

Good Friday Reflections

St. Andrew's – Kent

April 19, 2019

STANDING BY

. BEING THERE

OMG !

BE WITH ME,

PLEASE!

How BRUTAL !

How utterly, shamefully brutal!

The man who wrote that anguished Story was in PAIN –
Every memory, a vivid, re-lived picture.

JOHN WAS THERE.

Sometimes, when I feel like crying,
I write.

WORDS give the relentless pictures
a place to rest,

where they won't be forgotten.
where they can be re-reverenced on-call.

*[John and I grew up without cameras.
What we experience
is burned into the film of our souls,
in words].*

What we see here in memory today --
the torture and mocking and murder of One Woman's Son,
that horrific process --
is dreadful;
too excruciating to watch
but unable to erase.

THEY

the loving and loved John
-- and THREE MARYs --

WERE THERE.

What I want to share with you today is
a little comforting assurance,
vivid in my soul
from the Dyings I have companioned.

***Suffering is what scares us,
not dying.***

LIVING scares us.

**Living through pain and misunderstanding,
living disdained,
living disregarded,
not mattering.**

NOT MATTERING.

NOT BELONGING.

This is the dread
that drives the separation
between those who feel righteous
and those who suffer keenly,
knowing that they fall outside the boundaries of The Righteous,
disdained and undesirable,
excluded
-- but also,
grossly UNKNOWN,
generically unwanted
because of somebody else's self-insulating righteousness.

What I have shared with so many for almost 8 decades is
that the process of dying
is just one more almost-familiar step
in the process of living.

Death is not scary.
The process of getting there can be.

Something in us,
intuitively, is at ease with our own transition
into whatever it is
that is our death.

We intuitively acquiesce in our mortality.

We are not, essentially, afraid of it,
however reluctantly we may anticipate it.
We anticipate, and shrink from, *the process*.

Death – trust me, -- is not fearful.
Suffering IS . . .
and suffering is where we do have power.

We can't control death,
but we CAN take the fear and isolation out of each other's suffering,
while LIVING,
and while dying.
WE can take the dread out of pain and the fear of more pain,
especially, pain *alone*.
We CAN take away the fear and isolation,

the utter aloneness,
 the abandonment,
 the not mattering.
 We can take away the pain of invisibility
 In LIFE and in death,
 by being there.

Little children ask me,
“What Can I Do For God?”
 (to compensate, as if,
 for all the badness).

NOTHING

We DO For Each Other

We CAN NOT hurt God.
 We can not make God feel better.
 We hurt each other.
 We CAN make each other feel better.

O, Let Us Do What We Can While We Can

BE NOT AFRAID

Death is not scary.
 Living scares us.
 Fear holds us back
 in ways we too often don't see.

LIVING is where we help each other get past the fear of failing, ultimately,
 in what we're all about.

We can't control death,
 but we CAN take the fear and isolation out of each other's suffering.
 We *can* dilute pain
 and silence the dread of more pain,
 by being there.

In both LIFE and in Dying,
 fear that the suffering will get worse
 exacerbates the suffering of the moment.
SOMEONE TO HEAR,
 to listen, to care,
 calms; reassures; restores connectedness,
 eases acquiescence;
 tenders the parting.

Death,
 especially companioned Death, when it comes,
 is a gentle, UNfearful release,
 almost always.
 The most troubled, broken, frightened, shunned people I have held
 are freed from fear,
 from conflicted clinging
 to false failure.

HOW SACRED THE OPPORTUNITY, TO BE THERE !

Analogously,
 in those moments when dying is not yet imminent,
 Being There – in Dying AND in Living –
 is the emollient that relieves almost every suffering.
 Being there.
 Touching.
 Hand-holding.
 Eye-to-Eye listening with our hearts,
 our intuitions,
 our sameness;
 letting our understanding emanate,
 because we DO understand brokenness.
 We've been there, each of us,
 helpless,
 alone.

We know how close to our *limits* of confidence we really are,
 much of our time.

Living with the Dying, as they die . . .
 living with those inside AND outside our Righteous Zone as they LIVE
 – with the mysterious resilience that has sustained them
 throughout their fallings and stumblings
 and horrendous pain and shame and rejection --
 THIS is where we should be.

LIFE is a succession of saying YES
 to our own WHAT IFs,
 and to each other's.

We do understand each other's brokenness, fear,
 incapacity
 more than we think we do.

I AM HERE.
 BE WITH ME. BE WITH ME.

PARTING. LIVING. Together.

Here I am, Lord;
as I am.
finished, for this moment.
grateful for any Next.
ready to rise,
to see
and to be
and to relish,
as You do,
all that I have become.

AMEN.