

BBC Radio 4 Prayers for the Day

Tuesday 26th March

Good morning.

In different parts of the world people give different accounts of what it is to be human. In Western Europe we're shaped by a philosophy in which, "I think therefore I am". So it's not surprising that when we're told by our Prime Minister that in the present tough economy, "We're in it together", our behaviour doesn't match up and we see people individually looking after themselves first.

We'd be helped more by an African perception that we only exist in community with one another. I suppose that's, "I belong therefore I am". Not having many possessions makes that a bit easier. There's a freedom like that experienced by St Francis of Assisi. The son of a wealthy merchant who accepted poverty and in doing so became rich in spirit. It was a choice, so not at all the same as that grinding poverty in which there are few choices. Having little he gained much, including a joyful thanksgiving for all creation, giving thanks to God for everything.

This Holy Week, Christians remember the events of the last week of Jesus' life. It was grim, but his loving acceptance of what happened to him transforms us. As he comes to the cross, the disciples scattered. At Easter he rose from the dead and creates a new community of the resurrection.

George Fox, founder of the Quakers, powerfully catches the implication of this for us:

Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone; whereby in them you may be a blessing, and make the witness of God in them to bless you.

George Fox (1624–1691)

Amen