

coastal

SANCTUARY



A HOLY WEEK PILGRIMAGE

A set of reflections and images exploring Jesus' journey to the cross

Welcome to Coastal Sanctuary, this is a Holy Week resource based on the stations of the cross, put together by the folks at BeachcomberFX. You will see that for each day of Holy Week we have a written reflection for you to ponder on, as well as providing an opportunity for you to join with us and gather at places around North Tyneside to make altars in the world in everyday places.

We hope Coastal Sanctuary will provide an opportunity for you to discover something new about the incredible journey of Jesus as we walk with him through the events of Holy Week. We also hope, that it will give you an insight into some of the ways BeachcomberFX explores faith and spirituality.

Rob Wylie

God reveals God's self to us through what unfolds as our life, along with every visible thing around us. These ordinary revelations must be respected and deeply listened to—before we start reading Bibles, joining churches, and quoting dogmas. Life itself is the primary divine revelation.

Richard Rohr

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SIGNS OF GRACE

A beachcomberFX work of the
people

DAY 1



Jesus begins his journey to the cross
Seaton Sluice Point

As the time approached for him to be taken
up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for
Jerusalem
Luke 9:51

Signs of Grace
6 : 7 : 8

GLENN DYER

Focussed and determined, resolutely setting your foot on the path to danger. It's like the start of a grand adventure, with tales of peril and derring-do, witty one-liners and over-budget special effects.

In reality, very few people are fearless heroes, willing to dive headlong into danger with just a cheeky wink and a dazzling smile. And the people who are, are probably psychopathic (a study was done on this, look it up).

For the rest of us, facing danger means agonies of the spirit, soul and body. Gut-wrenching terror, tears and self-doubt. Every day, when you wake up, you may know the day is going to be a struggle. You dread the coming hours and just want to stay where it's safe and warm.

And you know what, that's ok, that's normal. No-one is smashing life 100%. Don't get sucked into images of perfect lives, perfect relationships, and fun-filled days without a care. We all struggle and face our own fears, but we can do it, we can make it through.

Our paths are not remote, we walk alongside each other every day; they cross, converge, separate and join again. We can help when we see someone struggling, embrace when our paths cross again. Or we can just sit and take a break, rest for a while until our strength is back.

Jesus didn't walk to Jerusalem alone.

DAY 2



Jesus is condemned to death
North Shields Registry Office

So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd,
released Barabbas for them; and after flogging
Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Mark 15:15

Signs of Grace

8 : 9 : 10

BEV HENDERSON

Pilate, who was prefect of the Roman province of Judaea at the time of Jesus' ministry, was criticised for offending the religious sensibilities of his subjects when he first took up his post and, according to the historian Josephus, he was deposed and sent back to Rome after harshly suppressing a Samaritan movement in A.D. 36-37.

In dealing with Jesus however, Pilate seemed to be caught between a rock and a hard place. It would appear that he knew Jesus had been arrested by the Jewish authorities because they felt threatened by him but, as Rome's representative, it was up to Pilate to pass sentence. We know the story so well; Barabbas, a murderer, or Jesus, who the Jewish leaders accused of sedition against Rome by calling himself a king. Pilate asked Jesus if he called himself King of the Jews, but Jesus only answered, "So you say," - or variations of this. It wasn't enough for Pilate to find fault with him.

So why then did Pilate give in to the Jewish leaders? He hadn't worried about upsetting them in the past, so why start now? Barabbas was a known murderer, yet Pilate was willing to release him just to appease the religious leaders of an occupied territory. Maybe he had simply had enough of them and, as it wasn't going to affect him personally, was it really worth giving himself a headache over it?

Maybe however, he was simply a tool in the Father's plan to sacrifice his son for the redemption of humankind.

DAY 3



Jesus carries his cross (aided by Cyrene)
North Shields Fish Quay walking to
Collingwood Monument

Carrying his own cross, he went out to the
place of the Skull (which in Aramaic called
Golgotha).
John 19:17

Signs of Grace
11 : 12 : 13

MICK WALKER

In this one sentence I see so much. I wonder if you do too?

