

PARISHES OF  
**ST PIUS X, ALDERLEY EDGE, ST BENEDICT'S, HANDFORTH**

**AND**

**SACRED HEART & ST TERESA'S WILMSLOW**

**WEEKLY REFLECTION**

**Sunday 22nd March 2026 Fifth Sunday of Lent**

**The Way of the Cross**

**Jesus is nailed to the Cross**

*“Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals - one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”” Luke 23:32-34*

*“But (Thomas) said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.”” “Then (Jesus) said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”” John 20: 25&27*

Jesus is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). Jesus climbed willingly onto the cross in atonement for our sins. The Nicene creed reminds us, ‘For our sake he was crucified..’ Jesus pays the price, the ultimate price - he gives His life for us. His sacrifice removes the barrier of sin and enables us to be reconciled to God; to be restored to a right relationship with God the Father.

Saint John Henry Newman, in his meditations on the Stations of the Cross, comments upon Jesus’ condemnation to death by Pontius Pilate, “Jesus is condemned to death. His death-warrant is signed, and who signed it but I...?”

We each individually helped to sign Jesus’ death warrant when we first seriously sinned. Do we not also each help to hammer those nails in just a little bit harder when we continue to sin? Particularly when we consider what we are about to do and think, ‘I know what you want God, but I don’t care what you want, I want what I want.’ That type of sin?

I watched an Italian film recently where a little boy loves Jesus so much, spends so much time looking at Jesus on the cross that, in a dream-like sequence, he goes up to the cross and pulls the nails out of Jesus’ body as it is crucified and Jesus is able to climb down from the cross and walk free. Jesus walks right out of the church in which the crucifix the boy is contemplating is hung. It struck me as a hugely powerful image of what we could achieve if we really loved Jesus. Do we love Jesus enough to want to go up to Him and pull the nails out of His hands and His feet, because we can’t bear what our sins have done to Him and because we want to relieve His suffering?

Are we resolved to live our lives so that we can be confident that, at the hour of our death, Jesus will say to us, as he did to the 'good' thief, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise"?

The gospel narratives of both Luke and John make certain to tell us that Christ's resurrected body carried the scars of the nails from the cross. If they did not tell us, it might be easy for us to assume that His resurrected body would have been healed of the scars. That the evidence of His suffering would be somehow wiped away. But no, His scars remain; a sign of His true humanity as well as His true divinity. He was "made like (us) in every respect.." Hebrews 2:17.

Graham Kendrick, in his beautiful hymn 'The Servant King', reminds us:

Come see His hands and His feet  
The scars that speak of sacrifice  
Hands that flung stars into space  
To cruel nails surrendered

After His resurrection, Jesus' wounds become a sign of victory over sin. The evidence of what he suffered remains, but He is glorified through that physical testimony - He bears His scars to fully reveal His glory. The cross becomes a place of victory - victory over death and over the power of Satan.

When we sin, we wound Christ, we wound the church - the body of Christ - other people, but most of all we wound ourselves. Even after we are forgiven, we carry the wounds of sin. Some of those wounds can be healed on earth through reconciliation and restitution but some cannot and we carry those scars with us through the rest of our earthly life.

When we hide ourselves in the wounds of Christ, we unite ourselves with the suffering of Christ and we allow ourselves to be healed by His grace, through the power of His infinite mercy, in a mystical way that draws us closer to His heart, even while we remain on earth. While we ourselves, 'look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.'

**Lord by your cross and resurrection  
you have set us free.  
You are the Saviour of the world.**

Rachel Grayson