

Reflective Sheet & Prayers St Mary's & St Augustine's Church

Passion Sunday: Psalm 51. 1-13; Jer 31.31-34; Heb 5.5-10; John 12.20-33.

This week's reflections are written by Claire.

Jesus said to them, "The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you" (John 12. 35)

"Soon very soon we are going to see the King x 3

Hallelujah, hallelujah, we're going to see the King x 3"

I've had the above song by Andrae Crouch running around my head a little bit this week. He was, I think, a black Pentecostal minister in the United States, yet some of his hymns also make an appearance in the Methodist Hymnal. I think I was drawn to it because I am longing for this present time to be over. I keep counting down the days...weeks till lockdown ends. "Soon..very soon..."

Soon, very soon it will be Easter Day, we have now reached Passion Sunday on our Lentern approach. So soon Easter will be upon us. Crouch's words are taken from the book of Revelation when God will wipe away every tear from the eye and there will be no more death or dying. It speaks of a New Heaven and a New Earth where the old order of things has passed away and God himself will wipe the tear from the eye. Maybe we are looking to the end of Covid as a restoration time, a time when we will be able to get back to family and friends, to reconnect. When we do so we will also notice a change, we've been changed and some of the certainties we had are not the same now.

In response to this I have been thinking about the second coming. Which is strange for me .. I hardly ever think about it, it is a concept I struggle with. But latterly when I have been thinking about and longing for an ending to all of this dreadfulness I have found myself reflecting on the second coming.

We are in an in between space. A place suspended between the first coming of Jesus Christ and the second coming. In Jeremiah the Prophet tells us: "The days are surely coming when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel ..." (Jer 31.31) A reminder of Noah and the covenant God made with the people that never again would he cause a flood to devastate the earth. And yet here we are ... in the middle of a pandemic which has surely done that, devastated the earth, or at least come close to it! We know however, that God's covenant is sure and steadfast, as sure as the dawn, or the coming of Spring. So for me this only makes sense in that all of this will heal, one day ... one day ... or soon very soon! Not in the first coming of Jesus Christ but in his second coming.

Crouch recognises that until that time there will be 'rivers to cross and mountains to climb'. That whilst we can hold onto and recognise the promise of God for our future hope, they are promises which do not extract us from our earthly struggles. God

does not promise that everything is going to be made well for us on earth in our lifetime. We remember the risen Christ has wounds still. So our bodies and experiences remain captive to this present age...the pandemic and all its uncertainties...but our hearts and minds can yearn towards the ... "Soon, very soon we are going to see the King!"

We have always been in this place. This suspended time, this in between space. But the pandemic has accentuated this for us. And when we get back together again everything is not going to be 'normal' and fully restored. There will be crack in everything! But as another great singer song writer Leonard Cohen wrote "that's how the light gets in!"

So as we approach Easter 2021, weary, fatigued... we can set our hearts not on what is temporary but on the eternal promises of hope that indeed soon, very soon we are going to see the King. Hallelujah, hallelujah we are going to see the King! Hallelujah, hallelujah we are going to see the King!

Collect for Passion Sunday

O God, the source of our passion,
Who took upon you our unprotected flesh,
Kindle in us
Your anger and desire;
That in suffering we may not be consumed,
But hold fast to you
Through Jesus Christ, Amen.

Janet Morley

The birds they sang
At the break of day
Start again
I heard them say
Don't dwell on what has passed away
Or what is yet to be

Ah, the wars they will be fought again
The holy dove, she will be caught
again
Bought and sold, and bought again
The dove is never free

Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in ...

You can add up the parts
But you won't have the sum
You can strike up the march
There is no drum
Every heart, every heart
To love will come
But like a refugee

Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in

Ring the bells that still can ring
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That's how the light gets in
That's how the light gets in.

Leonard Cohen

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