

**Dear Friends**

I am writing this article on Good Friday. Having spent time last night (Maundy Thursday) confessing, worshipping, hearing of our Lord's Passion, praying psalms for deliverance and then spending time in extended prayer I am feeling **grateful** and **free**.

**Grateful** because the injustice and pain Jesus endured for me and for you. He pursued love and goodness and God's Kingdom no matter what the circumstances nor the consequences. On the Cross whilst still in pain he asks for God to forgive those who cause it. How deep is His love for us and the whole world?

Justice matters. Our call is to love others as we love ourselves. Things need to be put right. Pain, chaos, death and destruction were never meant to be. Justice is the heart of the Gospel. But so too is the mercy of God. We have caused all that mars God's good world, but rather than us paying the ultimate price, Jesus offered himself in our stead. That we need not die. He took our place, just like you would wish to do if someone you love was facing a terrible trial or consequence. **I am grateful. Are you?**

**Free** because I know God loves me, and there is nothing beyond his redemption and restoration. Even our worst fears and pains can and will be overcome. Don't believe me? Look at the Cross. Then look to the empty tomb. Hear the words of those who saw him. See how they were changed by meeting the Risen Christ.

Death could not hold him, and he promises it won't hold us.

He has opened the gate of Glory. **I am free. Are you?**

So as we live in the light of our Risen Lord, and the victory of Easter, I pray you know in the depths of your heart that the Cross was not the end of the story, and neither is your grief, nor will your next trial or crisis be. Do not fear. You are loved and held.

**He is Risen!**

**Be grateful! Be free!**

**And share His LOVE with the world.**

Blessings,

*Jo*