

Holy Week and Easter Day were marred by terrible and hideous acts of violence.

The murder of Lyra McKee on Holy Thursday shocked all those who have watched the steady unfolding of the peace process over the past 21 years. Lyra, we're told was a bright, rising star who believed passionately in inclusivity, justice and truth and who boldly campaigned for equal marriage in a part of the UK, the only part of the UK where it is not recognised.

It was fitting that Lyra's funeral took place in the Anglican (over there that means Protestant) Cathedral of St Ann's: it's location in the city and its long standing work for unity and reconciliation meant it could be home for Lyra's farewell and a safe place for President, Taoiseach, PM and politicians to gather.

As if that were not enough, we then woke to the news on Easter Day that Christians at Mass and holiday makers at breakfast, over 200 of them, had been murdered as bombs rocked the island of Sri Lanka...we have witnessed the outpouring of raw grief at countless funerals this Easter Week. And now, despite basic human rights, our brothers and sisters are prevented from celebrating Mass this morning and our closest cousins were prevented from attending Friday prayers.

It would not, therefore, be unreasonable for us – let alone those who are still traumatised by grief, to ask “What was the point of Easter which we celebrated with alleluias, cymbals and bells?” and to ask, “Where is the new creation which we celebrate not only for 50 days, but for all our days?”

We ask such questions in communion with Thomas the Apostle, Patron Saint of Sri Lanka; the courageous master

of the awkward question, speaking words others dare not say<sup>i</sup>; whose faith and trust was evidence based, placing his hands into the wounded side of Christ and gazing on the glorious scars, in beauty glorified.

For remember, the resurrected body of Christ was still, and is still and always will be, a wounded body.

So even after death and resurrection Christ is present – not floating around as a disembodied apparition<sup>ii</sup> - but present: in the pain, the bloodshed, gore and open wounds of this world.

Yet more than that, Thomas reminds us that, if we're honest, change, growth, new-birth and new life – even resurrection and revelation – are seldom 'one-off', instantaneous, events. Rather resurrection and revelation is a process and often a long term journey.

No wonder the earliest of Christians talked about their faith as “The Way”... they were on a path; they hadn’t got it all; they were not yet perfect; their calling and ours is a path and a journey and not an end or destination.

So, maybe, just as we know conversion is very rarely a one-off, once for all event, so perhaps revelation and resurrection itself are an unfolding of God’s wounded love.

For example: none of us who welcomed the Good Friday agreement which has saw it as a magic wand, an overnight sea-change; it was, still is, and more so this week a precious unfolding of God’s will and purpose.

For example: none of us who physically or emotionally joined in the interfaith vigils in solidarity with the people of New Zealand – a few short weeks ago – believed that they of themselves would usher in a brave new world; not an

end in themselves to extremism they were none-the-less a witness against extremism and violence.

Or again, for example: those of us, and I guess a good number of us here, who joined in the Jubilee 2000 Campaign to end the injustice of the debt that were crippling developing nations, might be shocked – as I was – that Christian Aid has a campaign to drop the IMF’s debt against Sierra Leone incurred during the outbreak of Ebola in 2014...so the Millennium Campaign continues.

Our task, as people of faith, as inheritors of Thomas’ questioning faith is to

- ✓ To recognise that the Kingdom is still a long way off – while admitting that we do still see glimpses of it;
- ✓ To remember the slow and fragile nature of resurrection;

- ✓ To see those examples, a peace *process*, vigils and demonstrations, the ongoing Jubilee Debt Campaign, as SIGNS that things are being made new;
  
- ✓ To look for the wounded God who is healing this wounded world and to pray this Eastertide, in the words of the Good Friday prayer: things which were cast down are being raised up; and things which had grown old are being made new; and that all things are returning to perfection, through him from whom they took their origin, even Jesus Christ our Lord.

---

<sup>i</sup> Malcolm Guite

<sup>ii</sup> Malcolm Guite

---

## **St. Thomas the Apostle**

“We do not know... how can we know the way?”  
Courageous master of the awkward question,  
You spoke the words the others dared not say  
And cut through their evasion and abstraction.  
Oh doubting Thomas, father of my faith,  
You put your finger on the nub of things  
We cannot love some disembodied wraith,  
But flesh and blood must be our king of kings.  
Your teaching is to touch, embrace, anoint,  
Feel after Him and find Him in the flesh.  
Because He loved your awkward counter-point  
The Word has heard and granted you your wish.  
Oh place my hands with yours, help me divine  
The wounded God whose wounds are healing mine.

© Malcolm Guite

<https://malcolmguite.wordpress.com/2012/07/02/a-sonnet-for-st-thomas-the-apostle/>