"Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

Passiontide begins with two powerful and suggestive readings, not to mention the gradual psalm set to one of Bach's passion tunes. We ignore them at our peril. The epistle reading from *Hebrews* lays out the profound theology of atonement and redemption. Christ is the Mediator of the New Covenant, the new understanding of the relationship between God and Man accomplished through Christ's sacrifice. The gospel reading from *Matthew* relates a critical set of exchanges, first, between Jesus and the mother of the sons of Zebedee, secondly, with the sons themselves, and, then, with the rest of the disciples. The dialogue is altogether about two things: sacrifice and service.

"We go up to Jerusalem," Jesus said, in the gospel read on the Sunday just before Lent, *Quinquagesima Sunday*. Not just *I* go up. Not just *you* go up, but *we go up*. In some sense that is the meaning of Christian pilgrimage. It is about a journey to God and with God. The meaning of that journey takes on an heightened sense of intensity with Passiontide. Suddenly more and more of what that journey entails begins to become more and more apparent. It challenges all our worldly aims and ambitions. It is not about success as the world counts success but neither is about being losers. No. There is altogether something here that is much deeper and grander. It speaks to our souls.

The Letter to the Hebrews is a theological treatise. It seeks to explicate the theology of God's engagement with our humanity in Jesus Christ. Atonement is one of its major themes. *Atonement* simply means being at one; in this case, *being at one* with God. But the whole reality of human experience is about our *estrangement* from God. The story of the Fall is played out in each of our lives individually and collectively. We are not at one with the world. We are not at one with one another. We are not at one with God.

This is the stark reality of the human condition. We are anxious and fearful about the world, particularly the natural world, the physical and material world over which we claim a kind of dominance and mastery, *on the one hand*, and a kind of despair about what that we have done as a consequence, *on the other hand*. We are not at one with one another as a world of endless conflicts and wars bears more than ample and sad testimony and in the brokenness of our families, our communities and our churches. All these estrangements arise in a fundamental sense from our estrangement from God. This is emphatically and inescapably the religious and theological perspective of the Christian Faith. It argues in the strongest way imaginable that the forms of our estrangement from the world and from one another arise from our separation from God.

Yet at the heart of Passiontide is the divine will to be reconciled with his creation. Our willful separation is the old story of the Fall, the story of disobedience and a betrayal of truth. The new story is what God does to reconcile us with himself. That is the story of Christ, a story which has its most concentrated form in the Passion of Christ. The

struggles of our humanity in all our disarray and confusion are drawn up into the heart of God. Indeed, Passiontide reveals the heart of God to us. It is the heart which is broken for us on the Cross. It is the heart of sacrifice and service.

We cannot begin to comprehend the wonder of the divine will to be at one with the creation which has constantly been in rebellion and destructive disarray. Yet this is what we are given to see in the events of the Passion. Take away the divine will to be reconciled with his world and people and the story is nothing but an unedifying, gruesome, and meaningless tale. But see in the story the divine will to reconcile us with himself through the Incarnation and sacrifice of the Son of God and then, then you begin to grasp the strange wonder, joy, and delight of the Christian faith.

Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant, *Hebrews* instructs us. We have, perhaps, become accustomed and blasé about mediators in the world of business and employment conflicts and in the conflicts between the warring nations of the world. What is presented here is something greater and more profound. The gap between God and Man caused by sin cannot be overcome by us. However much we wish it to be overcome we cannot make it so. There are our desires, to be sure, like the desire of the mother of the sons of Zebedee. We look for what is best for our children and for ourselves. We seek to get ahead in the world which, by definition, means trampling someone else down. There is no getting ahead in the world on the world's terms that is not at the expense of others. My gain is your loss. So much for human mediation, it seems.

It is not so with God. Passiontide ushers us into the greatest of all revolutions. God puts himself in our place to bring us to himself, to our place with him. It happens through the most challenging feature of the Christian Gospel. Christ is our Passover, our sacrifice, the Divine Mediator between God and Man, the one who bears the whole sorry packet of human stupidity and willful sinfulness that defines the sad reality of the human condition. He gives himself for us and invites us to be with him in his sacrifice for us. He calls us to love as he has loved. It is only his love in us that can make it possible for us to love. He makes something out of the futile nothingness of our empty lives. Redemption is the new creation.

That is what Passiontide presents to us: the divine will to be reconciled with us and to gather us to himself. We are in the story. We must want to be at one with God, with his world and one another, but our wants and desires cannot accomplish what we want. What we want is simply what we *know* we do not have. That is what makes Passiontide so wondrous and poignant. God gives us what we want but cannot attain ourselves.

This is where the dialogue of the Passion Sunday Gospel comes into play. The sons of Zebedee answer Jesus' question about his cup and his baptism. *"We are able,"* they say. Jesus acknowledges this. *"Ye shall indeed drink of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with."* We are allowed to participate in Christ's Passion. It is his sacrifice for us and yet he allows us to be with him to drink of the cup of his Passover

sacrifice and to be baptized into his death and resurrection for us. Such is the radical meaning of our Holy Week liturgies. It is not entertainment. It is exactly what this gospel story suggests. It is God's act *with* us, Christ's sacrifice – unique, pure and perfect – and yet for us so as to be in us. And it is about service, itself the living form of sacrifice, day in and day out. *"For the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."*

This is our vocation. To let the sacrifice of Christ define us and to lead us into service for one another and for our world. But only out of our service to Christ. His sacrifice accomplishes our atonement but we have to live it in our lives of sacrificial service, in the giving of ourselves as Christ has given himself.

Passion Sunday coincides this year with St. Patrick's day and so it may be appropriate to say something about Patrick, the patron saint of the Irish. What we commemorate are not shamrocks, shillelaghs and snakes, the stuff of legend but something rather more profound, namely, the transformation of a culture. Patrick is the Apostle of Ireland, the one who brought Christianity to its shores, bearing the light of Christ to Ireland in a time of darkness, lighting the paschal fire on the Hill of Tara and banishing the pagan darkness. Thomas Cahill juxtaposes the image of a *silver cauldron* and a *silver chalice* to capture the transformation of a culture in its conversion to Christianity; the one, beautifully carved and deliberately broken, symbolic of the culture of pagan human sacrifice; the other beautifully engraved and whole, capturing the names of the apostolic fellowship; the one, a century or two before Christ is known as the *Gundestrop Cauldron* and depicts animal and human sacrifice; the other, late seventh or early eighth century AD is known as the *Ardagh Chalice*. There is, I suppose, all the difference between a cauldron and a chalice; in this case, the juxtaposition captures the transformation of a culture.

