



Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney's Lent Course 2024

THE WAY TO THE CROSS

FRIDAY | MARCH



PERSONAL REFLECTION THE CROSS & GOD'S PROMISES

Do you have a favourite cross? This might sound a strange question but as people who spend time in churches, wandering around Aberdeen we see many crosses around us. There are many representations of the cross in art - and you might have a favourite one, perhaps one in stained glass in a place special to you? Maybe it's the crosses that are most meaningful to you.

The county I grew up in - Northamptonshire is famous for having two of the remaining three Eleanor Crosses in the county. Not anywhere near where I grew up but nearby and we visited them. Eleanor Crosses are named after Eleanor of Castile the first Queen of Edward I (aka Longshanks), She was on her way to be with her husband but on the way (in 1290) she died in Nottinghamshire,

Edwards had crosses erected in each place her body rested on it's way back to London. These are the crosses that Charing Cross was named after. Death, love and life in these memorials.



Collect for Second Sunday of Lent

God of patience and humility, in your love you gave your Son to be rejected and raised up on a cross.

Gather us under its shadow and open our eyes to its mystery, that we may share even now in the life that is from above; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

I have a several favourite, most meaningful crosses, the Eleanor Cross in Geddington is one. Another is the one made out of recycled wood that I was given from my placement church in the borders, a placement 6 years ago marked by illness of others, the Beast from the East, this beautiful cross fashioned by one of the Wardens that makes the most of the existing shape of the cross - reminding me that the cross always makes things good - Jesus, God incarnate finds ways to reach us in the twists, turns of life, in the roads and shapes expected and refashioned in life.

Each of our churches has crosses inside and outside and you might have some in home, some you wear, images of the cross you return to. In churches they might be made of burnished mahogany and of rough-hewn timbers. It is a symbol of a Christian space of worship, of the faith, whether bearing the broken body of Jesus or simply the shape of the cross.

The Cross of Christ, of Jesus our Lord, the one who we are journeying through this Lent. We began our Sundays in Lent with hearing of Jesus' baptism and time in the wilderness. We are asked by people including me of what does it mean to be a faithful disciple, a follower of Jesus at all times but particularly during Lent. One theologian Frederick Buechner suggests that after his baptism, Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness asking himself the question of what it meant to be Jesus, and that during Lent Christians are to ask in one way or another what it means to be Christians. In his Gospel, Mark sets out to answer these questions, realizing that the answers are inextricably linked. Before we can understand what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Messiah, we must understand what it meant for Jesus to be Messiah

The cross is the definite centre of Jesus' redeeming work - as can be seen in all the New Testament books.. However it is understood, his death on a Roman cross bridges the wide gulf of sin and death that separates human beings from God. Moreover, without the crucifixion, the definitive triumph of God would not have been made visible in and through the resurrection. The cross of Christ, however it is rendered and presented in Christian worship space, is the central symbol of the faith, the fitting end of the journey of Jesus of Nazareth. The cross as a symbol it not only points beyond itself but participates in the reality to which it points, namely, the saving love of God for humanity.

The season of Lent, structured as it is to remember in its fullness the journey of Jesus to the cross, is also the perfect time for articulating the call of Jesus to discipleship. In these forty days we may contemplate not only the wonderful power of the cross of Christ, but the power inherent in taking up our own crosses too. Opportunities are daily before us, times when we may give our lives sacrificially to acts of love, compassion, justice, and peace.

I have another favoured cross to me, the one I wear around my neck at all times. The one I've had since I was 18 finishing my A Levels, a gift to replace one I'd been wearing since I was 14 and was confirmed. A cross I began wearing after claiming my faith as my own, affirming the baptismal promises made on my behalf. A cross that I've worn when I've been sure in my belief, times I've doubted, one that has been worn in times of joy and sadness, times where I've been seeking and the times I know I'm in the place just right. It's worn, it lost its stone a while back but it's a constant reminder of God's grace for me, reminds me of my call to respond to God's call on my life in love and of the many ways I make the way to the cross in my life.

“If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me”

Mark 8.34

Usual Weekly Pattern

Sunday

RCL Eucharist

Readings and Collect

Monday

Delving Deeper into the Readings

Tuesday

Words from Others (sacred & secular)

Wednesday

Resources from the Arts

Thursday

Contemplative Acts

Friday

Personal Reflection - what this means to me

Saturday

Acts & Deeds