I see a solitary man, doubled up, carrying a heavy cross that seems will be his undoing.... I see many others, 'carrying the weight of the world on their shoulders', struggling under that weight, wondering how long they have to carry it for.... I see myself, suffering with depression a long time ago.... struggling with its weight... seeking help, and feeling the help was not enough... I see a man carrying a cross on his own, unlike the story we read in the other gospels... I see many others, who feel they are on their own, no one to share their burdens, no one to truly understand...

I see a man that doesn't consider the cross as the moment of his humiliation, but as the moment of his glory. I see a man, that although is struggling, knows his identity.

Can I see others, finding strength in their identity as beloved children of the loving God?

Do you and I realise, that we are loved beyond words, that Jesus carried that cross on his own, so that we can give ours to him, so that we can know that as we struggle, we are not on our own? Do we open our eyes to see those that are struggling and be alongside them, even when we do not fully understand?

I see Jesus, and with Jesus I see God's love, God's strength, God's majesty in the midst of the pain and humiliation... I see Jesus, reigning from the cross, the same cross that caused him to double up in pain.

And I pray that many of us will realise that we too can reign from our cross, because of this one sentence, because of God's love.

DAY 4



Jesus meets...
Whitley Bay Metro station walking to
Monkseaton Metro station

A great number of the people followed him,
and among them were women who were
beating their breasts and wailing for him.

John 19:17

Signs of Grace
11 : 12 : 13

MARTIN HOOD

It is morning in Jerusalem on the day before the Sabbath. The business of the day is in full swing: the open markets are stocked, the heat of the day is rising, crowds are in the holy city for Passover festival.

Luke has just recounted the Passover meal gathering of Jesus and his disciples, the prayers at Gethsemane, then Jesus' betrayal by Judas to the religious authorities, and subsequent questioning by the Jewish assembly, then Pilate, then Herod, then back to Pilate, before whom the crowds shouted for Jesus to be crucified. Pilate reluctantly agreed to the crowds' demand; the soldiers led Jesus way (after his flogging (Mark 15:15) and called upon Simon of Cyrene to help carry the cross on the way to Golgotha. 'A great number of people followed him...'

Who were the 'following' crowds?

The distraught disciples of Jesus, like the wailing women? The rubber-neckers, in town for the holiday? The Jewish religious leaders ensuring the upstart troublemaker was out of the way? Folk swept up in the melee while getting the shopping?

Luke, two pages later in his Gospel account, and writing an 'orderly account' (Luke 1:3) some decades after the event, then recounts Jesus' resurrection appearances and joyful disciples. His next book, Acts, continues the story of these followers.

Imagine the scene that Jerusalem morning. Who do you empathise with: which one in the crowd is you?

And today, what sort of follower?

One who would rather be getting the shopping in, or just idly curious, or a more engaged (whether bewildered, occasionally distraught or joyful) disciple? And who is being followed?

DAY 5



The last supper and the
garden of Gethsemane
Northumberland Park Band Stand

Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.
Matthew 26:27-30

Signs of Grace
All

ROB WYLIE

When I first read this text I was struck by a word that we often use in church circles, that is forgiveness. It is an overused word and a word that we sometimes have trouble really getting to grips with.

Firstly how do we deal with ourselves. I have met many people over the years that have really struggle to forgive themselves, holding on to past actions or inactions.

Secondly, we also find it difficult to forgive others, we hold on to so much. Of course it's not easy, and I think it is a process for most of us. Sometimes we can find a sense of forgiveness as we journey. As we move forward, we are able to let go...

Or sometimes it festers within us.

One thing is for sure, unforgivingness is not good for any of us!

This passage reminds us of the generous nature of God, that God looks upon us and smiles...

God loves us, and is willing to forgive us.

Just hold that thought, sit with it.

God forgives us. There is something profound contained within forgiveness that allows space for us to live differently, it allows us a chance to create something new, to live openly and to live free. It might just allow us to smile more, and create a space for others to find God's forgiveness too.