The great poem and hymn *St. Patrick's Breastplate* or *Lorica* is associated with St. Patrick and largely attributed to him. It lives and breathes the patient, pastoral, impassioned and devout spirit of St. Patrick; the very qualities needed for dealing with the Irish. As that great hymn emphasizes, the Creator of every created thing is the Blessed Trinity. *"I bind unto myself today the strong name of the Trinity."* By cup and by baptism we are granted to participate in the life of God, the life of the Trinity.

Christ asks the question of us, *"Are ye able?"* Will we like the sons of Zebedee say *"we are able?"* If so, then that leads inextricably to service, to the sacrifice of ourselves for the good of Christ's church and people, for the good of his world. Only so shall we discover our atonement with God, with his world and with one another.

"Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

Fr. David Curry
Passion Sunday, March 17th, 2013

"I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood."

Holy Week is the spectacle of all our betrayals. The words of Judas Iscariot are all the more poignant for this reason. His words are also our words. They belong entirely to the pageant of Holy Week. We go into the parade of Christ's celebration of the Passover only to discover what we might call the great make-over, the great and redemptive transformation of our humanity. Central to that transformation, however, is a certain discovery about ourselves and our humanity. We discover the deep and dark betrayals of our hearts. But then what?

Make no mistake. There can be no Easter, no joy, no happiness apart from the realization of our own failings and stupidities, our own self-willed preoccupations which by definition set us at odds with every one around us. To know this and to feel its truth is to be catapulted into Truth itself. The paradox of Holy Week is signaled in the liturgy of this day. We who cry, *"Hosanna to the Son of David"* are the same as those who cry, *"Crucify, crucify!"* These are our cries, our voices, our contradictions, our betrayals.

We are Judas. Holy Week confronts us with the betrayals of our hearts. We do not wish to see this or to think it. Such is the power of our illusions. Holy Week would show us to ourselves as we are truly are. In the great Gospel for this day, we hear of Judas' words of confession. *"I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood."* And yet, Judas' confession does not lead to repentance and renewal, to new life and joy. His words are to the Chief Priests and elders, not to God. *"And they said, What is that to us? See thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hung himself."* Confession without contrition; remorse without repentance leaves us in the darkness of our selves; in short, there is only death and despair.

Such is the power of remorse; it leaves us dead in ourselves. Even greater though is the power of forgiveness. God wills to be reconciled with his sinful creation. That means being recalled to the objective realities of the Christian faith. Judas' confession is an object lesson for us about an aspect of confession which we easily ignore and overlook. It isn't just about feeling bad – such is remorse. It is also about true contrition, a true sadness in our souls about the truth we have betrayed. Yet true confession is to God. It acknowledges the divine truth and thus is open to that truth. True contrition and confession seeks the divine will. Remorse and regret leaves us trapped in the prison of our prideful selves. Despair is to be without hope. It is to be without God precisely because of the way we are buried in ourselves. Such despair is death, like the death of Judas.

In Giotto's telling depiction in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua of Judas betraying Christ with a kiss, Christ looks directly at Judas. What is missing in Judas' confession is that he is not looking at Christ but is more concerned with himself. That is the way of despair

and death. Holy Week would reveal us to ourselves through revealing to us the nature of divine love.

Palm Sunday ushers us into the intensity of Christ's Passion. For Anglicans, especially, there is a most remarkable focus on the Passion in all of its fullness. We read through all four accounts of the Passion from each of the Evangelists. We do so as to learn about sin and love. The whole purpose of this week is captured in a poem by George Herbert entitled appropriately enough for Holy Week, *The Agonie*. There are *"two vast, spacious things,"* he says, which are needed to be measured or known though *"few there are that sound them."* The two vast, spacious things are sin and love.

To know sin is to see our sins as borne in the sufferings of Christ. This is the counter to being absorbed in our sorrows, our remorse and regret. It means looking at the agony of Christ, the agony of our sins as borne by the innocent blood of Christ. The whole of Holy Week focuses our attention on Christ and on the various forms of human relationship to him. Ultimately, that brings us to the Cross. But as Herbert's poem suggests we come to the Cross by way of two wonderful illustrations of the intensity and the enormity of sin and love in the pageant of the Passover: the Last Supper and the Agony in Gethsemane.

> Who would know Sinne, let him repair
> Unto Mount Olivet; there shall he see
> A man so wrung with pains, that all his hair,
> His skinne, his garments bloudie be.
> Sinne is that presse and vice, which forceth pain
> To hunt his cruell food through ev'ry vein.

He has in mind the account of the Agony in Gethsemane in the Gospel according to St. Luke. Luke provides us with a certain kind of psychological insight into the human soul of Christ wrestling with the Father in prayer about Calvary. *"Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done."* As Luke indicates, *"being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."* It is a powerful visual and visceral image; his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground, anticipating his blood outpoured on the Cross itself. Herbert has picked up on the imagery as applied to the inner struggle of the soul of Christ, the struggle between good and evil. *"Sinne is that presse and vice"* – images of torture applied here to the tortured soul of Christ. There is a very real intensity to the Passion of Christ. We learn something of the destructive nature of sin in having it made objective before us in Christ.

But we learn sin only so as to learn something more and greater than sin. We learn sin so as to learn love, the love that turns agony into ecstasy.

Who knows not Love, let him assay
And taste that juice, which on the crosse a pike
Did set again abroach; then let him say
If ever he did taste the like.
Love is that liquor sweet and most divine,
Which my God feels as bloud; but I, as wine.

