

Thought for the day 3rd August from Anna Bland (All Hallows)

Bible reading: Luke 23:13-25

In Luke 23: 13-25 we see Pilate, the chief priests and the crowd working out what will happen to Jesus. We all know the outcome of this: the crowd shout for crucifixion, Barabbas is released and Jesus sent to be crucified.

Human nature does not come out well in this section of the Gospel of Luke. In Easter passion performances I have found it interesting playing the different roles in this passage over the years. It forces me to reflect on the times I have acted like the various people involved in this all important day.

So let's look at those people who are as human as you or I.

Pilate: powerful leader of an unpopular empire who run this land by force. I can't imagine his life was easy, living in a hostile place is hard even if you are the most powerful. Giving the people what they want in this case may have seemed an easy win politically even if he seems uncomfortable making the choice. As Tony pointed out on Saturday we also see that it could also have been a politically savvy move to keep his new friend Herod happy!

So when are the times that we take the easy route to keep friends and have an easy life rather than speaking out for what we believe is right?

The crowd: as a child I learnt the crowd were paid off by the chief priests and in Mark's Gospel it says the chief priests stirred up the crowd. I cannot claim to know what the truth was but I do wonder how much a Jerusalem crowd knew of this Galilean visiting their city? His reputation certainly goes ahead of him as we see with Palm Sunday but I don't imagine this crowd had seen Jesus teaching or understood the message he was bringing. Were they doing it for the money? Were they caught up in the moment, not fully understanding the outcome of their actions?

Can you think of a time when you have gone along with something, not fully understanding or knowing what you are supporting?

The chief priests: often thought of as the villains, powerful and wealthy religious elites. They didn't like this heretical young man speaking out against the order of things, the way things had always been done and the way they believed to be righteous. Someone said to me recently, 'today's heretic is tomorrow's prophet'.

Where are we clinging to things of the past to keep order? Are we ignoring any prophetic voices in our midst?