

GOOD FRIDAY
10th April 2020

On this day, Good Friday, when all seems at its lowest ebb,
We are confronted with the realities of the sin of the world and the suffering and death that results.
As we reflect on the death of Jesus upon a cross
We experience again its sadness and its seeming futility.
We are reminded of the one who suffers for us,
Who dies our death, and who takes our sin upon himself.
In this event God meets us, in an act of selfless love.

The echoes of cheering heard along the route into Jerusalem just a few days ago have now died away
And the partying palm branches shrivel on the side of the road.
The glimpse of light on the way ahead flickers into darkness.
All that lies within the shadows and the emptiness waits to be entered, in its pain,
Its oppressions and its deathliness.

Silence

But one thing is never in doubt:
Jesus the Christ goes on in faithfulness.

PSALM 22:1,2,9-11,19

God, my God, why the hell have you turned your back on me?

..... How come in my most desperate hour,
..... you are nowhere to be found?

I called you all day, God, over and over;

..... I tossed and turned all night,
..... but I still didn't hear back from you...

What's the story God?

..... Your hands eased me from my mother's womb;
..... You kept me from harm as I suckled at her breast.
..... As a baby, I rested trustingly in your arms;
..... You've been my God since the day I was born.

Don't quit on me now.

..... All hell is about to break loose
..... and there is no one else I can turn to.

What are you doing, LORD? Don't quit on me now!

..... Get your act together and come to my rescue!.....

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REFLECTION 1

We hear the words of the Psalmist crying out to God in anguish.

Words echoed in those of Jesus on the cross

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me”

We too experience times of anguish and heartbreak and deep suffering and wonder where
God is in our time of need.

Sometimes we dread to search those dark places within us

In case we cannot bear to touch the wounds which lie there,

And the betrayals of our hopes,

Or the grieving we cannot bring ourselves to enter.

Within the hidden place we will find our own tears.

JOHN 18:1-11 *Time of silent meditation on the reading*

REFLECTION 2

What sounds are hidden in the depths of life?

We hear the weeping of the poor in the distance

And the struggles of desperation and death.

In our hearts we move towards the lost and rejected,

And hear their sighs of longing and loneliness.

We hear the cries of the poor in India and Indonesia, in the face of COVID 19.

For them social distancing is not an option and not to work means the family will die of hunger.

For those who are sick the health system cannot cope with their needs and so they die in the street.

In the depths of life we will find injustice.

JOHN 18: 12-14,19-24 *Time of silent meditation on the reading*

REFLECTION 3

Starkly standing on the road ahead are the Jerusalems of our day:

The voices of religion when it betrays its God

And leads the people into judgements of others;

Violence against those who are different

And entrenched positions of privilege.

The sounds also of the power of money,

And of greed beyond description;

The exploitation of the powerless

And temptations to endless consumption;

The shrieks of pain and fear in war and violence,

amid the threatening sounds of military action,

in order to be the ones that maintain control.

In the places of power we find violence:

JOHN 18:28 -19:6 *Time of silent meditation on the reading*

REFLECTION 4

Even as we stand and search into the future,

we hold fears about climate change,

We know that the ground under our feet begins to weep with its pain,

The oceans surge in distress,

And the mountains shed their coverings of snow.

The telling of the story of the crucifixion in Matthews Gospel

speaks of the darkness that covered the whole land for 3 hours

and as Jesus breathed his last the earth shook and the rocks were split

In places of devastation, we find the earth and its people crying out for care.

JOHN 19: 16b-30 *Time of silent meditation on the reading*

REFLECTION 5

As we find the courage to enter the darkness, the cross rises before us.

So it is we dare to look at the cross of human deadliness.

Jesus the Christ has moved into all human life,

with all its sinfulness, all its suffering and all its death.

We are never, ever, left alone.

THE CHERISHING: JOHN 19:32-42

Let us gently cover the wounds that are there in life, knowing that, as we do,
We are also receiving the gracious love of Jesus the Christ.

We will cover our pain, our grieving, and our unforgiven failures.
We will cover the injustices and rejections of the world.
We will cover the violence of the world.
We will cover the struggling life of our planet
Like the friends of Jesus in his day, we will gently cherish the Christ.
In doing so we are invited to lay down the difficulties of life.
To bring these burdens to the Body of Christ,
for healing, comfort, forgiveness, and new life in the future.
We will place it into the tomb of love and care.

PSALM 22: 22-31

LORD, you did not rubbish anyone
.....or blame the victims for their suffering.
You did not turn away or slip off quietly;
.....when I cried for help, you responded.
Whenever people gather to worship,
.....my heart overflows and I sing your praises.
Out in the open for all to see
.....I'll do all that I promised.
At your table, God, the needy will feast;
.....those who hunger for you will be fed till they burst with praise!
.....They will be able to live it up, now and forever!
In every corner of the earth people will wake up to themselves
.....and turn back to you, LORD.
Every race, nation, tribe and family
.....will offer themselves to you in worship,
for you have the last word on everything;
.....what you say goes.
Even the dead will bow down to you, LORD;
.....those who are trampled in the dust will look to you in hope,
.....and I will live for you and you alone.
Our kids and their kids will serve you, LORD;
.....as we pass the message down from one generation to the next.
People not even born yet will hear the story;
.....they will be told of what you have done to set us free.

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BLESSING

We go into the dark places knowing that we are embraced in the love of Christ
Walk deeply into your own lives, with all their frailties.
Discover, as you do that in spirit and in truth,
You are walking towards the joy of Easter Day

“The cross of our Lord...strengthen your hearts in faith to Christ
In hardship and in ease, in life and in death, now and for ever.” Amen

(From Iran: A blessing given by Simon a bishop, at the time of his martyrdom in AD 339)