

Easter – Good Friday 2024

Isaiah 52:13- 53:12; Psalm 30, Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9, John 18:1-19:42

The human mind is phenomenally complex. If you have a memory of a terrible experience which you do not know how to deal with you can lock it away in your mind - like a box - and purposefully forget that it is there. This is called 'Repression'. The psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud is responsible for popularising the idea of 'Repression' and it has entered into the common understanding of some mental health problems. Another way of expressing this walking away from memories you don't know how to deal with might be 'Passive refusal'. If I do not know it is there I don't have to fix it. So, this painful, traumatic memory, goes away, by burrowing deep into the subconscious where it cannot be seen or heard from. The problem is that although you might forget it is there the rest of your brain does not. It no longer has a name, this memory that you dare not think about, but it touches everything about you: your emotions, your thought processes, your relationships, your dreams. It manifests itself in a life that is disjointed and feels like it is scarcely holding together. What's wrong? Don't poke the bear. It is asleep in his cave. It is a little bit like the evil character, Voldemort, in the Harry Potter books and movies in which characters wishfully hope that if you don't utter his name he won't wake up. However, he is twisting the world within and around you.

In society, in this country, throughout the West of Europe and North America, we repress the Crucifixion. It has become something too terrible to talk about, because it reminds us of the cost of

salvation, and we don't want to face that. As a culture we have seem to have simply lost the ability to talk about reality. We seen redemption in the face of Christ crucified, but that requires us to also face ourselves, and we don't want to do that. Truth be told, I am far more comfortable hearing that I am alright as I am, because then I do not to do anything about the problem. I have allowed myself to be lulled to sleep with dreams of comfort, my belly full, and to not upset anyone.

The natural, human desire to respond to the call to be better than we are – that which gives church and society a 'centre of gravity' and draws us together as a people has been cast off and been filled with many popular fictions of what it is to live. We have become scattered, splintered shards of reality cast of in an infinitude of erratic directions. Generations of people do know what is killing them or how they can be rescued. But the Truth is still there, rising up through the cracks, causing us disquiet, and nightmares and disfunction. It is the Cross.

It seems strange that the Cross is the cause of this disquiet, because 'repression' is normally the stuff of nightmares, and yet there it is. Christianity is so tightly woven into our societal structures, and value system that to try to live without it is like having lungs with no air to breath in. We try to deny it. but the Crucifixion cannot be undone. God has spoken into time from Eternity. We have been redeemed by it: this act of unguarded Love. Look on the Cross. Let it be emblazoned on your heart and rise to the top of your conscious being. Allow yourself to breath. Easter is coming. Let yourself live.