

A Reflection for Good Friday

As Jesus hangs on the cross, the church His wounded body begins to take shape. When the soldiers approach Jesus they find that he is dead, one of them takes a spear and pierces his side. Out of that holy side flows down water and blood symbols of the sacraments of our salvation, the sacraments on which the church is built – Baptism and the Eucharist. From the cross Jesus has already entrusted the Beloved Disciple into the care of Mary, thus placing each Christian and the whole church in her care. And in entrusting Mary to the Beloved Disciple, each Christian is reminded that they must always have Mary close to them as a powerful intercessor and guide on their pilgrim journey. Jesus has also forgiven those who have persecuted him and brought him to this moment. As he forgives them so he forgives us for our sins. The account of the Passion of Jesus in St John's Gospel makes it clear that the journey to the Cross, as difficult and painful as it is, is not a defeat but a triumph. It is the triumph of life over death, of good over evil, and it is the wiping away of sin and the devil. At the end of the Gospel we leave Jesus dead and in the tomb but with a sense and understanding that this is far from the end of the story, it is only the beginning. As Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus emerge from the shadows they become members of the first church community, seeking to perform an act of mercy in giving Jesus a place lie in death. And so we gather as the early church did around the cross to pray and to ask that God would be with us. We might be worried and afraid as they are but the Cross for us has become a sign of hope and of triumph of life over death. Earlier this week I built a small garden tomb in the church garden and placed the white cloth over the cross. A simple sign of hope, a sign of comfort, that Jesus who died on the cross that first Good Friday did not just do so for the people of his time but for the people of all time to come. When we are just a footnote in the history books (if we are very lucky) Jesus Christ will still save, the church will still proclaim his love, and people will still come to his cross for comfort.