The references are at once to the scene in the Upper Room on the night in which he was betrayed when Jesus identifies himself with the bread and wine of the Passover celebration and to the actual Crucifixion in the moment when the dead body of Christ is pierced by the pike or spear of one of the soldiers, *"and forthwith came there out blood and water,"* as John recounts in his Gospel. *"Out of the wounded side of the crucified Christ flow the sacraments of baptism and holy communion,"* as the ancient commentators put it. Here Herbert connects the sacrament of Holy Communion to the Cross of Christ and to the paradox that out of death comes life, the life of Christ which is to live in us. *"Love is that liquor sweet and most divine,/which my God feels as bloud; but I, as wine."*

Caught in the betrayals of our hearts, Holy Week would have us know and confess our sins, to be sure, but even more to know and confess the love which reveals our sins to us. That love is greater than our hearts of betrayal. We go into the pageant of the Passion to learn the love that triumphs over our sins, the love that redeems and restores, the love that transforms our sorrows into joy. For that will be a Holy Week, indeed. To confess not just our sins but Christ crucified and risen from the dead.

"I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood."

Fr. Curry
Palm Sunday, 2013

"Judas, betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss?"

Holy Week is the spectacle of all our betrayals. In a way, all betrayal is an aspect of the archetype of all betrayal, the betrayal of Judas. It is the intimacy of a kiss that heightens the sense of the enormity of sin and its betrayal of the goodness of God.

We read the Passion of St. Mark on Monday and Tuesday of Holy Week. The Passion of St. Matthew has already been read on Palm Sunday. The beginning of the Passion of St. Mark is intriguing and to my mind, quite beautiful and compelling. The passage begins with the pouring out of the ointment of spikenard from the alabaster box upon the head of Jesus. It ends with the outpouring of the tears of Peter. In between are the various scenes of betrayal: Judas Isacariot going to the chief priests to betray him; Jesus' at table with the twelve predicting that *"one of you which eateth with me shall betray me"*; the falling asleep of the James and John and Simon Peter while Christ wrestles with the Father's will in Gethsemane; the actual betrayal and capture of Christ; the false witnesses against Christ before the high priest and the council of the elders; and, of course, Peter's threefold betrayal of Christ. Betrayals are us.

The frame of the story here is most instructive. What the unnamed woman has done is portrayed, too, as a kind of betrayal. Pouring out the anointment is seen as a waste *"for it might have been sold for more than three hundred pieces of silver, and have been given to the poor."* Her anointing of Christ is seen as a betrayal of what is owed to the poor. We have obligations and duties, responsibilities and commitments to one another, to be sure, and especially towards the poor, but the point of the Gospel is not the eradication of poverty – an utopian dream – but to do always what you can, *"for ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good."* There is more than money, dare I say, that the poor and, indeed, all of us need. The church must be more than another agency for worldly improvement.

That is what makes Jesus' response here so intriguing. *"But me ye have not always. She hath done what she could; she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying."* There will be a burying because there is death; a death we might say because, as Hosea suggests in this morning's lesson about Israel, *"when they had fed to the full, they were filled, and their heart was lifted up; [and] therefore they forgot me"*! The Lord had delivered them from the land of Egypt and had known them in the wilderness, but in the land and time of plenty they had forgotten God. And there is a further point. It is our forgetfulness of God that results in both our material and spiritual neglect of one another and of the poor in our midst. In forgetting God we forget our humanity.

And so there is an anointing of his body aforehand to the burying. Already something of the divine will is quietly in action, an action that underlies the Passion. What is poured out here is connected to what will be poured out on the cross. He will pour out his life for us on the Cross; here his body is anointed aforetime in anticipation of his sacrifice. What is poured out here points us to what the redemptive sacrifice of Christ actually means. God makes something out of the betrayals of our hearts. God makes

something good out of the darkness of human evil. We are meant to see this and be moved to repentance so that our tears are joined to the anointing sacrifice. We are convicted of the Judas within each of our hearts but only through the profounder realization that God provides a great good for us even in and through our evil. But only if we, like Peter, *"call to mind the word that Jesus [says] unto [us]."* For, then, as Hosea bids us this evening, we will have *"take[n] with [us] words and return[ed] to the Lord."*

"Judas, betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss?"

Fr. David Curry
Monday in Holy Week, 2013

"Judas, betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss?"

Jesus' question to Judas underscores the various forms of betrayal that are on display in Holy Week. In *The Continuation of the Passion according to St. Mark*, it is the betrayal of justice and human dignity that is most apparent.

The chief priests, in consultation *"with the elders and scribes and the whole council"*, have Jesus bound and delivered to Pilate – the Roman authority. In a way, it is a betrayal of Jewish law and Jewish identity, a betrayal of, what we might call, religious, or ecclesiastical, justice. For it is about getting the Roman authorities to do what the religious authorities were not prepared to do themselves. In short, it is underhanded and gives rise to an even more explicit form of the betrayal of, what we might call, civil justice.

Jesus is hauled before Pontius Pilate and is accused by the chief priests of many things to which charges he answers nothing. Then there follows a complete miscarriage of justice in the releasing of the murderer, Barabbas, while condemning Jesus to be crucified. Pilate has the ultimate earthly authority here and yet he defers to the crowd about releasing the one and condemning the other, the innocent other. He knows, Mark suggests, "*that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.*" And yet he goes along with this charade of justice and gives in to the popular will of the people, the will of the mob incited by the envy of the chief priests. As Mark puts it ever so succinctly and yet so tellingly, "*Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.*" He is the classic example of a leader who follows the people. Justice is betrayed and perverted. He is *"willing to content the people"* but at the expense of law and justice and conscience. It is a betrayal of justice and truth.

Envy is, perhaps, the most nasty of the seven deadly sins, as they will later be known. It acknowledges the good of another but from the side of the negative. It resents the good which is perceived in another and which is lacking in you. It is not only about the inability to rejoice in another's good or talent or gift but even more to resent it so much as to seek the annihilation of the other altogether. Envy is hideous and nasty. It is the underlying force that drives the two forms of betrayal on display in *The Continuation of the Passion according to St. Mark*. After the spectacle of the betrayals of justice by the religious and civil authorities, there comes the further spectacle of the betrayal of all and any form of human dignity. Jesus is not merely scourged; he is mocked and derided, hit upon and spit upon. Cruel tongues and cruel hands reveal the cruelty of our hearts. It leads to the cross.

