

Good Friday

*Yet it was our infirmities that he bore
our sufferings that he endured
while we thought of him as stricken
as one smitten by God and afflicted*

For most people that first Good Friday the death of Jesus was a tragic miscarriage of justice. Many people understood that Jesus was a good man, perhaps even a prophet, that he had been unjustly put to death by those who were threatened by his proclamation of the kingdom of God. Most viewed his shameful death by crucifixion as a miscarriage of justice, another proof that the power of Rome was all-powerful, another proof that while Jesus was a good man, he was misguided.

After all, what else could one conclude from looking at the blood-stained body of the man hanging from the cross? Could any good come from such a death? The death of Jesus seemed to contradict all that he had said and taught. Where is the kingdom? Where is the power and the glory? Where is God? Why was God so silent if Jesus was his Son?

On the first Good Friday, those who had put Jesus to death were confident that his death was the end of the affair. On that Good Friday, even Jesus' disciples thought that his death was the end of the affair. On that day, people returned to their homes, disappointed that the kingdom of God had not come.

But God's ways are not our ways, and God's thoughts are not our thoughts. God chooses to work through the weakness and folly of the cross to bring about

our redemption. God uses the cross, which the world counts as weakness, to manifest his power. God uses the cross, which the world counts as foolishness, to manifest his wisdom. This is why Isaiah says it was our infirmities he bore, our sufferings he endured. Although the world could not see it, God was at work in the crucified Christ. And while the world thought of Jesus as smitten and afflicted by God, God was at work in the cross reconciling the world to himself.

No, things are never what they seem to be, even today. God is at work where we least expect to find God. God is found in the despised and disinherited of the earth. God is present in what the world counts as weakness and foolishness. God was found, and God continues to be found, in the cross.