

Dear all

Holy Saturday is a very strange time. It is the time when the disciples were bereft. They hadn't the benefit of having 'read the last chapter of the book'. They were in the pit of despair.

Here is our Archdeacon, Justine Allain Chapman's reflection on the day, which put things much more eloquently than I ever could:

#EasterBegins in isolation



At the moment I am only seeing other people and their lives through some sort of window. Mostly it is either a computer screen or the window onto the street. Through the window which is a screen I can only see what people choose to reveal and they can shut me out or mute me. Sitting and watching the world go by through my window isn't what it was anymore. Few are there to wave to, none to invite to come in for a chat. Were I in a hospital there would be other screens and windows to isolate me from others.

Jesus, arrested and crucified, was isolated, kept away from those who he loved. They could only look on. He was buried hurriedly, with guards preventing anyone from going near. The experience of those who mourned him was of him being taken away from them. The disciples, terrified by what was happening, having scattered into hiding, were isolated from one another. Funerals now have only a few people.

When I was a child I (and millions of my UK contemporaries) used to watch Playschool. It ran from 1964 to 1988 and I was invited to look at some aspect of the outside world through the square or the round or the arched window. I had to guess through which one we would go that day.

Easter invites us to look at the world through a cross-shaped window. The cross is a multifaceted symbol of meanings. Many express the overcoming of the separation and isolation that sin causes between us and God, us and each other, that which keeps us from inner peace. The cross is always a sign of the love of God for the world: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16).

Today, as we long for connection and communion, look at our world through a cross-shaped window, through the loving eyes of God, and wait in hope.

A traditional Easter Vigil takes up readings from the Old Testament and, as the risen Christ spoke to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, shows how His death and resurrection is foreshadowed in the OT. I have taken the 'Salvation' set of readings, Psalms and Prayers, and, with the help of Ted, Helen, and Benedict, have put together a video montage. The Psalm readings are attached if you wish to join in. Here is the link – I hope it runs OK. It took all day, and a good few attempts to get it to what I think is right!

https://youtu.be/5Vju_SpdFw4

Hilary Mason has recorded a beautiful version of the song 'I surrender' which she offers to us for our meditations:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sJNUaG5TFk&feature=youtu.be>

The Revd Richard Coles produces, every year, a challenging and provocative Stations of the Cross. There is no narrative. I have attached this year's.

An alternative Stations of the Cross, from the Dean of Southwark Cathedral, the Very Revd Andrew Nunn

<https://southwarklivinggod.wordpress.com/2020/04/10/stations-for-our-times/>

Finally, a beautiful instrumental rendition of the Passion Chorale by guitarist Phil Keaggy:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRgs68urR58&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR0AV_vCp_NB-47AoAc9RlrZ7tSVHzeVvAT2Z7GNCGiQ3I28HZ54LoWSXxg

Stay safe

Blessings and love

Mark