DAY 6



Jesus is nailed to the cross
Sundial Hill, Cobalt Country Park

My God, my God, why have you abandoned
me? Why are you so far away when I groan
for help?

Psalm 22:1

Signs of Grace

1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5

EILIDH SKINNER

I think we have all had these doubts through our lives, similar to when Jesus was on the cross, the feeling of complete doubt of God's presence during some very painful and challenging times in our lives.

From childhood, I was taught that faith was a very turbulent experience, once described to me as a balloon that you have to keep blowing up or it will deflate. But after lots of times of joy, pain and everything in between I just can't relate to it in that way.

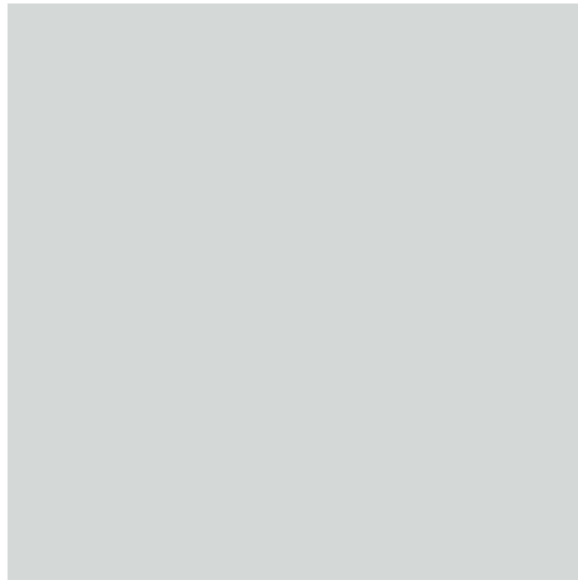
Life is all about these different experiences and surely God is in all of this?

Jesus shows us this on the cross when he experiences this excruciating pain and feeling of abandonment. Surely part of this is Jesus revealing his true humanity and showing us this will be part of our experience on Earth as well.

I don't think our journey of faith removes the tests and pain of life but gives us a fuller understanding of the richness of life. I am acutely aware that when you are in the pits of this despair, it may be hard to gleam comfort from this. This is when we, as your friends and family, must support and nurture you through this time.

I have found that as I have gained understanding of my spirituality, it has helped me shine a light on the harder things in my life and question why I believe what I believe. Understanding the hardship of life will surely help us to grow and evolve as individuals and help us move forward as we wrestle with doubt and fear. This is an ongoing process for sure, but I feel it will assist in finding who we truly are and ground us in the love and the beauty of life.

DAY 7



Betwixt/Between
Wherever you are...

He said: "In my distress I called to the Lord,
and he answered me. From deep in the realm
of the dead I called for help, and you listen to
my cry."

Jonah 2:2

Signs of Grace
All

RALPH BOSSINGHAM

From the belly of the fish Jonah realises how dire his situation truly is and in his distress he calls out. What a reassuringly human response it is to wait until there are no other options and then from “deep in the realm of the dead” to pray out for help.

Jesus too from the garden of Gethsemane called out for help knowing that he was only hours away from death. And so too did Job, having lost everything he loved he tore his clothes, shaved his hair and fell to the ground. Arguably it is easier to call out to the Lord in these moments when we are at rock bottom, but what should we say to God? Is it more than asking for help?

In Jonah’s prayer he ends with the words “But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, ‘Salvation comes from the Lord.’” (Jonah 2:9) God then releases him from the fish.

Job too praises God “blessed be the name of the Lord” and he finds God blesses him with more. Both Job and Jonah find salvation and restoration when they worship the Lord at the very moment where there appears to be no hope.

This challenges us to think about when, why and how we worship; do we worship even when our situation appears impossible?

Our salvation comes from the Lord when we call out to him, and he restores us in those moments because he is a God who never stops listening out, a God who answers, and a God who never stops loving us. So, in moments of desperation maybe we too should try to say ‘not my will but yours be done’ and be moved to worship.