Simon, a Cyrenian, is compelled, forced, to bear Christ's cross, the cross upon which Christ will be crucified. There is not even the sense of willingly helping out one who is downtrodden and beaten, literally, the one who is the walking dead. At Golgotha, Christ, finally, is crucified. We might think that might be the end of it, but no. He is mocked and scorned, reviled and shouted at while hanging on the cross both by those

that passed by and, particularly, by the chief priests and scribes. They remember his words, it seems, but only to cast them back into his face. "*Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down from the cross. He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe.*" Even "*they that were crucified with him reviled him.*" The betrayal of human dignity is complete. There is no regard for the dignity of his humanity; there is only mockery and scorn by all, it seems. It is not a pretty picture of what we do to one another. It is what we do to Christ.

The cry of dereliction, itself a quote from the Psalms, is a prayer of the crucified, if not to the Father, at least to God. It expresses the agony of the indignity of the crucifixion, the sense of utter abandonment and helplessness. And yet that cry is misunderstood. Some who hear him mistake, "*Eloi, Eloi,*" for Elijah. They anticipate some prophetic intervention, Elijah "*com[ing] to take him down.*" The Crucified has even become a spectacle for our entertainment.

"*And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the spirit.*" He dies and yet his death already signals something new and wonderful; something good that comes out of this sorry spectacle of our betrayals of justice and human dignity. In a way, Mark's account of the Passion already anticipates the Resurrection. First, there is the sense of something momentous and transformative; "*the veil of the temple was rent in twain.*" Something is fundamentally changed with respect to the forms of the relationship between God and man in the worship of Israel, a transition from the old covenant to the new is underway. Secondly, there is something new and wonderful for everyone, something universal, we might say. It is signaled in the words of the Roman centurion who "*saw that he so cried out.*" His words already anticipate the Resurrection. He says, simply and yet profoundly, "*truly this man was the Son of God.*" Out of death and destruction comes new life and joy. A greater justice and a deeper dignity arise out of our willful betrayals of both justice and human dignity.

The words of the Centurion speak volumes about God's redemption of our humanity. Something good and true comes out of the evil and lies of our betrayals of justice and human dignity. It is God's way at work through us, even through our evil. *The Continuation of the Passion according to St. Mark* reveals to us our betrayals of justice and human dignity but only so as to awaken us to something greater, our awareness of God in Christ. In the word of the Centurion rests the possibilities of a renewal of justice and a re-appreciation of human dignity. But only through, it seems, the spectacles of our betrayals, the forms of the Judas within us.

"Judas, betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss?"

Fr. David Curry
Tuesday in Holy Week, 2013

"Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"

Tenebrae means shadows or darkness. Part of the intensity of Holy Week is captured in an ancient tradition of the solemn recitation of the psalms and lessons of the Mattin services of the *Triduum Sacrum*, the three great holy days of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday, sung on the evenings before each of those days. Less common, perhaps, in our time, *Tenebrae* now happens, if at all, on the Wednesday evening. The readings are those of the Mattins of Maundy Thursday while the psalms and canticles anticipate the whole drama of human redemption. Christ's Passion and Resurrection are the central events of salvation; they illumine each other. *Tenebrae* helps us to appreciate something of the weight and the intensity of Holy Week and Easter.

The darkness is the deep darkness of spiritual betrayal, captured most profoundly in the figure of Judas. Luke's account of the Passion is read on the Wednesday in Holy Week and on Maundy Thursday. It is Luke who gives us these poignant and yet heart-rending words of Jesus to Judas, the question that in its scope and meaning catches us all. *"Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"*

The kiss is followed by Christ's capture; it is a scene of violence. They have come out against him with swords and staves. In the melee, one of the servants of the high priest has his ear cut off but Jesus intervenes to prevent more violence and *"touch[es] his ear and healed him."* Such things deliberately signal the contrast between human violence and destruction and divine grace and healing. In a way, Luke's account accentuates this contrast. Judas' betrayal, too, is seen to include all of us. We are all implicated, in one way or another, in the betrayals of Christ. Jesus' words to Judas and his captors in the maelstrom of the confusion of his captivity are his words to us. They convict us of our neglect, read 'betrayal' of his teaching, our betrayal of the Word made flesh, we might say, whose words are meant to take flesh in us. We betray the words of his teaching and we betray the Word who is Christ.

"When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness." The power of darkness. Jesus goes into the darkness of human sin and death; he alone can turn darkness into light. Even the darkness is light to God, we might say, an image of how God is beyond the contradictions and oppositions of the finite world, let alone the world of sin and evil. Yet it is through the symbolic force of darkness that we come to know the light of God's truth and mercy. *Tenebrae* takes us on a night journey through the darkness of the Passion and into the early morning light of the Resurrection.

Our service of *Tenebrae* telescopes the events of the *Triduum Sacrum*, intensifying the idea and experience of our participation in the Passion. The Psalms and Canticles, along with the Scripture lessons, concentrate the whole of the Lenten journey into one interwoven liturgy of the Word. We come out into the light but only by going through

the darkness. In this way, *Tenebrae* is not only anticipatory but illustrative of the meaning of our pilgrimage at the point when it is most intense – on the eve of the *Triduum Sacrum*. The literal and metaphorical darkness is the darkness that belongs to our wills in disarray, our hearts in betrayal, to the Judas within us for whenever we turn away from the truth, we are in darkness.

Tenebrae, like the *Triduum Sacrum* itself, would have us feel the intensity of the darkness of sin and evil. It is not a matter of easy indifference, a kind of naïve confidence about how everything is good. In a way, Holy Week is meant to help us sense how we are out of place, how things are not alright with us at all, and to make us think about how things are not always getting better either. In short, we are being told to contemplate the worst.

