

Lent 6 Passion Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Mark 15:1-39

Contemplatio: Michael Wood

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If Holy Week is the centre of our Christian story – around which everything else circles, then how do we approach it – how ARE we approaching it as we begin Holy Week?

Our little group of meditators is not meeting on Good Friday, but we have listened to the passion story from the Gospel of Mark.

The crucifixion is the crisis of the universe. It is what John's gospel calls the judgement of the world and the glory of God.

The cross does two things simultaneously:

- (i) The cross is the supreme revelation of God's love for the cosmos (the glory of God)

AND

- (ii) The cross the supreme revelation of what we are capable of when we turn away from God's love – how we can crucify others either figuratively or metaphorically (the judgement of the world)

Good Friday presents us with a crisis because regardless of whether we are turning away from God or towards God, God is inescapably part of that very dynamic of binding and loosing of ourselves and others.

Today I on the freeway in Perth when everything came to a grinding halt. As I sat there for about 40 minutes with police, fire engines and tow trucks whistling down the emergency lane towards whatever was going on up ahead, I was observing the patterns of traffic flow.

Various cars were putting on their indicators and trying to change lanes. We were all moving at a snail's pace and I looked at the reactions of different drivers when someone else tried to change lanes in front of them. Some drivers would speed up and clearly try to block out the person who was trying to change lanes. Other drivers would clearly hang back and make space for the person who was trying to change lanes.

Just as I was reflecting on all this, I turned on the radio and started listening to a program called The Mine Field, with Scott Stevens and Waleed Alley. Scott Stevens made this striking observation that 'sacrifice' is 'making space for others within our common life, even those who we don't like very much'.

It's not really a big deal to make the minor sacrifice of opening up space for another driver on the freeway. But I really liked that idea that this is one important meaning of the word 'sacrifice' – to make space for others within our common life.

Could we think of God as a 'maker of space?' In God's open arms on the cross, in this loving embrace of the cosmos, God is making a space for us within the divine household. At any particularly point in time we might be moving towards that embrace or away from it, but it's always calling us home – calling us into life – into the resurrection future.