

done in our lives and the lives of people we know. Christ is risen, we are full of joy, our lives can be transformed, let us thank the Lord, let us praise him and spread the good news. Death has been abolished, Christ is risen, Alleluia

Last Sunday we started with a triumphal procession, on Thursday we enjoyed the celebration of the Passover Feast remembering God freeing his people from the slavery of the Egyptians, on Friday we reflected in silence on the terrible events, yesterday we waited, lost, frightened, confused, grieving, guilty and then the joy, the disbelief, the amazement, of this morning, he is not dead, he is risen.

We have not been abandoned, the Love that hung on a cross has found us and restored us, we have been redeemed.

Richard Rohr argues “that it is wrong to think that before God could love us God needed and demanded Jesus to be a blood sacrifice to atone for our sin-drenched humanity. As if God needed payment to love and accept his own children. Instead the Incarnation of God and the Redemption of the world was not a mere mop-up exercise in response to human sinfulness, but the proactive work of God from the very beginning. We were ‘chosen in Christ before the world was made’ (Eph1:4) our sin could not possibly be the motive for the divine incarnation, but only perfect love and divine self-revelation.... God always acts out of love. God

loves us because he is love, because he is good, not because we are good. Nothing humans can do will increase or decrease God's eternal eagerness to love."

I, we, have been brought up on the fact that Jesus died for our sins, but this is temple language, that of debt and atonement, Rohr argues and perfectly understandable language for the Gospel writers, steeped in their traditions and learning.

However the theologians debate and discuss, and I can see where both sides are coming from, the main fact is that God loved us, you, me everyone, so much that he gave up his deity, became human and died an horrific death out of that love.

Jesus was, is and always will be our salvation, it difficult to understand the enormity, the mystery, the love of that act. Perhaps because for many people, being loved that much, from before conception, is difficult to comprehend, to experience. For many love is only given as a reward for certain behaviour, or because of gender, or birth position. Accepting God's unchangeable, immense love is hard, and we can't do anything to earn it. He loves us, he has

always loved us, and will always love us. It is a love that sets us free, that cherishes us, empowers us and encourages us.

We see in the Gospel stories, the ups and downs of the disciples' faith, the learning, the misunderstandings, the failures, all echoed in our own faith journeys I would suspect, they were as human as we are, think of Peter, who denied Jesus and then went on to found the church. As we move with God, perhaps a bit like counters on a snakes and ladders board at times, we are held, surrounded by a love so great that nothing can overcome it, not even anything we do.

We have the promise of a new life, an eternal life because of Good Friday and Easter Day. God is the source of life, our creator, the one who loves us and now, we need to take that good news out into the world, we need to mirror that light and life and love to others. We follow in the footsteps of the Apostles, we have seen that the tomb is empty. We know that Jesus is alive, not only because of the eyewitness accounts of the time, and many of those witnesses preferred death to recanting their story, but also because of the transforming work he has