The English novelist and poet, Thomas Hardy, reflecting in part upon the changes to the rural landscape of England through the industrial revolution of the 19th century and the bleakness of the human condition in general, something which the vast destructiveness of the First World War would bear more than ample testimony, wrote three poems entitled *In Tenebris I, II,* and *III*. The poem, *In Tenebris II*, especially challenges any sort of easy complacency about our capacities for evil. If there is a way towards things being *"Better,"* he argues, *"it exacts a full look at the Worst."* It requires going into the darkness. It means, too, that if there is any good or delight to be found, it is, he suggests, *"a delicate growth cramped by crookedness, custom and fear."* Each poem begins with a quote (in Latin) from a psalm; the one for *In Tenebris II*, is from Psalm 142.4. *"I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me; … no man cared for my soul."* It is an image of the darkness of desolation and abandonment, the very things that belong to the Passion in the journey from Gethsemane to the tomb.

The great mercy of Holy Week, here concentrated for us in the service of *Tenebrae*, is that the darkness of our betrayals of Christ are made a critical part of our journey to God.

"Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"

Fr. David Curry
Tenebrae, 2013

"Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"

It has been our mantra, the interpretative text for our Holy Week meditations. It speaks profoundly to this day, the beginning of the *Triduum Sacrum*, the three great Holy Days of Christ's Passion. In our Anglican tradition, we immerse ourselves in the reading of all of the accounts of the Passion. Luke's Passion is read on the Wednesday and the Thursday of Holy Week. It is from Luke that we get this defining word of betrayal.

Maundy Thursday is a day of complexity and confusion. Maundy is the Englishing of the Latin *mandatum*, meaning commandment. The *novum mandatum*, the new commandment, is Jesus' word to us at the Last Supper, on the night in which he was betrayed. What is the new commandment? That we should love one another as he has loved us. The Passion of Christ signals to us exactly what that means. It means sacrifice and service.

Those two concepts mark the solemn ceremonies of this day. Christ institutes the Holy Communion, identifying himself with the bread and the wine of the Passover celebration and thereby inaugurating the new covenant that will be realized through his death and resurrection. He inaugurates this new reality in the face of our betrayals and he also insists on washing the feet of the disciples. It signals the servant ministry of the Gospel. *"I am among you as one that serves."*

Sacrifice and service. And yet, betrayals.

The betrayals of Maundy Thursday are the great betrayals, the betrayal of fellowship and the betrayal of friendship. *"Behold,"* he says, *"the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table."* He says this immediately after instituting the new covenant in his body and blood; it is the further expression of the new covenant to love as he has loved us, which is about the giving of ourselves even as he has given himself to us. It is done in the face of our betrayals. Take and eat, Drink this. These, too, are the dominical commandments, the commandments which give further meaning to the commandment to love, precisely because they are about the sacramental form of divine love which is to live in us. It is altogether about our being with him and he with us, about him being in us and we in him, to make the point even more emphatically.

This is what gives heightened poignancy to Judas' betrayal and to that betrayal in all of us. The Psalmist puts it this way. The sin and evil which we confront does not come from our enemies or from strangers; they come from within the fellowship of friends. In words that can be applied to the events of this night, he says, *"For it is not an open enemy that hath done me this dishonor; / for then I could have borne it; /Neither was it mine adversary, that did magnify himself against me;/for then I would have hid myself from him./But it was even thou, my companion,/my guide, and mine own familiar friend"* (Ps. 55). In words which must

surely move us to tears, he goes on to say, *"we took sweet counsel together,/ and walked in the house of God as friends."*

The very intimacy and special wonder of friendship and fellowship is betrayed. It is this which breaks our hearts, or should. We are convicted of our betrayal of those who have trusted us. In a way, it is the deepest betrayal and anticipates the most exquisite yet most heart-rending form of that betrayal in the actual kiss of Judas in the garden of Gethsemane.

We are with Jesus tonight in all of the events of the Passion, at least that is the spiritual intent and meaning of Holy Week and, especially, of the *Triduum Sacrum*. And so we are with him in the strange wonder of the Passover celebration when he gives himself to us, body and blood, in the bread and wine, establishing the sacramental union of himself with us for all time. Not only does his action anticipate and transcend his impending crucifixion and death, he also provides for us, his life continuing in us through his passion, death, and resurrection. What he does here in instituting the Holy Communion belongs to the meaning of the *novum mandatum*, the new commandment which inaugurates the new covenant. And it is done in the face of our unfaithfulness, in the face of our betrayals of his love.

At every service of the Holy Communion, we are recalled to the actions of this night in the Upper Room, how *"in the same night that he was betrayed, [he] took Bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it; and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, eat; this is my Body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."* Take, eat; do this. These are his commandments in virtue of which his new commandment to love can begin to be realized in us, for it is entirely about his sacrifice in us. His sacrifice is about nothing less than his living for the Father in the bond of the Spirit and that sacrifice is given to live in us. It is ultimately *"our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,"* our praise and thanksgiving for the one who gives himself so completely and entirely to us. And *"likewise after supper he took the Cup and when, he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all, of this; for this is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins: Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me."* Drink ye all, of this, Do this … in remembrance of me.

Love has its way even in the face of our betrayals. That is what we contemplate most forcibly this night in the narrative of love and the betrayals of love. Perhaps nowhere is this dramatic narrative better captured than in Tilman Riemenschneider's Altarpiece of the Holy Blood in St. Jacobskirche, Rothenburg-on-the-Tauber, executed sometime in the early years of the sixteenth century. It is a visual narrative of the Passion with Christ's entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and his Agony in the Garden depicted on the two wings or *flügel* which frame the central theme of the Last Supper. What makes this work so striking is the way the carved work comes alive through the passage of light in the course of the day. In the morning light, faces of the figures in the front row

of the scene of the Last Supper are illuminated except for Judas. As the sun moves on through the course of the day, Judas becomes more and more the solitary centre of the event. In the late afternoon light, the figures in the back row are seen in silhouette while Judas is illuminated. The interplay between the face and hands of Christ and the face and figure of Judas offer a moving tableau of the narrative of love and betrayal.

The betrayal of fellowship and friendship is fully on display in the events of Maundy Thursday. We betray our own familiar friend who in the face of our betrayals gives himself for us and provides for his love to live in us. He makes something out of our betrayals but only if we find ourselves in this story and turn to him for forgiveness.

"Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"

Fr. David Curry
Maundy Thursday, 2013

"Christ our Lord became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"

"While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Such is the mystery of this day, the double mystery of our disobedience and Christ's obedience, his obedience unto death, a death that is somehow a blessing for us. How shall we think about *Good Friday?* The Scriptures unveil the great spectacles of obedience and disobedience that help us to ponder the deep mystery of human redemption in the passion and death of Christ. We ponder the mystery of Christ crucified.

The words of the Crucified challenge and confront us in our complacency and our cynicism and in our folly and our despair. These words which illumine so much of our understanding of the Scriptures and human life are also illumined by the whole pageant of God's Word written.

The stories of Isaac and Absalom are the stories of obedience and disobedience that provide an interpretative framework for our reflection together on the mystery of human redemption.

The story of the Abraham's intended sacrifice of Isaac belongs historically and traditionally to the sorrowful and serious theological considerations of Good Friday. A most disturbing story, think how troubled Søren Kierkegaard was by this story, for example, it nonetheless helps us to think about Christ's crucifixion. In *Genesis*, God puts Abraham to the test, to an almost unbelievable and utterly disturbing test, bidding him sacrifice his only son, the son whom he loves, the son of God's promise to him and Sarah, the son through whom *"all your descendants shall be named"* and *"through whom all nations of the earth shall be blessed."*

We are apt to focus more on Abraham's dilemma than to consider Isaac's disposition. Abraham, it seems, must find his love for Isaac in his faithful obedience to God. Faith untried is hardly a living thing. There is no life without sacrifice. But what is that sacrifice? The sacrifice is love found in the good-will of another. There is as well, Isaac's obedience to his father. But how hard it seems!

"And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son." Isaac goes trustingly and willingly with his father, but he goes unknowingly. *"My father ... behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"* Abraham's desperate and yet hopeful answer echoes hauntingly down through the corridors of the centuries, reverberating in all our hearts: *"God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son."* Faith is formed in the crucible of sacrifice. *"God will provide."* Even more, *"God will provide himself."* Somehow these profoundly disturbing words take on a whole new meaning in the spectacle of Christ crucified. As we hear in the last word from the Cross, *"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."*

Apart from Abraham's dilemma, there is the amazing spectacle of the obedience of Isaac. He goes willingly but unwittingly even as he carries the wood for his sacrifice. Not so with Christ. He goes willingly and full knowingly even as he carries the Cross of his sacrifice. His love for the Father embraces the death of the Cross. The Words of the Crucified reveal this at the same time as they reveal the intensity of the reality of his suffering even unto death.

Isaac is the obedient son who goes willingly but unknowingly. Christ is the obedient Son who goes willingly and full knowingly. Therein lies the difference. But what about the sons of disobedience, the disobedience that Jesus bears in his obedience? The story of Absalom, David's son, illumines something of the nature of our disobedience.

As told in *II Samuel*, Absalom conspired against his father, King David. His campaign of disobedience sought to take his father's throne and his father's life. Yet the father, David, did not wish in return the death of his son, though disobedient. *"Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom"*, he commands. And yet, disobedience must display its true character. It is death. The disobedient die by disobedience.

> *Absalom was riding upon his mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great oak, and his head caught fast in the oak, and he was left hanging between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him went on (II Samuel 18.9).*

Disobedience leaves you hanging on a tree *"between heaven and earth."* And on that tree, the heart of Absalom is pierced by the hand of Joab, one of David's generals in the field who acts in formal disobedience to David's command. He is pierced and dies.

What exactly do we see in the disobedience of Absalom? We see the revolt of sin against the truth and goodness of God. *"Touch not mine anointed"*, the psalmist warns, yet who have our sins touched but Christ whom we have pierced? All sin is disobedience. All sin counters God's will. *"Against thee only have I sinned."* All sin from the greatest to the least seeks this one and only simple thing, the overthrow of God. Such is the hidden intention in every act of sin.

Absalom sought the death of his father. The full horror and meaning of our sins is that we would kill God. We seek God's death. We would bury him in the dark wood of our confusions. Such is the utter folly and madness of our disobedience. Sin is always about our way over and against God's way. That is simply no way. It leaves us hanging between heaven and earth – in a kind of no-man's land and without God. Nowhere and no place to go; *"the mule that was under him went on."* Yet it belongs to the greater mercy of God in the witness of the Scriptures to the Crucified that we are not simply to be left hanging like Absalom. *"God will provide himself."* It is the way of forgiveness, the way of

the son's prayer to the father *for* the forgiveness of the sons of disobedience. We hear it in the first word of the Cross, *"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."*

The wood carried by Isaac and the tree in which Absalom was caught bring us to the Cross upon which Christ hangs and dies and is pierced. His perfect obedience bears the full brunt of all our disobedience.

No doubt, we all know something about the force and power of human wickedness and evil. But how can it be that my sins and yours can hurt God? They can't. We can only hurt ourselves. We can no more touch God than we can tweak his nose. And yet, what if God so wills to be touched? What if he provides the way by which our intention to destroy can be seen and known for what it is? *"God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son."* God become man that he might suffer in the flesh of our humanity, bearing in his own body all the marks of our disobedience, becoming *"sin for us."*

Christ's obedience bears the full meaning and intention of our disobedience. The wonderful grace of this day is the terrible death of Christ. What do we see? We see our disobedience – both the intention and the consequence – and we see Christ's obedience. What does it mean? It means that *"God shows his love for us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* Such is the great good of this terrible yet holy day.

"Christ our Lord became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"

Fr. David Curry
Good Friday, 2013

"Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"

The kiss of Judas is the archetype of all betrayal. Holy Week in all of its intensity and drama has set before us the pageant of all our betrayals. What we contemplate is the Judas within each of us. How is this possible? Because of the love of God which is greater than our betrayals, because Truth has more power than all sin and evil. Betrayals, after all, are themselves an acknowledgment of a truth which we have denied. Even more, as we see in the pageant of the Passion, that truth is so much before us even in denial that we seek to destroy it. We kill God.

