

Some thoughts on Good Friday 2020 – Revd Steve Whiting

We moved through Lent in an extraordinary manner this year, it has been like no other journey to Passiontide and Holy Week. Passiontide begins the Sunday before Palm Sunday, this influences the Daily Office of morning and evening prayer, we see the change from reflecting on our sinfulness – we who don't always get it right – to bringing the Passion of Christ into view.

I feel that it is indicative of our times that we so often make things easier to swallow, to make what we see and read less offensive by eliminating anything unwholesome, objectionable, or incriminating, anything offensive, distressing, disturbing or just plain upsetting.

Take the brutality of the Passion of Christ, it is absolutely horrific! And yet we hear calls for a softer version that makes for more comfortable listening or reading. But stop, look again at the passion narrative and it is to say the very least, grim.

Why then should we allow ourselves the licence of a watered down, sanitised passion narrative for our cosy 21C lives, allowing us to hide behind the true horror of the mock trial, humiliation, torture and eventual excruciating death of an innocent man from Nazareth called Jesus.

Good Friday is an oxymoron, what is good about being humiliated, abused and dehumanized by being stripped naked and physically nailed to a cross, what on any level is good about being brutalised in such a way? It's difficult to see what is "good" about it.

There are a number of beliefs surrounding this, two of which state that 'good' used to mean holy or that it is 'good' because it led to the Resurrection of Jesus and his victory over death and sin and the celebration of Easter.

Easter! Thank God!! The Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. That fact remains that Jesus died to set us free, he paid the price for our freedom, he atoned for our transgressions and offers us the gift of eternal life, that, surely is GOOD! GOOD! GOOD!

Life is sometime grim, but we have a hope and a joy that nothing can destroy, a light that no darkness can overcome; we have Jesus Christ Son of God, Prince of Peace and Lord of lords.

In three days...

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ pastorally
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.