

A thought for Easter Eve

by Belinda Barwick

Prayer for today:

O God of the living, on this day your Son descended to the place of the dead: Look with kindness on all of us who wait in hope for liberation from the corruption of sin and death, and give us a share in the glory of the children of God, through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord. Amen.

In 'The Magician's Nephew', the first in the sequence of Narnia stories by CS Lewis, there is a wood between the worlds, but "It's not the sort of place where things happen. The trees go on growing, that's all." For many of us that is what life has felt like in the past few weeks—we've gone on existing, but not much has happened. We have been unable to do many of the things that shape our daily lives, including going to church, seeing our friends and family, or going where we want, when we want. We have had to become passive, and that's not something most humans readily do.

For Jesus' friends and disciples, the day after the crucifixion must have felt like that. They had to be discreet and secretive- the authorities were on the lookout for any hint of rebellion: having dealt with the ringleader they were ready to eliminate any disruptive followers who hadn't got the message. They were in shock—their beloved and inspiring friend had been ripped away from them,



just at the height of his powers. They were ashamed—they knew that the time of Jesus' arrest had not been their finest hour. They were bereft- the person they had come to revere, to love and to depend on was no longer there.

When someone we love dies, one of the most difficult things to come to terms with is the negativity: what was a presence becomes an absence, what was alive is dead. It's an aching emptiness. This week, of all Holy Weeks, we have been acutely aware of the fragility of human existence, as we hear of the deaths that have occurred because of the virus. We are all sharing in that emptiness and negativity.

But we as Christians are a people of hope and positivity. Hope is our gift to the world, and we must continue to share that gift wherever and whenever we can. The tomb in which Jesus was laid was not sealed for ever. The emptiness was filled again for the disciples, and their experiences at this time transformed them and transformed the world. Our emptiness will be filled, and our contemporary world can be transformed.

The wood between the worlds was not dead, but very much alive. "It was a *rich* place, as rich as plum-cake." Perhaps this can be a time of great richness too, because we know that "in all things God works for the good of those who love him."
(Romans 8, 28)

