

Holy Week Reflections - Good Friday

It is easy to gloss over the cross and go straight for the resurrection. Let us pause at the cross today.

The crucifixion can be a powerful focus for our sorrow. How often have you used the phrase 'blood, sweat, and tears' to describe something that required a lot of effort but was cast aside?

Here on the cross, it is no different – except for the fact that the crucifixion is so unjust. Today, it is that injustice, coupled with the senseless waste of a life, that we should focus on.

Neil Paynter of the Iona Community wrote, *'For many people every day is a Good Friday. People forced into poverty, those who are homeless. Those seeking asylum. People crushed into debt and treated with contempt by the powerful. Jesus is crucified today in their suffering...'*

We are conscious of this during our global pandemic; as we realise more than ever how much of our lives rely on hundreds of people doing small jobs, for rubbish pay, at unsociable hours. In our day to day lives, we barely think of them. In Jesus' eyes, they always were the most important – and should be in ours too.

As we started on Palm Sunday, with Psalm 118: *'The stone that the builders rejected; has become the chief cornerstone'*.

Especially at this time, what we can do to aid them, we should. Many social initiatives have been doing over the past few weeks. The real test of our gratitude and of our human memory, will be when this pandemic is over. Whether we will make the necessary changes to value everyone more equally and not return to the status quo.

Every year on Good Friday we face that choice full in the face. Sam Wells put it succinctly: *'Are we willing to be part of this story, even if it isn't a rescue story, even if it is in many ways a sad story?... Our faith, our hope, our love is hanging by a thread. But maybe... when it matters most, we resolve to come back and be with Jesus.'*

Even when all seems lost, has Jesus' story given us anything to live by? On Good Friday, in the tragedy and cruel waste of such a life, it absolutely does. As Dylan Thomas famously put it:

'Do not go gentle into that good night. Rage, rage against the dying of the light'.

Action

Read over the crucifixion narrative in a Bible that makes sense to you (on phone, tablet, or audio). If you don't have any of those, here is an online, searchable, Bible:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/?version=nrsv>.

Take a plaster, piece of paper, and a pen. Draw a cross on the paper and write down what jumps out at you as you read. When you've finished, ask yourself why it resonates with you – and write it on the plaster. Stick the plaster on the cross and, if you would like to, pray this prayer:

*Thanks be to you, my Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits thou hast given me,
for all the pains and insults thou hast borne for me.*

*O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may I know thee more clearly,
love thee more dearly, and follow thee more nearly, day by day. Amen.*

(St Richard of Chichester)