

## **NORTH BALWYN UNITING CHURCH**

### **PALM SUNDAY**

**SUNDAY 1 APRIL 2012**

**Mr Robert Sanderson**

**Mark 11: 1-11**

### **“The March to Change the World”**

In this morning's religious play - *On the Way* - we looked at the domination system in force in the first century. Domination systems had the characteristics of “rule by a few, economic exploitation and religious legitimization”. How Palestine differed from other domination systems was that the temple was at its heart with Rome at the top and the local system beneath. The society was ruled through the temple.

In the play, our journey touched on the history and the theology of the ancient Hebrews, the society and the politics of first century Palestine and of course the physical and spiritual journey of Jesus of Nazareth.

There were two processions on that Palm Sunday. The Imperial procession with its domination system; its pomp and power and politics. And then there was Jesus' procession with its joy and love and care for others... and yes, its politics too. But this time it was the politics of the weak and the powerless against the domination system – a procession all about building a better world that is God's Kingdom.

Jesus died because he stood up to the domination system. He non-violently challenged the might of Rome and took the consequences.

Palm Sunday is all about Jesus leading his followers on a protest march to change the world. We are challenged to contemplate whether we are on the Way with him.

As you listened did you think “I recognize that in today's world.” “Oh! That hasn't changed.” Despite our ‘enlightened’ democratic society, there are many things that have not changed. There are still domination systems in full flight.

Here are two examples that make us stop and think.

I am sure you remember the extraordinary event in September last year called the ‘Occupy Wall Street’ movement which swept the world. I don't want to go into the pros and cons of the movement, I only want to say that it was formed by mainly young people who protested “against social and economic inequality, greed, corruption and the undue influence of corporations on government – particularly from the financial services sector.” Because it was Internet based, there was no leadership as such. Only a wave of feeling of injustice and lack of power.

Dare we ask, “Which procession am I in?”

The parliamentary inquiry into Australia's immigration detention network was released on Thursday. The report advocates sweeping reform. Remove the Immigration minister's guardianship of

unaccompanied children as he has a conflict of interest with mandatory detention. Limit detention to 90 days (most mental health professionals say that after this time mental health declines.) Some asylum seekers are still in detention after 2 years. And what about those who are blocked by ASIO for unknown reasons? There is no way of reviewing the status of these 46 people in detention.

Dare we ask, "Which procession am I in?"

The main question remains: are we on the Way with Jesus?