

Daily thoughts on 'The Footsteps of Christ'

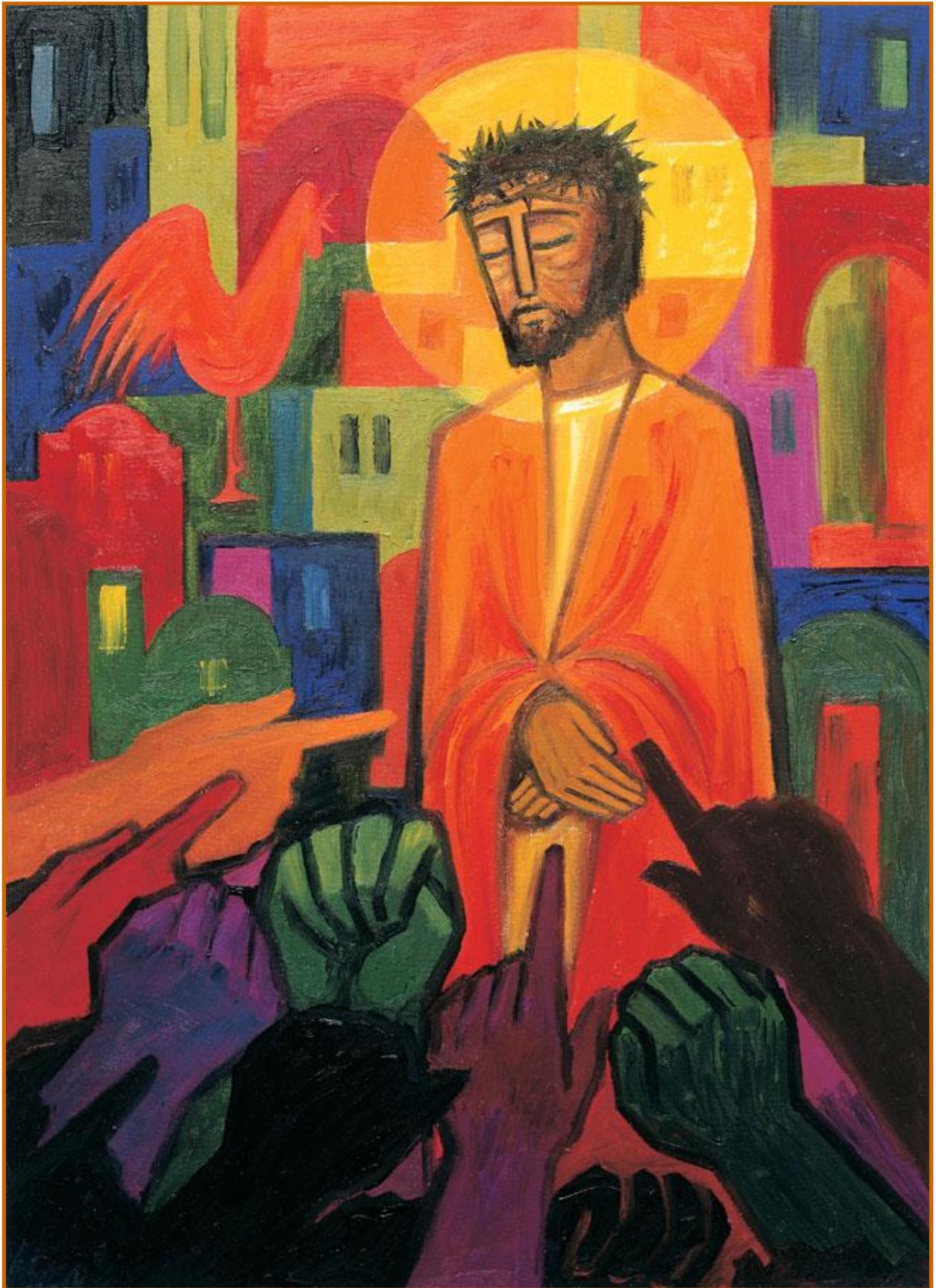
Passiontide 2020.

Some thoughts and reflections using the images painted by the Benedictine Sisters of Turvey Abbey.

You may find it helpful to print pages 3 and beyond whilst retaining page 2 (with the painting) on the screen of your computer or device.

Rev. Andrew Farrington

1. Jesus is condemned to death.



The eve of the passion: Jesus' hour of darkness has come when
"...all are to be scattered, leaving me alone. Yet I am not alone, because father is with me."

John 16:32

Jesus spoke to the crowd: "Do you take me for a robber, that you have come out with swords and cudgels to arrest me? Day after day I have been among you teaching in the temple, and you did not lay hands on me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled." Then the disciples all deserted him and ran away.

Matthew 26:55

You may also read: Luke 22:47-62; and John 18:12-27.

Jesus, Son of God, Messiah, man, beloved Son and son, friend, has set his face resolutely towards Jerusalem. Those last frenetic days of praying, healing, teaching and final farewells, moving in and out of the city walls now finally arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olive. The sacrificial lamb brought back into the city to be ferried in the veil of deceitful darkness between the houses of the High Priest and his deputy.

With startling accuracy, Jesu's prophies become reality: betrayal, arresting, denial, beating and rebuking, carrying a cross, death and 'in three days' time'. Yes, the eve of the Lord's passion and the hours of darkness have come.

The exchange of coins has been transacted, the time and place set. Now other forces seem to prevail.

Here, in this image, Jesus stands calm, still, prayerful subdued. Hair tussled as if to form a crown of thorns. Cloak wrapped as to conceal hands tied, its folds forming a fateful cross-like image. The houses glowing the redness of passion from the fading embers of courtyard fire. All so resonant of the fading friends who have departed the scene.

The hands that once stretched out to touch even the hem of garment of the passing Messiah, grasping for a miracle of healing, now turned, pointing, accusing, condemning. All the anger, all the hate, all the prejudice focussed solely on the plaintive, peaceful, Light of the World.

Already the cloth is yielding to blood stained sacrifice.

The cock will crow, and Jesus will lift his head and open his eyes directly upon Peter as he finishes that fateful sentence 'Man, I don't know what you are talking about' (Luke 22:60). One sentencing sentence for the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

Can you picture yourself in this scene?

Where would you be?

What would you be doing?

What would you say if Jesus looked at you?

Soon Jesus will be carted to and fro. To Pilate privately, to Herod, to Pilate and public audience before being taken out of the walls once more. This time crowned in thorns and bearing in his hands the cross he had long expected.

From all evil and mischief;
from pride, vanity, and hypocrisy,
from envy, hatred, envy and malice,
and from all evil intent,

Good Lord deliver us.

From sloth, worldliness, and love of money;
from hardness of heart
and contempt for your word and your laws,

Good Lord, deliver us.

From sins of the body and mind;
from the deceits of the world, the flesh,
and the devil

Good Lord, deliver us.

From famine and disaster;
from violence, murder, and dying unprepared,

Good Lord, deliver us.

Amend.

From the Alternative Service Book 1980 (Prayers for Various Occasions, p99)