

Daily thoughts on 'The Footsteps of Christ'

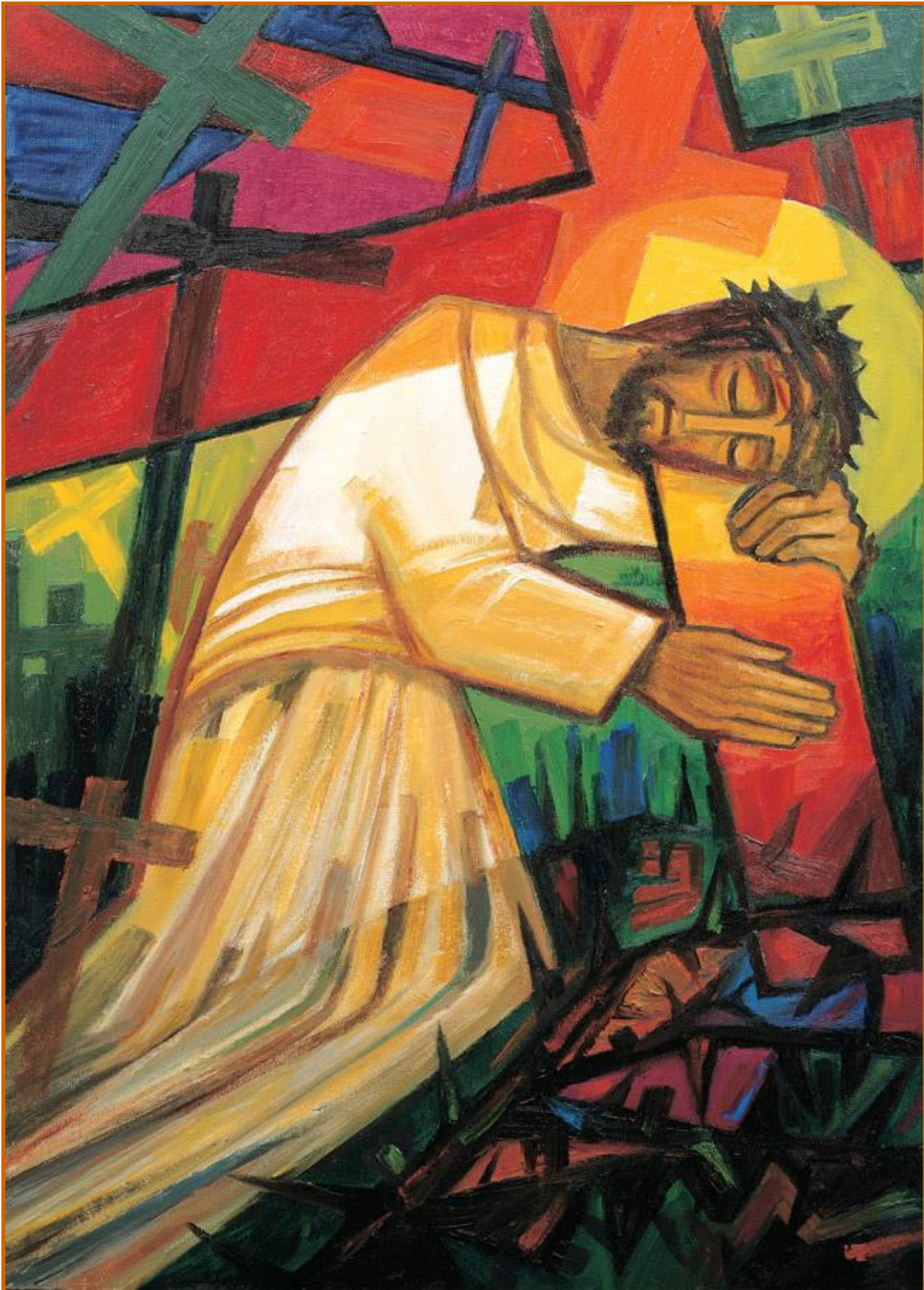
Passiontide 2020.

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

3 - Jesus falls for the first time.



*Ours were the suffering he bore,
ours the sorrows he carried.*

Isaiah 53:4; 1 Peter 2:22-24

He was not carrying that one and only Cross.

He was weighed down, crushed by the crosses of all the world. Whatever we suffer, Jesus is carrying the weight of it.

He suffers with us. There is no human suffering in which he is not present to redeem it and to turn it into a seed of resurrection.

It is hard to bear a weight for a long period on just one shoulder. Your body is unbalanced, with each step the downward pressure grows. Each rut and stone you hit reverberates through the wood causing hammering waves of more pain. No pausing place, no respite, no chance to swap shoulders to bring just a few minutes of ease.

And you start to feel yourself in exhaustive decline. Longing for each step to move you further forward than the last, hoping the finishing line is near. With grim determination you drag yourself to the next step. When will it end?

I have tried to avoid cross-referencing to current events. Yet, I am mindful as we watch and hear the daily parade of politicians and care professions trying to lead us through a pandemic, there are many who must feel they have a burdensome weight of responsibility. Each admission to hospital, each death, each economic challenge, each day of social isolation brings its toll on those on the front-line, those striving to keep things working, those taking decisions and those working with the dead and bereaved.

Can you think of someone you know who might just feel like Jesus is this picture? A nurse, a doctor, pharmacist, shop worker, care giver, at home and anxious, in hospital and anxious, politician and, yes, even in ministry.

What can you do before they, like Jesus, melt into the very earth they stand on, overlaid, ground-down? Thorns below, crosses above. Wounded and unable to bear any more?

Pray. Smile. Offer a kind word. Clap in unison. Be patient. Keep faith.

Can you still hold hope in resurrection?

For in Christ we stand.

In Christ all of our hope is rested.

For Christ bore all, that we might live life in all its fulness. Life with its joys and pains.

- 1 When my love for Christ grows weak,
when for deeper faith I seek,
then in thought I go to thee,
Garden of Gethsemane.
- 2 There I walk amid the shades,
while the lingering twilight fades,
see that suffering, friendless One,
weeping, praying there alone.
- 3 When my will to love grows weak,
when for stronger faith I seek,
hill of Calvary, I go
to your scenes of fear and woe ;
- 4 There behold his agony,
suffered on the bitter tree ;
see his anguish, see his faith,
love triumphant still in death.
- 5 Then to life I turn again,
learning all the worth of pain,
learning all the might that lies
in a full self-sacrifice.
- 6 And I praise with firmer faith
Christ who vanquished pain and death ;
and to Christ enthroned above
raise my song of selfless love.

John Reynell Wreford (1800–1881)

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A prayer:

Wherever we go, God goes with us.

Whatever we do, God is beside us.

Whatever happens to us, God will uphold us.

May we always be aware of God's presence. Amen

('Open with God', © Christine Odell 2004, Inspire, p156)

Rev. Andrew Farrington