DAY 8



Jesus rises from the dead
Cullercoats Bay

Therefore if anyone is in Christ he is a new
creation, the old has gone, the new is here!
2 Corinthians 5:17

Signs of Grace
1 : 2 : 3 : 4 : 5

NAOMI WYND

New. What is so special about things that are new? New home, new job, new book, new car... new baby...new life. New brings a promise. New brings hope. It is clean. It is pure. It tells of a future yet unwritten, undefined by things passed. New is unspoiled. New says "this time, it will be right". New says "this time, it will be different". We seem to be utterly dependent on the concept of "newness".

Our economy thrives on it. We live our lives from New Year to New Year. As I write this it is still early January and my social media is still filled with "New Year, New Me" statements. Statements that will be largely forgotten within a few weeks, if not sooner.

So why do we do it?

Why do we repeat this process every year, with seemingly little success? Because deep down it is what we need. Deep down we recognise that we are broken and need fixing. We are damaged and need restoring. We are spoiled and need cleaning. We long for the new. We long to be renewed. We long for the promise of hope that comes with a fresh start, with a clean slate.

This is what I believe this passage from Corinthians talks about. In Christ we are truly a "new creation" – that which was inadequate, is made perfect. The old ways no longer exist – in Jesus there is the promise of a new way, a new rhythm, a new life. In his death Jesus condemned the old to the past and in his resurrection he enabled the new to come forth.

SIGNS OF GRACE

A beachcomberFX work of the people

1. Grace happens
All the time
In the dramatic and in the ordinary
Every moment with the potential to transform the world
Every instance a sign of God at work
2. At times we are distracted by other signs that demand our attention
Political swings and economic shifts
Facebook likes and Instagram pics
Step counts and carb amounts
Productivity charts and multiplying tasks
3. Yet in the beginning
Before seconds, minutes, and hours
Before technology and biology
Before stock rise and fall and left and right swings
There was God and there was Grace
4. God created us and all things, but that was not the end
God is still handing out grace
Giving it to everyone and everything
Our job is to look for it in each and every moment
Our task is to celebrate it in each and every instance
5. So we look out for those holy moments
Search for altars in the world
Spaces and places where we can celebrate your presences
Evidence that you are still here with us
And your grace is still to be found

Pause

6. We remember
Todays moments
Where we have seen your grace at work
Todays instances
Of a world changed for good.

Pause

7. We remember
Lifes moments
When we sensed your purpose at work in us
Lifes instances
Of knowing we are loved without condition

Pause

8. We remember
Our moments
As we have journeyed together
Our instances
When we have been bound as one

Pause

9. We remember
The moments
When we turned our back
The instances
When our love has been absent

Pause

10. We remember Jesus
The moments of unequivocal welcome
His everyday forgiveness
The instances when love and justice prevailed
His life given over to fullness

Pause

11. Each one of us is caught up in this story of grace
Part of a journey from darkness into light
From slavery to freedom
So we share our story for it is a gift of God

Give space for people to share something - a moment of grace, an image, a song...!

12. Each one of us is created to be a love bringer
Giving of ourselves for the people we meet
Opening our arms in welcome to all
So we share our love for it is a gift of God

13. Each one of us is called to be a peacemaker
All of us from different places and shaped by different experiences
Yet gathered together in unity
So we share our love and our peace for it is a gift of God

Give space for people to share love and peace as they want to! A handshake, hug, with words or without

14. Each one of us is sustained by the food we eat.
It strengthens us; mind, body and spirit
It is a sign of God's grace
So we share this bread for it is a gift of God

Give space for people to share the bread

15. Each one of us is given life through what we drink
It is a sign of the fullness of life and it inspires joy
It is a sign of God's grace
So we raise our glass and share a toast for it is a gift of God

Give space for people to raise a glass and drink

We are a community of faith.

Strandlopers on a journey.

We have shared our stories, our peace, our eating and drinking Let us continue to live this way now and always.

By God's grace we go.

Amen

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