

Beyond Easter

I have to admit I had a wry smile on my face on Easter Sunday when I read of a small church in Melbourne that had their crucifixion re-enactment disrupted by the police. The police had been called to a shopping centre where the church had set up their Good Friday drama, because a number of people had complained about the distasteful nature of the whole affair. Part of me agreed that a crucifixion complete with fake blood is not for general exhibition, but another part of me wanted to say in the light of last week "As I See It", there I told you so! We want the joy Easter without the pain of Good Friday. And as if to reinforce my point, the Examiner ran a vox-pop on the subject and each of the respondents said they thought the authorities were right to close down the fake crucifixion.

So I wonder what these same people would make of this week's gospel reading about Thomas, and Jesus' invitation to him to place his hands in the wounds in Jesus' side and hands. A gruesome picture if there ever was one. But I wonder if Jesus' invitation to Thomas was more than just that if you see and touch – then you might believe. As it transpires in the gospel, Thomas doesn't have to go anywhere near Jesus' wounds, for him seeing, is believing.

Perhaps Jesus' invitation is made not just to Thomas but to all of us. Jesus' healing ministry was always one where he thrust himself into the wounds of humanity. His whole ministry consisted of loving connection with the wounded ones of his society. And I wonder if that is not his invitation to us, his Body on earth, to be in loving connection with the dispossessed, the scorned, the poor of our society. **As I see It**, there is no other reason for the church to exist. Like Jesus, we do not live for ourselves.

So let me finish with poem from Iona by Kate McIlhagga simply called Thomas.

***Put your hand, Thomas,
on bloated belly of a child
starving to death in Somalia.***

***Place your finger, Thomas,
on the list of those
who have disappeared in Chile.***

***Stroke the cheek Thomas,
of the little girl
sold in prostitution in Thailand.***

***Touch, Thomas,
the gaping wounds
of my world.***

***Feel, Thomas,
the primal wounds
of my people.***

Pilgrim Uniting Church
As I See It - Rev. Tony Duncan

***Reach out your hands, Thomas,
and place them
at the side of the poor.***

***Grasp my hand, Thomas,
and believe.***

As I see It, we are called Thomas!

Tony would be more than happy to chat about the above article with anyone who wants to.

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