

## Good Friday 2023

Perhaps one of the mightiest vindications of the Roman Catholic faith is that we do not take suffering for granted. Neither do we ignore it.

When there is a death often those closer to the secular world ask if the funeral can be just a simple service.

Hoping it seems to avoid the pain.

To get through this encounter with loss without enduring the pain, or reconciliation without the sense of desolation.

The coffin is presented there at the front of the church

Before the people

And above the cross of Christ

As Roman Catholics we do not pretend that there is no suffering

We do not ignore

We encounter

It is not denial

It is an acceptance and challenge

A part of this life itself

But not a conclusion to it

In Jesus Christ God became fully human

Thus there is the inevitable encounter with suffering

Suffering enhanced by evil

If I am to follow in the path of Christ my Lord

I too will inevitably encounter suffering

And on occasion suffering enhanced by evil

It is my faith to share that suffering with the cross

Not to deny it

So I am no longer twenty one  
There are aches and pains  
And more to come  
This is the reality  
I could dye my grey hair black  
Attempt to wear slim fitting shirts  
And dress inappropriately  
Or accept that at this time  
This is me  
Take up my cross and live happily

I have relationships  
Family chosen by God  
and friends who were less imposed  
On occasion they drive me crazy  
This is the reality  
I could fabricate images of the past  
And pretend there is perfection  
Close my eyes to problems  
And act inappropriately  
Or accept that at this time  
This is us  
Take up the cross and live honestly

I live in this town  
With access to beautiful Moorland, and appalling traffic jams  
With clients for the food bank, and housing the size of small hotels  
Where there is drug abuse, and sport, and community and fun  
This is a part of the reality  
I could close my doors and shut out that which disturbs me  
I could wallow in mournful self-pity

Both a denial  
Excusing me from taking up my cross  
And accepting that this is my home and acting appropriately

Perhaps one of the mightiest vindications of the Roman Catholic faith is that we do not take suffering for granted. Neither do we ignore it.

There is suffering  
This is a reality  
Christ Jesus avoided nothing  
But was crucified  
died upon the cross  
And in the taking up of the challenge  
Overcame all that would destroy him

Do the same  
Do the same  
Yes it is so difficult  
The suffering is a reality  
However do not deny  
Do not pretend  
Face the reality  
Take up the challenge  
And overcome

Be free  
Then we  
Shall meet happily  
In heaven