



Lenten Reflection for Holy Week 2019

‘And then the beating began.’ The first words that burst forth, uninvited from ‘CocoJo’s lips when I met him on a glorious February afternoon a few weeks ago. I had dropped into the Medaille Safe House to deliver clothes donations from my local parishioners. Clearly in need of a listening ear, CocoJo approached me. Bearing his untouched cup of coffee in his hands, he recounted without bitterness how ‘his friends’ had said they were offering him a job and a better life in the U.K. Now he was trapped in the back of a van, robbed of his passport and documents and suffering the pain and humiliation of torture all the way ‘to the promised land.’ Five years of abuse followed where he worked as a cleaner, gardener and car wash attendant. There he suffered the degradation of sleeping on the car wash floor until rescued by the police and brought to a place of safety and rehabilitation. CocoJo is 33 years old.

My thoughts immediately drew a comparison to the passion of Christ. Jesus had been betrayed and sold by ‘his friends’ and tortured all the way to His innocent death. On occasion, I am one of those ‘friends’ who still betray him. There are moments when my thoughts or actions do not reflect a knowledge of or relationship with the living Lord. My indifference to the suffering of humanity transports Jesus all the way to the cross and moments of un-forgiveness pass one more sponge of vinegar to His parched lips.

Fortunately for CocoJo, a rescuer appeared and CocoJo had the courage and grace to enter into His rehabilitation programme. He now shares his story of recovery to offer hope to others.

I too have been blessed on the many occasions when I have known the healing, forgiving and redemptive love of the Lord. A joy to be shared with all people.

Sr. Siobhan