TFTD

Good Friday 2019

GOOD MORNING

Silence.

That’s what those who were with the crowds on the banks of the Seine reported as they watched what they feared might be the death of Notre Dame Cathedral – watched it being consumed before their eyes in smoke and flame. Some prayed. A few hymns were sung. But there was silence as they watched the Cathedral which carries much of their national history – carried also much of the ambiguous relationship between a modern secular state and its religious past – at risk of being completely destroyed

Silence

That’s what happened after Jesus died on the Cross on the first Good Friday. Other parts of the story were noisy. There was the clinking of Judas the Betrayer’s Thirty Pieces of Silver, the coarse shouting of the Crowds who called for the robber Barabbas and sent Jesus to his death. There was the banging in of the nails on the cross. A few stifled sobs from the women who were the only ones left to watch.

But then silence

Good Friday makes us thoughtful about some of the greatest mysteries of life – above all it confronts us with the reality of human failing and God’s response to it. Can it really be that this story of the innocent, obedient, undeserved suffering of Jesus can hold the possibility of an answer to the challenges of human sin, suffering, failure and death?

It is therefore somehow fitting that Good Friday was the day for the Agreement of 1998 which ended the violence and brought what is as yet an imperfect peace to Ireland

Good Friday carries layers of mystery about human sin and God’s response. But here is a very warm reflection on it. In Moreton Parish Church in Dorset is a ‘Forgiveness Window’ by the artist Laurence Whistler. Judas with a rope around his neck is pulled into Heaven; the blood money which he was paid for betraying Jesus falls from his hands to become blossoming flowers on the ground. The message? Nobody is beyond saving love of Jesus Christ.

Silence is not God’s last word