God is dead. That is the disturbing wonder of Good Friday and Holy Saturday. And yet the death of God in Christ – for the death of God only has meaning through the Incarnation – accomplishes a strange marvel. There is the quiet peace of this holy day. It is the peace of Paradise. All the rage and spite, all the bitter agony and ugly violence of Good Friday is past and gone. We have, literally, done all that we could to annihilate God from the horizon of our minds. We have, literally, in the crucifixion of Christ done all that we could to deny the dignity of our humanity. It is not just God who is dead in Christ; we are dead in ourselves and dead to God.

All our wild sin and evil has had its say. It all amounts to what it is. It is nothing. It is all a denial of what truly is, a denial of God and creation, a denial of all that is true and good about ourselves as well. *"Nothing is but what is not,"* indeed, to adapt Shakespeare's phrase from *Macbeth*. And yet, there is the peace of Holy Saturday, the sense of paradise. Why? Precisely because the fury and folly of sin and evil has done its worst; there is, literally, nothing more that we can do by way of sin and destruction.

You may cavil at this. What about the monstrous and hideous pageant of man's constant inhumanity towards his fellow man? What about the pageant of the holocaust and the vast enormity of the deaths in the last century, especially, those that are the product of totalitarian regimes? What about the continuing spectacles of genocide and the destruction and loss of human life in our unending world of wars? What about our misuse and destruction of the natural world? And so on, and so on. The litany of our disorder and destructive disarray is surely endless and mind-numbing. How, then, can the crucifixion of some obscure figure in some forgotten corner of the world, long ago and far away, be seen to be the end, in the sense of being the fullness of sin and evil? Precisely because the Gospel makes it clear that what is going on is our attempt to destroy God. All of the ugly pageant of our destructiveness is captured in this story. All that comes later is but more of the same.

But so, too, all that went before. All sin, past, present and future has run its course, we might say, in Christ's crucifixion. God has given himself us into our hands. We have done our worst. Christ is God and so we have killed God. We have had our way. There is nothing left for us to do. And yet, God's world remains and God's word and truth

remain as well. For all that we have done, after all, is but an empty contradiction of the truth. The truth remains the truth, we might say. But peace and the harmony of paradise? How is that possible? Because God has willed to bear all of the wicked packet of our follies and sins. He has embraced it all in himself. We have seen it in the crucified Christ. We have beheld him who we have pierced. There is nothing more to be said, really, about sin and evil. It has had its sway and its say and it all comes to nothing.

And so there is a kind of peace and quiet. We are in our sins and follies a spent force. God is dead to us, to be sure. But God who is truth lives and in the quiet of Holy Saturday there are the motions of divine love that are already quietly underway. Peter indicates this in the marvelous epistle reading for this day. *"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison" (*1 Peter 3.18). Christ suffered *once* for sins. *"We shall not see Christ crucified a second time,"* Augustine remarks. There is the theological sense that all sin – past, present and future – has been borne in the body of the crucified. This is the great insight of the Christian Faith, part of the power of this story. Its truth is for all times and for all peoples.

This logically requires something else, something which is captured in Peter's epistle, suggested in the reading from Zechariah, and expressed in the Creed. All sin is past in a way, that is to say, sin is about our denial of the truth of God. It is something we do only after the fact of our being. It is about an action in the mind, in the tongue and in the hand that has in some sense already happened. If it is an intention, then at least the intention is already there in some inchoate form or quite explicitly as something pre-meditated. To speak of sin and evil in the future is to project from the present and the past though this does not cause future sin. We merely surmise that there will be sin and wickedness in the world in the future.

But all actual sins that are committed are by definition thoughts, words and deeds that have already been thought, spoken and done. All involve the same logic of a denial of what is and the folly of trying to destroy God. Because of this, there is the strange but wonderful creedal doctrine of the descent into Hell. Christ goes and preaches to the spirits in prison. They too are gathered into his redemptive word. Their sin and evil is also part of the crucifixion. It is all done! Their actions are part of that empty and destructive nothingness that we see in the crucifixion and death of Christ.

The Churches of Eastern Orthodoxy have a beautiful way of capturing this teaching in an icon. It depicts Christ drawing up Adam and Eve out of a tomb, out of the prison of death, as it were. The theological point is wonderful. The sin of Adam and Eve, after all, is in each of us in each of our own particular sins. Adam and Eve are us is the point. And all of that sad sorry packet of sin and wickedness in all its manifold and different forms has been totally embraced in the arms of the crucified, in the body of Christ

which lies in a borrowed tomb, even as he has, as Athanasius puts it, *"borrowed a body so that he might borrow a death,"* our death.

This is all part of the marvel of Holy Saturday. God and his creation are greater than our sin, greater than all evil. Christ rests in the tomb but the rest of God is always something more and there is something more at work in the quiet of Holy Saturday; it is the descent into Hell, into the place of departed spirits. It signals the divine truth of God who wills to be reconciled with the whole of sinful creation. His creation, past, present and future remains, we might say, despite the wicked folly of our sins. We have had our way in every sense, past, present, and future but God's peace and truth remain. Sin is nothing and all is at peace. God has embraced it all.

The kiss of Judas reveals the full tenor of betrayal. It is all borne by God in Christ. It is only in the truth of God that we can contemplate our sin and learn something more and greater. It is God's will to be reconciled with us. The peace of Holy Saturday celebrates that reconciliation. It has happened. The unseen activity celebrated on this day is the doctrine of the descent into hell because all that belongs to the past of sin and evil, too, has been embraced by the reconciling will of God.

The paradox is simply this. We can only confront our betrayals because of God's forgiveness. Out of that paradox will come something new and wonderful, a new creation, the resurrection. But like all good things, we have to wait for it. Such is the holy wonder of this day; it becomes a day of waiting on God, for we have had our way.

"Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"

Fr. Curry
Holy Saturday at Mattins and Ante-Communion, 2013

"I waited patiently for the Lord,/and he inclined unto me, and heard my calling."

The words of the Psalmist capture what we do this evening. It is the vigil of the Resurrection. We wait, patiently, I hope, for the Lord. Vigils are about a special kind of waiting, a waiting expectantly, a waiting with a sense of purpose and openness to God. To keep vigil signals our watchful waiting upon the divine will in which we find all our good and all our hope. We wait for what only God can provide.

