

Heini's Good Friday Message 2020

'Good Friday' is called 'Gwener y Grogolith'. 'Croglith' means 'Yr efengyl am y croeshoeliad' – the gospel, or good news, regarding the crucifixion. It is the good news that, through his death on the cross, Jesus made atonement for our sin. This is the central theme of the Christian faith, the only hope for a fallen human race. This is the 'Good' in 'Good Friday'. This is why the Apostle Paul said, *"For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ **and him crucified**".*

In Colossians 1, Paul says: *"[God] has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation".*

That is truly amazing. If we repent of our sins, and trust in Christ's saving work on the cross, then we are reconciled with God. Through Christ we appear holy in God's sight, without blemish and free of accusation. It's as if we have never sinned. That's the power of the cross. If this has happened through Christ's physical body on the cross, it would be good for us this Good Friday morning to focus a little on Christ's wounded body.

- **Wounded back and shoulders**

Christ's back and shoulders are unique. His back and shoulders are strong enough to carry all our burdens and anxieties simultaneously. *"Cast your burden on the Lord and he will sustain you"* (Ps 55:22). *"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you"* (1 Peter 5). Isaiah tells us that the "government will be on his shoulders". His shoulders and back are strong enough to carry them all. *Yet he offered his back to those who beat him*" (Is 50:6). He needed the help of Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross to Calvary. But on the cross, *"[Jesus] bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness"* (1 Pet 2).

What about our backs and shoulders? *"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ"* (Galatians 6:2).

- **Wounded head**

Christ's head is unique. *"The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head"* (Jn 19). In Genesis 3 we are told of The Fall of man. God said *"Cursed is the ground because of you....it will produce thorns and thistles for you"*. Therefore thorns are a part of God's curse. The crown of thorns is our doing, yet he wore it. *"By his wounds we are healed"* (Isaiah 53:5).

What about our heads? Brother Andrew's hymn offers a prayer:

*O dearest Lord, thy sacred head with thorns was pierced for me:
pour out thy blessing on my head that I may think for thee.*

There's a mediaeval prayer: "God be in my head and in my understanding".

- **Wounded hands**

Christ's hands are unique. Creative hands: *"When I consider your heavens, **the work of your fingers**, the moon and the stars, which **you** have set in place"* (Psalm 8:3). Protective hands: *"See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands"* (Isaiah 49:16). *"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they*

follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand" (John 10:27-28). Pierced hands: *"Hands that flung stars into space, to cruel nails surrendered"*.

What about our hands? Again we pray Brother Andrew's prayer:

O dearest Lord, thy sacred hands with nails were pierced for me:
pour out thy blessing on my hands that they may work for thee.

- ***Wounded feet***

Christ's feet are unique. Mary (Martha's sister) sat at his feet and learned so much. Feeling sorrowful at the death of her brother Lazarus, Mary fell at his feet and was comforted. Knowing what was ahead for Jesus, Mary anointed his feet. The woman in Simon the Pharisee's house she expressed her repentance and faith by washing his feet with her tears and drying them with her hair.

"Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet" (Psalm 22:16).

What about our feet? He washed them – because he is the servant king. *"To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps"* (1 Peter 2:21).

O dearest Lord, thy sacred feet with nails were pierced for me:
pour out thy blessing on my feet that they may follow thee.

- ***Wounded heart***

Christ's heart is unique. *"One of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water"* (Jn 19). *"Let the water and the blood, from thy riven side which flowed, be of sin the double cure; cleanse me from its guilt and power"*.

As we saw earlier, in 1Peter 2 we read, "[Jesus] bore our sins in his body on the tree (which means that all our guilt has been transferred onto him, and therefore he has suffered God's wrath instead of us – first cure), so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness (which means we, with the Holy Spirit's help, are increasingly saved from the power of sin in our everyday lives – second cure)".

The heart symbolises love. *"I live by faith in the Son of God, who **loved me** and gave himself for me"* (Galatians 2:20).

O dearest Lord, thy sacred heart with spear was pierced for me:
pour out thy Spirit in my heart that I may live for thee.

This Good Friday I urge you to briefly look away from the present global crisis, and see what Isaac Watts saw:

See from his Head, his Hands, his Feet,
Sorrow and Love flow mingled down!
Did ever such Love and Sorrow meet?
Or Thorns compose so rich a Crown?