

## Good Friday 2020

When Mother Theresa would go out into the streets of Calcutta in search of the abandoned homeless, she never knew exactly what she would find.

One night, she came across a middle-aged man, lying in the road. Obviously malnourished and dehydrated, his speech was impaired, almost indecipherable.

Upon bringing him to her hospital, he was placed in one of the large rooms that housed the sick and the homeless. On the wall was a rather large crucifix-the depiction of Jesus suffering on the cross. As the evening went on, the man became transfixed by the cross, as if his eyes were glued, riveted to the image.

Becoming more and more animated, he began to gesture toward the cross, struggling to speak to the attending nurses. One of them asked him to slowly sound out what he was trying to say. And he did: **“My friend, my friend! That’s my friend!”**

The man was not a Christian. He did not know exactly who was on that cross. But he knew that whoever it was, he must be a friend, because he was suffering too. Neither of them were strangers to suffering. They were both “crucified” in their own way. This much they shared.

Good Friday commemorates Jesus’ crucifixion. It also reminds me that the world is a place where everyone

carries a cross. Everyone is pierced by pain in some way (although some people do a far better job at hiding it than others!) Suffering is a contagion from which no one is immune.

When we accept this inconvenient truth, we tend to look at one another differently, even the people we have little in common with or who we find difficult to love. Knowing that the human in front of me aches even as I ache creates a connection, an odd solidarity: “Friend, we’re in this together!”

The pierced body of Jesus on the cross is a timeless invitation. Simply put: Our suffering connects us to one another. Within our wounds there is energy for good. Our own pain can be used to bring healing to others. Our crosses can bring new life. This is the path that Jesus walked, even unto death. This is the path that beckons us.

When we embrace this, we are well on the road to Easter, even when dawn seems very far away.

*And this is grace.*