

## Good Friday Reflection 2

Father Tim

Jesus and Pontius Pilate, Matthew 27: 11-26

Are we living in a post truth society. A world where it seems possible to assert things that have no factual basis, even though fact checkers will criticise it, people often just keep asserting it and large number of people go along with it. It can leave us in the place where it seems anything can go. There is a decline of trust in traditional institutions authority across the board, cooperation's, unions, families, churches, political parties which structured our political life. Polling data over the last 40 years, see a decline in people trusting in them.

Smart phones, body cams, access to open source data online has caused an erosion of confidence in these institutions. With technology playing a big part in transparency. It seems that with trust at a low and there are many opportunities for manipulation. To the point of causing us to be jaded and confused. As Manipulation can be feel rife. Even the idea of our data online being used against us can manipulate us into having the impression that we are subject to a big brother type apparatus. That we are be targeted and controlled online. When the reality is probably much more banal. When really for most of us, the info is merely about what you've purchased in Marks and Spencer's or Waterstones and not the deep realities of our relationships to work, community our loved ones or our spirituality. But of course manipulation can be confusing and debilitating.

Of course, this is nothing new. Pilate is a master manipulator who disposes of Jesus who is a threat to his authority, all the while pretending and manipulating the crowds into thinking that he doesn't shoulder the blame. Pilate wishes to maintain the privileged alliance with the Jerusalem authorities.

Jesus' encounter with Pilate exposes Pilate and the emptiness of his actions. Pilate washes his hands, this has become a cliché or a proverb in our current culture. Although Pilate is playing a game here, this is a kind of post truth move and a carefully planned charade. Pilate has absolute power here, but pretends as if it's nothing to do with him, when this is just untrue. He creating a smoke screen. Deeply manipulative to set someone up for death and at the same time denying all responsibility. Pilate runs a system which is benefits from by making citizens powerless and him exceptionally wealthy.

There is much to be lost when Jesus has been talking of a kingdom that is not built on manipulation or misuse of power but is essentially a kingdom of love and justice. Where the king of this Kingdom doesn't respond with violence but absorbs violence on behalf of others, even those who seek to reject and kill him. Pilate doesn't understand Jesus because he is so wrapped up in the emptiness of his manipulation. He can't imagine an order not founded on the threat of violence or force. A King who sets his people free to love God and each other. A king who enters the conflict of this political world, who engages in his own way of non violence that brings the corruption of public structures under God's judgement. This kings death on the cross was a central victory in a series of victories over corrupted forms of human life. A king who's death did expose him as a charlatan, a manipulator, a pretend king. Nor did his death bring an end to his rule. But opened up an invitation to a new way. That is of resistance to sin, unmasking the corruptions and pretensions of earthly powers. Christ works within our world , within our institutions, where Sin corrupts we can have faith that Christ can redeem.

This is a hope that can stop us from becoming jaded with politics - as we come into an electoral year, this good Friday story highlights to us Gods involvement in our life as a community and nation. We are to be hopeful. To hope is not to merely dream, but to live in the reality of the kingdom we can reflect on this King, who confronted rulers, not like for like, but through courage, sacrifice and unconditional love. We can hope for the completion of this Kingdom because of our faith in this King, who breaks the cycle of violence and institutes this new way. A kingdom that is not a run of the mill political regime but its the goal of all creation. It's fulfilment will be in an indescribable future when God will be all in all.

Amen