

Easter Reflection 2021

The run up to major festivals for clergy can be quite full on and intense and COVID has not diminished that situation. However, compared to many folk it is minimal. For example those in the NHS. I could never have managed to work in healthcare - needles, blood, pain, trauma and tears - not for me! Over the past year on top of the usual occurrences we have had COVID. NHS workers have experienced physical, emotional, mental and I would add spiritual exhaustion as they have helped us through the pandemic. We are so thankful for them, for the hours they have worked and for the lives they have saved.

As I was reflecting on the events of Holy Week, aside of the excruciating pain of the crucifixion that Jesus suffered, there must have also been an overwhelming exhaustion in every way...

In the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-42) we see the disciples falling asleep as Jesus prays. Jesus perseveres through the tiredness, that presumably he too had, as he cries out to his Father. The mental, emotional and physical burden beginning in his journey to the cross.

Mark continues (14.43-end) with Jesus being arrested and dragged in front of the Jewish Council that same evening. The physical, mental and emotional assault continues on him.

Mark 15 tells us that, '*As soon as it was morning...*' Jesus was taken straight to Pilate to be judged, followed through the next hours by the harrowing events of the Good Friday. A physical, emotional, mental and spiritual relentlessness was forced upon Jesus up until the peak of his ministry as, '*...Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.*' (Mark 15:37)

Jesus had been crushed and wrung out in every possible way, then removed to be put in a tomb seemingly defeated.

Perhaps for some of us we feel that way at this time. Like we have been defeated and wrung out? Yet we know the story does not end there. Jesus rises again in glory. But he is not just resuscitated, but he is recreated - a new imperishable body. A resurrected body and mind that will not tire, or ever be beaten again - something that we are promised too when we believe in his name.

So this Easter, I would encourage you to reflect on the Passion of Jesus. He suffered like we do, so he could fully understand and fully empathise with the physical, mental, emotional struggles that we all go through. But also, so God could show that in the end they will be taken from us as he will bring us to a place of re-creation. As we have seen this in the resurrection of Jesus, our hope is that God has done it, and will do it again.



Prayer

Jesus you understand what it is to suffer in extreme ways.

Jesus you understand what it is to feel empty physically, emotionally and mentally.

Help us to trust in the God of recreation and restoration as we live our lives of faith.

And help us have hope for our eternal future with you.

Amen

Wishing you a Happy Easter!