

GOOD FRIDAY 2010
Wendy Wilkinson
St. Aidan's Episcopal Church
Virginia Beach Va 23452

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us! We say this every time we celebrate the Eucharist. Today we enter into that moment with Christ. Jesus is dead. Jesus walked into the "Valley of the shadow of death." He died because of our sins, our failure to accept God's outpouring of love for us. The self-emptying love of God began at the Incarnation and finds its fulfillment on the cross. God in Jesus is one with humanity's sorrows.

God is assuring us that no one is beyond the love of God. In the Apostles' Creed we proclaim that Jesus "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended to the dead." Even those who may not know Jesus in this life will know him in the next. God's abundant love is available to everyone.

Today is the day that humanity rejected God's love, Jesus died. Today, we stand at the foot of the cross. This afternoon many of us along with people from other churches walked the Stations of the Cross in Town Center. People at my other church, St Stephen's in Newport News are walking the Stations of the Cross this evening. In walking the Stations of the Cross we join in solidarity with those in pain and sorrow around the globe. We walk with the first disciples who now are this evening feeling the pain of Jesus' death. Hiding in fear behind locked doors. Today is the day that the disciples were bereft of God's presence with them, as Jesus felt the emptiness on the cross. Jesus the Living Waters thirsts for God. Jesus entered the "Valley of the shadow of death."

We know the outcome of the story, but on this day the disciples did not. They had walked with Jesus, eaten with Jesus, talked with Jesus, listened to Jesus. And today Jesus died on the cross. They had taken his body down and buried it in a tomb. They wondered, "where is God?" Imagine the grief they experienced. Jesus at his crucifixion was God most fully experiencing our grief.

How many of us have walked through "the valley of the shadow of death" when a loved one dies, when the doctor says, you have cancer? Where are you God? Then with our loved ones we walk through the emptiness, the fear, the grief, "where are you God?!" Do we get an answer? Or like Jesus is there only silence?

We know the end of the story, but tonight and tomorrow we are with the first disciples in their emptiness, fear and grief. Where are you God in the suffering? God is there hanging with us on the cross.

The composer J.S. Bach gave us music to meditate on God's outpouring of love for us on the cross in his composition, O Sacred Head, Sore Wounded. #168

In a few moments we will sing this beautiful chorale, but for right now listen to stanzas 1, 2 & 5. As Jamie and myself play Bach's chorale please read the words to yourself entering into Christ's passion.