Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time B 2021

Jesus submitted to death. He offered no resistance. He did not take the path our human instincts direct us to - fight back, attack, defend. He said to Peter ‘…the way you think is not God’s way but man’s’. He absorbed the violence done to him - he did not turn it back on his attackers. That is what he continues to do - that is what he urges us to do.

But we don’t. In the smallest possible ways we fight back if we think we are being got at. Small disagreements become big rows. Think of the anger in some families which has its origin in a now forgotten remark or slight which has been fed endlessly by more resentment and anger so that it becomes a permanent split. Because early on family members wouldn’t absorb the hurt they felt but bounced it back and forward to do its ugly work.

Think of the disputes between regions and countries. Disputes over borders and possessions - things that can never be worth spilling blood over - which result in untold casualties thousands and thousands of deaths and displaced people. While those ordering the fighting say in their foolish pride ‘we will not surrender’. The Devil doesn’t have to work too hard in human affairs.

We hear Jesus’ words; we see his example. He would not pass the violence and anger on. He absorbed it. He offered no fuel for the fire in the way we do. It is not an easy path to follow - but he said to us ‘I am the way, the truth and the life’. For ourselves and for our world it is worth us putting all our effort into following this way - it is the only way that will bring peace, it is the only way that leads to life.