Feast of Christ the King 2022

There are many people who have the instinct to give of themselves - for the sake of family; for the sake of their parish and community. Some give of themselves almost to breaking point. I heard a saying the other day: ‘Don’t set yourself on fire to keep others warm’. Making the point that the generous carer should realise that they should also care for themselves or they will burn out, being of no use to themselves or anyone else. It is clearly wise advice.

But then I considered Christ on the Cross.

The One we identify as God; the One we today worship as King loved so much that he gave everything for us. We don’t stop at the Cross. Suffering and death is not what we are all about. But we pause at the Cross, it is an essential part of what we are about. Sin, that we encounter in our lives and in our wider world, is real. Suffering, great and small is real. Death is real. These are the dark areas we do not want to dwell in - but inevitably encounter. We can run away from them, we can distract ourselves, but ultimately there is no escape.

We turn to God. Who is this God? We see Him on the Cross. Not running away but entering the very depths of sin and pain and suffering.

As we pause and consider these things it is worth asking ourselves ‘How far can I enter into the world of the Cross?’ Jesus did say to us take up your cross daily and follow me’. Do we let ourselves off too easily? I know I do. There is more to do; more to do right; more to give.

If the Cross is only about defeat (on one level it is), then human life is hopeless. The shadow of the Cross is at the centre of our faith because of the light shone on it by the Resurrection. We can talk about the victory of the Cross because God in Jesus went to the heart of the battle and triumphed.

There will be some people who will be so self-sacrificing, like Jesus, that they will burn themselves out. I can see that is to be honoured - but not recommended.But we can probably all face more, give more of ourselves, trust in God more - and keep the Cross before our eyes…