



## A PALM SUNDAY REFLECTION

Palm Sunday, like me, has many hats.

I am a daughter, a mother, a wife, a Christian, a nurse and an activist and acknowledge the struggle of juggling all these hats.

I maintain my mental and spiritual health by focusing on the values with which I play out each role rather than the tasks involved. I change hats without changing my values.

Switching from 'work mode' to 'protest mode' is no longer such a big shift. The common value is Justice.

Whether I advocate for the voiceless in the health system or those in the immigration system I can be confident Jesus supports me. Jesus is about Justice.

Palm Sunday is the beginning of Holy Week. We commemorate Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a humble beast, triumphant, the palm fronds thrown in his path a sign of great respect and homage.

Palm Sunday is also about Justice that comes from a non-Christian, non-religious space.

For the past few years I've attended the [Walk for Justice for Refugees](#) in Melbourne on Palm Sunday. It is not a coincidence that the walk occurs on a Holy Day in the Christian calendar but the organising committee and many of the one hundred and forty endorsing organisations would not identify as Christian. We come together calling for an end to the indefinite detention of refugees on Nauru and Manus Island due to our shared value of Justice.

I attend the Walk representing Christians, Catholics, [Rural Australians for Refugees](#) and [Love Makes A Way](#). Many hats, common values.



This year I attended the prayer service at St Patrick's Cathedral Melbourne organised by the [Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum](#) preceding the walk. I found it particularly powerful to share this time with Catholics committed to Justice and prepared to take the message beyond the church walls.

The image of Catholics bearing the yellow and white papal flags walking together down Latrobe St from the Cathedral to join the main walk enriched my soul.

Each Palm Sunday as I take part in the [Walk for Justice for Refugees](#) I allow myself the

fleeting hope that next year we won't need to march. All people will be treated with justice and respect, there will be no more war and displacement.

We know the Crucifixion comes next in Jesus' story. We are also sure of the Resurrection. This year we seek the closure of Offshore Detention Facilities. Next year the specifics may change but the words of Jesus, 'you will always have the poor among you....' Matthew 26:11, reinforce that as Christians there will always be a need for the works of Justice.

So as the incinerated Palms of Palm Sunday 2017 become the Ash of Ash Wednesday 2018 I ponder incorporating the Palm fronds of peace and victory into my search for justice for those arriving on our shores seeking asylum.

*Katherine Stewart  
Easter 2017*

