

Thought for the week: Make the most of each day

It is striking how the journey to the cross in Holy Week begins in celebration. Jesus knew what was awaiting him in Jerusalem but he does not let that spoil the Palm Sunday party. He knows the cries of 'Hosanna!' will turn to 'Crucify' but he does not quieten the crowd. Palm Sunday is a day for celebration.

Richard Vautrey, GP, President of the Royal College of General Practitioners and former Vice President of the British Methodist Conference, argues that:

'Patients who know they are going to die often have a very different outlook on life. They make the most of every precious day. Yes, they prepare, and put their affairs in order, but many also compile bucket lists of exciting and challenging things to do while they have the strength and energy to do them. They do things they never thought themselves capable of.' (Methodist Recorder 20 June, 2014).

Sir Chris Hoy is a magnificent example of this. On receiving the news of his terminal diagnosis – something he did with characteristic grace and humility – he set out to make the very most of whatever time he was still to have on this earth. Fulfilling personal dreams, having fun and very special times with those closest to him and also inspiring many, many others to take care of themselves and others. He is as inspiring in the face of suffering as he was powering to Olympic glory in the velodrome.

Jesus certainly made the most of the days leading up to Good Friday: teaching, healing and helping. Alongside the drama of the cleansing of the Temple and the huge significance of the Last Supper it is easy to miss or forget just how much significant teaching Jesus shares in the Temple during Holy Week. Not a moment was wasted.

I wonder whether we are making the most of the time we have, however young or old, well or ill we are? How might we celebrate with our friends? How might we teach or heal, inspire or help?

In Holy Week the journey to the cross began with a party. After Jesus breathes his last upon the cross and the whole earth is shaken, it ends with the high point of Matthew's Gospel in the declaration of the centurion: 'Truly this man was God's Son'. The crowds had sung and shouted 'Hosanna', a cry looking for salvation. At the cross the Jesus who had humbled himself one final time had done just that. How might we, like the centurion, point others to the one who died that we might live?