

Holy Saturday – a personal reflection by Chris Curtis

That “in between day”, between Good Friday processions and Easter Communion was always an odd day. A day to get final Easter eggs, start to prepare the family meal for the Sunday, perhaps catch up on jobs. But ever since 1991 it has taken on a different meaning for us. Why?

That was the year we fully realised that **we** know the next chapter in the story and **they** didn't. And that changes everything.....

That year Alan and I spent Easter weekend on Iona: it was our first visit. We arrived on the Thursday and after supper everyone gathered in the Abbey for the dramatic and noisy “stripping” of the abbey after we had shared communion together. We were there on pilgrimage, an attempt to help us feel something of what it might have felt like to be in Jerusalem at the time. Friday we undertook the pilgrimage route around the island stopping as if at stations of the cross for reflection and prayer. We were instructed to be quiet and prayerful all day..... And all the next day, Holy Saturday, too..... We were not to chatter though we were not required to be totally silent and only to read spiritual matter or pray. What an incredibly long day that Saturday was, by the evening it was almost unbearable, the waiting for midnight and the coming of Easter day, to be able to sing, to share communion..... And yet it was comparatively easy for us. We knew the end of the story! Imagine what it was like for the disciples! They had watched the man they had followed, given up family and livelihoods for, being harshly judged and killed. No hope left. Dreams shattered. He had gone. And having shared the Passover meal together on the Thursday, it was now the Jewish Sabbath and that meant no work or travel. Most likely the followers all dispersed to their own homes and stayed there surely feeling that all was lost, there was no hope.

They couldn't look forward to Easter morning because that was yet to come. Even all these years later Alan and I can still feel the almost physical pain of the waiting, the unbearable yearning for the light of candles, warm greetings and hugs and most of all the Communion Service with which we greeted Easter morning. No, Holy Saturday has never been the same again.