

On Palm Sunday it would have been clear to the many Jews who had gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover that the wandering rabbi from Nazareth was making a statement by the way he was entering the city.

It was the way of the long-expected King, God's Messiah, to enter the city the way he did. And we can detect a power statement- Jesus is claiming the authority not just of a local wandering rabbi, nor even of a high priest, - which would have been authority within the religious and spiritual systems and understandings of God - and for a Jew that would have been pretty big! - but, no, the authority of a king has no limits, it is over every aspect of human life.

But then, even as they greeted Jesus with the 'Hosannas!' and threw palm branches in his path, as for a king who is a conquering hero, it must have confused people to see him not on a fine stallion but on a donkey. Jesus has turned upside down the expectations of a king's power. The donkey he is riding upon subverts ideas of coercive power and says, 'I come in peace'.

So, what is the power of the king of peace who comes on a donkey?  
It certainly isn't force of arms!

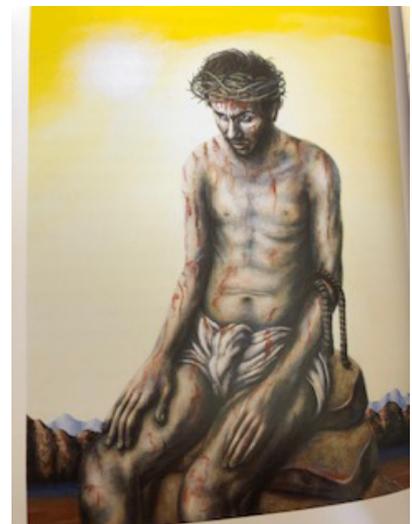
Perhaps it's more like the power of a strong and penetrating mind - which can cut apart a dodgy argument?

Perhaps it's the power of a creative genius - who can put forward ideas for the transformation of human life?

Maybe it's the power of a great poet, the power of an artist with words- whose stories and parables lodge instantly and permanently in the mind and heart?

Perhaps the power of this king of peace, of shalom, is that of compassion and tenderness- bringing forgiveness and healing?

Yes - all these things - but in this Holy Week, as we walk with Jesus the way of the cross, and see him, on Good Friday, reduced to total powerlessness, it is the power of self-emptying love that hangs before us on the cross.



So, this is the picture that I bring you today of our king.

Read poem & then think about Holy Week and ask God's blessing on us all

**"Morning glory, starlit sky"**

**W H Vanstone (1923-1999)**

1. Morning glory, starlit sky,  
soaring music, scholar's truth,  
flight of swallows, autumn leaves,  
memory's treasure, grace of youth:
2. Open are the gifts of God,  
gifts of love to mind and sense;  
hidden is love's agony,  
love's endeavour, love's expense.
3. Love that gives, gives ever more,  
gives with zeal, with eager hands,  
spares not, keeps not, all outpours,  
ventures all its all expends.
4. Drained is love in making full,  
bound in setting others free,  
poor in making many rich,  
weak in giving power to be.
5. Therefore, he who shows us God  
helpless hangs upon the tree;  
and the nails and crown of thorns  
tell of what God's love must be.
6. Here is God: no monarch he,  
throned in easy state to reign;  
here is God, whose arms of love  
aching, spent, the world sustain.