**MEDITATION FOR PASSION SUNDAY MUSICAL VESPERS**

**St Mark 10: 13-22; St Mark 10: 32-45 Sunday 21 March 2021**

**One of the great anthems of our day, especially if you live in Liverpool, is ‘you’ll never walk alone’:**

When you walk through a storm, hold your head up high and don't be afraid of the dark.

At the end of a storm there's a golden sky and the sweet silver song of a lark.

Walk on through the wind, walk on through the rain though your dreams be tossed and blown - walk on, walk on … with hope in your heart: you ‘ll never walk alone.

**Passiontide is exactly that, facing the dark, wading through the storms: Jesus had so much to contend with. And you would have hoped that he would have had some mates to share that journey with. St Mark Chapter 10, as I mentioned this morning, is the moment when Jesus turns his face towards Jerusalem – and yet not one of the people in these accounts understands what is going on. The disciples want to keep the children away from him; the enthusiastic young man cannot leave his wealth behind; and then James and John blithely demand the best seats in heaven.**

**Is it any wonder that Jesus looks for all the world like a very lonely figure; the Man of Sorrows some have called him: misunderstood so often and by people who seem to have neither vision nor stamina in the face of such overwhelming odds.**

**It has been so good to begin to catch up with our congregation today after such a long time in lockdown. But seeing people for the first time for a while has also been a reminder that we have all changed in these intervening weeks. Our children seem to have got taller and more mature: we have all been involved in events which no one else knows about. Some of the easy familiarity has slipped. We are less involved in each other’s lives and more ‘alone’ than we like to admit. We still have a lot of catching up to do.**

**And the only way through that – as the song says - is *to have hope in our hearts.* The canticle from Romans that follows this reflection puts it like this: *we even revel in our sufferings for suffering produces endurance, endurance brings hope and our hope is not in vain because God’s love has been poured into our hearts.***

**However isolated and alone Jesus will have felt, he could see Cardinal Newman’s ‘distant scene’; he had genuine hope in his heart and he knew how to take one step at a time, knowing that his companions would eventually come to understand. For him then – and for us now - loneliness is just a passing phase along the way.**