

Easter Saturday - Into the Darkness with You

This has been the strangest Holy Week ever, well apart from the first one that is.



How equally confused and lost and uncertain, not to mention fearful the friends of Jesus must have felt.

The Bible is silent about what happened to them after the Crucifixion, on that day between brutal death and stunning life; a 'nothing' day in every sense of the word.

There was nothing to be done.....it was all over; hopes dashed and dreams shattered.

There was nothing to be said.....what can be said at such a time, as those who have lost loved ones in recent weeks will know.

Where, oh where, was Peter.....brave, foolish Peter, who'd been broken by just one look from his Master. Was he hunkered down somewhere, remorse and regret pulsing through his veins?

What of the others, locked in fear behind closed doors.....?



Is that how it's felt for you this week, robbed of the usual patterns of life, of worship, of faith?

Some years ago I was struck by something an Anglican friend shared about her Easter Day message.

She'd focused on the phrase 'while it was still dark' (John 20:1)

She'd emphasized that it was in the deepest dark of the world where God was doing a new thing.

"Can you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43 v 19) he'd asked long ago.

They could not then.

Jesus' friends could not.

We often cannot.

Jesus asks us to enter the darkness with him, the darkness of this time, the ache to be brought back to life, to know once more 'life in all its fulness' (John 10 v 10).

Will we accept the challenge to be and not do, hold the pain and lament of so many affected by this dreadful virus?

'To be in your presence.....here I would stay' we sometimes sing.

Dare we rest here, knowing God is here too?

During Holy Week, I've been reading a book by David Thomson, Archdeacon of Carlisle.

In it he says: "Easter Saturday is a day for quiet waiting, for letting go of the busy-ness of religion, for simply being before the mystery of the Living God in the tomb."

There is much to be said for Anglican and Catholic traditions of holding an Easter Vigil on the Eve of Easter Day; to pause and reflect on the wonder of 'low in the grave he lay, Jesus my Saviour, waiting the coming day, Jesus my Lord.'

Stay With Me

Stay with me, three simple words

Stay here and keep watch:

Be alongside me in my hour of need.

Friends failed you then,

Friends fail you still.

We rush past this moment to the joy of resurrection,

Afraid to enter the darkness, what we might find deep within.

Yet into the darkness, you call us to go,

Into the pain you invite us to rest,

Waiting the coming day, not rushing away.

Trusting you are here, you are near, you are with us.....

As you promised you would be.

Lord may I feel your tears and sense your pain.

In the stillness of this night let me rest:

Your presence enough for me.

On the third day, while it was still dark.....you came: "love lives again, that with the dead has been," with the power to transform and heal: "When our hearts are wintry, grieving or in pain, then Your touch can call us back to life again."

Friends we may not be able to meet together to share the moment of joy as we transform the harsh cross, with its Lenten symbols, into a beautiful floral tribute.

Yet may we still voice the faith that burns within as we display crosses in our homes; signs of light and hope spread among the community into which God wants us to move.

As one American wit has put it – the church building may be empty on Easter morn but so too was the tomb.

He is alive, he is risen. Alleluia!!

Rev Melanie