

One of my favourite expressions is that Jesus never asks us to do anything he hasn't done before us. He is our God, the Father's Son in the Holy Spirit, yet he is also human, in every way that we are, and his life as a good Jewish man living around 2000 years ago echoes our own in every way, despite the difference in centuries in which we were born. The humanity of Jesus is a great mystery. He is fully divine, God, yet fully human, and his divinity and humanity cannot be divided in any way. When Moses asked God his name, as they talked together on the mountain, God simply said "I am". In the same way, Jesus 'is', completely human and completely divine. We cannot separate his divinity from his humanity, just as the drop of water that is added to the wine in the chalice by the priest during Mass can never be separated once combined. This is worth sitting with as we spend some contemplation time with the Lord this week. Do not let it frighten you in its potential!

Jesus lived as we live, he faced the physical challenges we do, even those we face as we endure lock down this Easter. Daily, Jesus reached out deliberately to the countless numbers of outcasts who sat begging, for money, or for love, even for a simple act of kindness, anything to sustain them in their forced isolation. Jesus purposely drew close to those who were shunned for all sorts of reasons by his 'honour and shame' society. He knew the leper colonies that housed those who were infected, victims enduring total isolation from their communities, fed through the distant visitation of those who dropped food for them on the outskirts of the colony they were forcibly prevented from leaving. Jesus' compassion moved him to make a difference to all who met him, healing the pain of those who allowed him to heal them. As we move with Jesus through Holy Week to the glory of Easter Sunday, I am struck that the calamities we face today through Covid 19 are truly echoed again and again in Jesus' Passion and death. As he hung on the cross, suffering intensely, bleeding, suffocating, fevered and shivering, he was truly alone in the crowd, separated from those he loved. In our helplessness in fighting the virus we cannot control or see, in the isolation of hospitals, hotels and our homes, we are separated from our family and our friends in an attempt to keep us safe. We are deprived even of our ability to worship in our churches. In our isolation, and through the suffering of those directly affected by the sadness of this world, we can reflect that Jesus cannot be closer to us than he is right now.

He shares our nature, understanding us from the inside out, and we share in his Sonship, invited in relationship over and over by Jesus himself to come through him to his Father. We can never be alone. Jesus' Incarnation carries us with him to eternity, born amongst us, walking amongst us, dying amongst us, and rising with us. We hear the echoes of his voice piercing through our own souls, "My God! My God!! Why have you abandoned me?" This always stops me short. As he hung from the cross in his final moments of human life, Jesus, the Son of the Living God, could not feel his Father, or the presence of the Holy Spirit. He knew the loneliness of abandonment from his absolute depths. He was not just play-acting, his sense of abandonment was truly real. We know that we are never alone, because we know that Jesus was never alone. It just felt like it to him in his anguish. The darkness of emptiness gives way to the fullness of resurrection. Jesus is truly alive. And in his resurrection, Jesus shows us light, freedom, victory over sin, and even over death itself, true, eternal hope. Through his resurrection, Jesus shows us our potential, life forever with him, in his Father through the Holy Spirit. We see a bright flash we cannot yet hold on to. We glimpse heaven, the home for which we were created, deliberately, on purpose, by our Father. Through the glory of Jesus' resurrection from death, we catch a taste of fullness we cannot imagine, and with joyful hearts, filled with his love, we recognise his faithful presence in the hope of our own resurrection, for he is just as we are in all things but sin...