**Ride On,Jesus!**

**… an Ash Wednesday reflection looking ahead**

Blessed?

Blessed?

Absolutely!

Absolutely!

Anyone who can draw in this sort of crowd

This sort of adulation

This sort of fervour

Hey, they must be blessed!

A rock star welcome!

Jesus, ride on!

Created by John August Swanson.

Crowds out in their multitudes

from every crevice in the Jerusalem woodwork

… stonework

to meet you

to greet you

to praise you

to worship you

to check you out

to check out this oddity

this living, breathing, polarising

Captivating conundrum

that is you

the one who rides into town

as Prince of Peace

Not warrior of war and might …

as one who mounts a donkey

as one I’ve heard Peter proclaims

as the Christ, the Lord, the Messiah

as the Son of the living God

as the one … as the one

who soon will be mounted to a cross

as one who says

turn the other cheek

as one who offers

a new commandment to love

as one who rebuts the establishment’s cries

for the cheering to cease

as one who in the middle of this jubilant mayhem

cries out: “I tell you, if they keep quiet,

the stones under your feet will cry out!”

as one who says the last and the least and the lost

will come first

first at the table

first in your new kingdom

of grace, welcome,

hope and life

salvation



as one who not only talks about God

but who is God

who not only calls us to holiness

but is holiness

who not only calls us to repentance

but is repentance

who is forgiveness

Jesus, ride on!

Jesus, God

we’ve taken in your teaching

we’ve marvelled at your miracles

we’ve wowed at your wisdom

But how could all this be?

I’m waving my palm branches

My red cloak is laid out as you come by

Red cloaks, blue cloaks, green cloaks

They’re all being waved.

Green – for life and peace

Blue – for something deep in the soul … the heart

Red – well, raising a red flag means

Sit up and take notice

Something’s happening here

Something unusual

maybe even not right

Yes, red flag for me.

This is no ordinary parade

No ordinary welcome.

Forget the soldiers, the scoffers, the skeptics

I’ve heard what they think of you ...

nothing but treachery

nothing but blasphemy

nothing but insurrection

nothing but elimination

Jesus

I can only tell my own story

We can only tell *our* own stories

When it was all hopeless

You offered my hope

When I was afraid

You offered your presence

When I felt forgotten

You brought me in

Offered welcome

Life in abundance

Life overflowing.

Is that what everyone around me

hollers about?

The latest Messiah

to get us out of our deep mess?

I’ve heard you’ll be tried

I’ve heard you’ll be betrayed

I’ve heard you’ll be ridiculed something shocking

I’ve heard - to be blunt

– they want to get rid of you

once and for all.

But that’s not all I’ve heard

I’ve heard there’s more to you

There always seems to be more to you.

That you promise a response

Like only God can offer

There always seems to be more to you.

You say the taints and torture

A deathly torture, no less

It won’t be the end

No way.

 will be just the beginning.

So Jesus

Ride on

You Prince of Peace

Ride on

You healer of hearts

Ride on

You Son of God

… to your future

Not for yourself

No!

To *our* future

The future of all creation

Forever

So Jesus

bring in your kingdom some more

Go to your cross

Go beyond

Save us

Love us

Free us!

Ride on, Jesus!

Ride on

Blessed

Obedient,

faithful one

Saviour

Befriender

Welcomer

Redeemer

Messiah

Christ

Lord

*David MacGregor*

Ash Wednesday, 2020