Holy Saturday is a day of waiting upon God, pure and simple. We have done our worst, after all, there is nothing more for us to do. No. We can only wait upon the God who creates out of nothing, the God who is truly God, the God who recreates. We call that recreation, resurrection. It is God's great creative act that at once takes us back to Creation and ahead to the purpose of our existence. We exist for God.

The paschal candle is signed, sealed and lit. It signals the ultimate triumph of good over evil, of light over darkness, of the power and truth of God against all the powers of this world. It awakens us to the victory of Christ over our sins and deaths. He is risen! Nothing can hold back the joy. It is about far more than the return of mine old familiar friend; it is about the new reality of the resurrection. And it signals the necessity of our renewals of faith as well. We recall who we are in the sight of God, namely his beloved. Out of the empty nothingness of our sins comes not only the quiet stillness of Holy Saturday but the expectant excitement of God's re-creative act; the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the new creation.

We renew our own baptismal vows in that understanding. We embrace the new life which the resurrection presents to us. What is that new life? A life no longer defined by the tiresome ways of our besetting sins; a life which is lived with and to God, a life for others. Such is the challenge. It is the challenge of our faith. It is about new life with God. The psalmist's words speak again to this new reality. *"He brought me also out of the horrible pit, out of the mire and clay,/ and set my feet upon the rock, and ordered my goings"* (Ps. 40.1-2). And this leads to a whole new sensibility and outlook. *"And he hath put a new song in my mouth,/ even a thanksgiving unto our God"* (Ps. 40.3).

A new song. The great *paschal praeconium*, allegedly composed by Ambrose upon the occasion of Augustine's conversion to orthodox Christianity, is a new song, a song of thanksgiving and praise for the great new act of God, the Resurrection. We are recalled to creation and now to its redemption, itself a new creation. It is by water and by blood; it is about the quality of our lives together in Christ. But only through the watching and the waiting. This is the night. Watch and wait and so shall we rejoice!

"I waited patiently for the Lord,/and he inclined unto me, and heard my calling."

Fr. David Curry
Easter Vigil, 2013

Christ is Risen. Alleluia, Alleluia!

The Church's ancient proclamation captures the joy and the excitement of this day. But make no mistake, the Resurrection is not some sort of clap-happy event, a happy ending to an otherwise sad and bitter tale. No. The joy and the excitement of Easter are born out of the Passion and Death of Christ. No Passion, no Resurrection. No Good Friday, no Easter day. The intensity of the Passion gives rise to the joyfulness of the Resurrection.

The Resurrection is a bodily event. But it gives rise to a new understanding of everything. There is, we might say, a resurrection of the understanding. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is, as I am fond of saying, radical new life. Radical is the right word, actually. It refers to the root of things, the radix. The Resurrection goes to the root of all life itself. That root is the reciprocal love of the Son for the Father in the bond of the Holy Spirit.

The God who creates *ex nihilo* - out of nothing - recreates out of the greater nothingness of sin and death. The Cross has made visible that greater nothingness. The full force of sin and evil are revealed in the crucified Christ. The greater nothingness is the vanity of our wills as against everything that is good - against one another in the human community, against the good order of creation, and against God himself. But the Cross has also made visible the far greater love of God both for us and in itself.

If the message of Good Friday is that God is dead, then the message of Easter is that death is conquered, death is dead. "*Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more;/death hath no more dominion over him.*" Christ is risen from the dead never to die again. The meaning of death itself is changed. The tomb is not only empty; it has become the womb of new life. The unending life of the Resurrection is accomplished in and through the darkness of death. Christ is Risen!

The Cross is the visible sign. The Resurrection is its invisible reality. We see Christ crucified. We look on him whom we have pierced. We behold him dead. But his rising to life again - that is something hid from our eyes. Like creation itself, we know it only by its effects. We see only after the fact, as it were. We know it by word - by the understanding of Faith and not by sense experience.

We proclaim the Resurrection by way of the word of witness: the silent witness of the empty tomb; the salutation of the angels; the message of Mary and above all else, the witness of the Risen Christ himself. His Resurrection is something which he wants us to know. He is the Word made flesh now risen from the dead – "*a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*" The bodily reality of Christ is more, not less, and so the Resurrection for us is more not less.

The Christian doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body is the strongest possible affirmation of the reality of our humanity. We are soul and body. The body is not

nothing; it belongs to the distinctiveness of our individuality. It belongs to who we are. We are not disembodied spirits. We are souls with bodies. What we shall be cannot be said with any degree of certainty - death is on the other side of our experience - but it is enough to say that we shall be like Christ. What more could we want to say than that? His Resurrection shows us the form of our resurrection. We shall be more and not less than ourselves. The body is not left out of the equation of redemption. Salvation is accomplished in the body; *"caro est cardo salutis"* – *"the flesh is the hinge of salvation"* (Tertullian).

The greater point is that the God who made us for himself has restored us to himself. We have our end in God but only through the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. That end is also our life here and now. We live the Resurrection in the body of Christ, the Church. We are identified with him in his Death and Resurrection. His Death and Resurrection become the pattern of our lives - the constant dying to ourselves and the continual living to God.

For in that he died, he died unto sin once:/
but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

Jesus has given his life for us so that his life might live in us. That life is the life of the Resurrection. It is about *"living unto God."* It is the life that has taken death into itself and overcome it. Death has been transformed into a way and not an end.

By the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are not only made adequate to the life of God, we also participate in the life of God now. The radical meaning of Christ's Resurrection is that the life of God lives in us. We arise to walk in the ways which he has prepared for us to walk in, the ways of service and sacrifice, the ways of prayer and praise.

It means rebirth, a being born anew into life with God. It does not extinguish the past confusions of our lives but redeems the past of sin and sorrow into the way of salvation. Again, it is what Jesus shows us in his risen body. The wounds of his crucifixion, the marks of our sinfulness, are not erased; they are transformed into the marks of glory. And so it is with our lives. The Resurrection would place our lives in the love of the Son for the Father in the bond of the Holy Spirit; it is the life which shall not end.

Christ is Risen. Alleluia, Alleluia!

Fr. David Curry
Easter 2013