

## **Good Friday Reflection 2010**

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**“Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” Luke 23:44-46.**

Jesus’ final words. The curtain of the temple rips in two. The sun goes out. Jesus gives a great cry. And then – “father, into your hands I commend my spirit.”

It would have been easier for him not to speak.

He has followed his heavenly father’s commands here, to the place where flesh parts from flesh, the edge of the pit, where pain grips every last sinew and each breath makes the body choke. Jesus has done what was asked of him.

It would have been so easy to sleep instead. To slip into the gentle, velvet embrace of death, to let darkness cover his eyes, to let the pain melt away. To lie quietly in the tomb, his work on earth completed. To let it all end.

But no. No, that isn’t right. It does not end yet.

Jesus commends his spirit into the hands of God. The Wild God, who has led him to this place of utter agony. Who has asked this sacrifice from him, which he has freely given. And then Jesus says – ‘Father, I will go further. I will go

further with you than this dark and painful and flesh-rending moment, when my spirit is wrenched away from my body. I will come and follow you.’

Jesus promises to go past death. He does not give in to the quiet dark, the release from pain, the promise of an end. It is so inviting, when we feel we are being shattered and cannot fight any longer, to fall backwards into that quiet. It is far, far harder to carry on living inside that pain, to nurture life where nothing but barren earth seems possible.

We know how the story ends. Jesus’ willingness to continue past the borders of death will lead into life. But Jesus did not know that as he spoke these words. He accepted the Wildness of what God was asking of him, even as it tore him apart.

From that breaking came the New Life that is so rich, so abundant – so wild – that we will celebrate on Sunday morning.

But now – tonight – we follow the signpost of the Cross. We wait out our vigil with the body, now that Jesus’ spirit has been commended to God. We trust with Jesus, as we put ourselves into God’s hands. In the unknown darkness, we will not be alone.