

## **#RedWednesday REFLECTION**

### ***Stat crux dum volvitur orbis***

*'The cross stands while the world revolves'*. This motto of the Carthusian Order has many layers of meaning. The saying helps make sense of the suffering and sometimes death of Christians for the faith.

*'The cross stands while the world revolves'*. The cross stands because the cross has a permanent place in human lives. There has always been injustice, and violence against the good. Sometimes this happens with a particular intensity. In parts of the Middle East today, an unusual and widespread savagery has broken out. Human beings are capable of passionately and calmly devoting themselves to the destruction or uprooting of people who are, in reality, their brothers and sisters. That propensity for evil is part of our fallen human condition and is revealed in its full hideousness in the butchery of the cross.

A great writer once said that *'Jesus will be in agony until the end of the world'*. Christ is in agony in his suffering members. That agony does not simply pass. It exists very much in the present and will exist in the future. *'The cross stands while the world revolves'*.

It can be hard even to think about what some people endure. It can be painful merely to contemplate the fact that, humanly speaking, many people find no happy ending. Yet when many people die, they die with the words of Jesus on their lips. The martyrs on the beach in Egypt turned to the Father, in the Lord's own prayer. The cross stands, because the injustice it represents has a permanent place in the world. But the cross also stands in another sense, because it is God's own cross. It is the sign of a divine love that can never be extinguished. Whatever else may be taken away from us, there is always someone to whom we may turn and who will embrace us. It is Christ crucified.

On the cross it appeared that God had been vanquished. As so often, humanity and goodness appeared to have been crushed. Jesus was killed, and yet the cross endures. It stands because it is sustained by what does not change.

*'The cross stands while the world revolves'*. The world may revolve. Fashions come and go and public opinion rushes from one event to another. Sometimes Christianity itself falls out of favour. The still point lies in the cross, the sign of a divine fidelity to human beings that can never be destroyed.

In faith and in prayer, something of the stillness of the cross may be learned. It may be imitated even by those who are spared the violence of the cross, in work for peace and reconciliation and in solidarity with those who suffer. *'The cross stands while the world revolves'*.

**AMEN**