

Earlier this week, in the Tuesday morning service, we considered the passage from 1 Corinthians where Paul says that “we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” (1 Cor 1:23,24) and I had to say that it still seems like foolishness to me. I do not and probably never will, understand the meaning of the crucifixion or whether it was necessary or just inevitable.

I do however believe that Christ crucified is the power of God and the wisdom of God and I wonder whether it isn't in some important way the very center of the cosmos. Our lives involve suffering of many kinds and we see suffering all around us, especially right now in Ukraine. We live in a system where we eat other beings for our sustenance – we survive by being predators, and we live in fear of those who might attack us. This is the other side of the beautiful, cooperative system of nature that we glory in.

In the crucifixion, God went straight to the heart of the problem. God allowed himself to be a victim. Jesus the Christ allowed himself to be betrayed by a kiss, accused of trumped up charges, beaten and killed in a particularly nasty way. We humans turned predatory and tried to kill God. And yet God turned it around. God took this demonstration of the worst of human nature and made it into something beautiful.

Something that brings us here today. An expression of unconditional divine love that we can scarcely fathom. Christ crucified, the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Perhaps it is because last night we celebrated the foot-washing of the disciples and each other that the image that keeps coming to me is that of a sock being turned right side out – how it suddenly pops up and turns out right. I am thinking about the crucifixion as somehow turning the whole cosmic experiment inside out and although it doesn't take away

suffering which seems to be endemic, it transforms it into something quite different.

Christ crucified is the greatest symbol we have of God's love. We don't have crucifixes in our churches because we celebrate the risen Christ, but on this day we remember and focus on Christ crucified who demonstrated the unconditional love of God by going forward to his own torture and death because that was his mission. It was his mission because somehow God entering into the heart of the darkness of humanity brought a light which cannot be quenched.

Marjorie Suchocki said, "It is the peculiarity of Christian faith that we dare to name powers of destruction precisely because we are convinced that there is a greater power for transformation." I think that is the core of our faith and our hope, the power of God and the wisdom of God, that despite all the powers of destruction there is a greater power for transformation... and that great power is demonstrated here in the cross of Christ and in his certain resurrection.

But there was time between crucifixion and resurrection so let us not move too fast, grasping hold of resurrection at the expense of a deeper understanding of Christ's amazing work diving deep into the eye of darkness until it turned into light.