

LENT 2024

# JOURNEY to FREEDOM

GOOD FRIDAY, 29<sup>TH</sup> MARCH

**READ: Matthew 26:45-55**

***‘Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?’*** Matthew 26:53-54

I recently visited Lichfield Cathedral. If you have been you will have walked past the white marble statue called ‘Sleeping Children’ (1817AD) which shows two sisters asleep on a bed in each other’s arms. As one reads the plaque above the statue one is gripped by the tragedy of their deaths and the tranquil beauty of the piece. Noticing my interest, a cathedral volunteer suggested I felt one of the feet to discover that the artist Sir Francis Chantrey had left a piece of the marble uncarved, apparently because he believed that only God was able to create perfection.

On this Good Friday we pause to reflect on the imperfections of our world. The garden of Gethsemane in Mathew 26 was the setting for the failing of the disciples to pray; the betrayal of a friend; the breakdown of trust and the onslaught of violence. How have we let down Jesus recently? How may we have been as guilty of desertion from Jesus as those in the garden that night?

On this Good Friday we pause and remember from Exodus 12 the threads of sacrifice that weave their ways through God’s salvation story. We remember the Israelites walking through their flocks to select the perfect animal that would be an acceptable sacrifice to pay for the sins of the people. We remember the cost of perfection and the priority to give to God the very best. What does ‘giving God our best’ look like for us? Is that something we need to think through on this day?

Only God is able to create perfection. Only He was able to step in and provide the perfect, sinless, spotless, sacrifice. The cross became the final altar on earth to be stained with the blood of the lamb—Jesus Christ, the only one who could take away the sins of the world (John 1:29).

On this day let us choose to put our faith in Christ alone. Let us give Him our thanks and praise for the cost He paid; the sacrifice He made and the life of perfection He led for us.

**Let us pray:**

*Lord, we come to You seeking forgiveness for the times we have let You down.*

*Lord, we come to You seeking Your mercy for the imperfections of this fallen world.*

*Lord, we come to You in thanksgiving for the sacrifice You paid for us.*

*By Your Spirit Lord reveal to us how we can live generously, love sacrificially, and share You boldly this Easter time. Amen.*

**The Revd Jenny Brown, Associate Vicar of St Anne’s Shevington**