

Reflection Saturday 5th Week Lent 2022

Thomas More wrote 'Utopia' about a world in which all goods are held in common and freely shared, labour is a means of social cohesion, while moderated pleasure in social life leads to greater happiness. The family is seen to be a microcosm of society. It reflects a world similar to the one Ezekiel presents to us today, a world God wants for us, filled with peace and harmony, where everyone matters, justice reigns and in which we all care for each other instinctively. A world in which God's presence is not seen as an intrusive presence but one that enhances, beatifies and sanctifies. An image presented to help us face the week ahead. Being rejected, Jesus leaves Jerusalem needing time to reflect. He could easily have wandered off into the desert and left everything but didn't. Let's pause and reflect:

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He is alone in prayer in the garden, knowing the cost.

His followers care, but flesh is frail and they fail
to fend off sleep as Jesus endures his mortal fear
with faithfulness. This night will bring betrayal,
abandonment, suffering, and ultimately, a cross.
But he will not turn from obeying the will of God.

He is alone in facing trial for blaspheming God.

The religious rulers are determined at any cost
to be rid of this nuisance Jesus. But though they cross
words, set their traps for him, they almost fail.
Judas' earlier duplicity is matched by betrayal
of truth; and the rest of Jesus' followers have fled in fear.

He is alone in front of Pilate, but showing no fear.

Is he King of the Jews? Is he somehow from God?
Pilate doesn't know, doesn't really care. Betrayal
of justice doesn't bother him much, the only cost
he worries about is the empire's peace. Fail
and he'd pay the price; so send this King to the cross,
it's an easy call. Kill the pest, quiet the Jews. The cross
is just another tool when you rule by fear,
after all, so why be worried about truth? *(This fails,
somehow, to ease his mind; but he holds the power of God,
of life and death, so death it will be, at Jesus' cost.)*
And Pilate's lethal injustice is the final betrayal.

Jesus is alone, crowned with the thorns of betrayals.

He is mocked and whipped and abused, and the cross
is placed on his shoulders, and the high cost
of love mounts the hill of the Skull. Fear
only forgetting love's suffering; forget not the grief of God,
as the sky grows dark as if the sun itself has failed.

Do the women wonder if faith has failed

as Jesus is laid in the tomb? Is hope's betrayal
on Joseph's mind, as he wraps this man from God
in burial cloth? The death of Christ on the cross
for many meant grief, despair and fear;
only later would they understand what was worth the cost:

that we are not alone in times of fear, nor when we fail
– bearing the costs of our small and large betrayals –
nor even in death: for Jesus, God's Son, died for us on the cross.