Selworthy Beacon

One summer, now nearly three decades ago, I spent some time on holiday in Somerset. During that time, I visited Selworthy village and from there I made my way up through the woods to Selworthy Beacon.

As I crossed a road which cut across my path, with the Beacon now in sight, I was struck by the final stage of my journey. On one side of the path there was an expanse of grey-black burnt moorland. On the opposite side there was a blaze of colour: the yellow of gorse and the purple of heather.

The contrast caused me to reflect upon the scene in terms of it being illustrative of Good Friday and Easter Sunday. The barren, lifeless expanse evoked a sense of the suffering of Jesus upon the cross. The yellow and purple carpet of plants cried out to me of the joy of the day when God raised Jesus from the dead.

The path I walked along clearly separated the two different sights. What my eyes took in depended upon the way in which I was facing. I could angle myself so that I could see either only one side of the path or the other, or so that I saw a combination of the two views.

On our journey through life there are varied experiences to be entertained. Some are extremely traumatic and sad. At such times all can appear dark and desolate. The message of Good Friday is that God, through Jesus, has entered into that kind of experience and continues to share in the pain and suffering of individuals within this world. Other occasions are full of joy and celebration, of life and colour. These are echoes of the wonder of Easter Day, when Jesus, through his resurrection and the power of love, overcame evil and all that seeks to destroy life. God shares with us in these moments of great pleasure when we are glad to be alive. However, most of our lives are generally lived between the lows and the highs and the scenery appears to be a blend of bad and good. In those times too God walks with us as our companion and offers us help along the way.

I do not know how life feels for you at the present, more like a Good Friday, or an Easter Day, or somewhere in-between. However, it is my belief, like the apostle Paul’s, that there is nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God. So, this Holy Week and Easter, I hope and pray that you will know something of God’s loving presence, however bad or good life seems to be.