



EMMANUEL DAILY DEVOTION – THURSDAY 18TH MARCH 2021

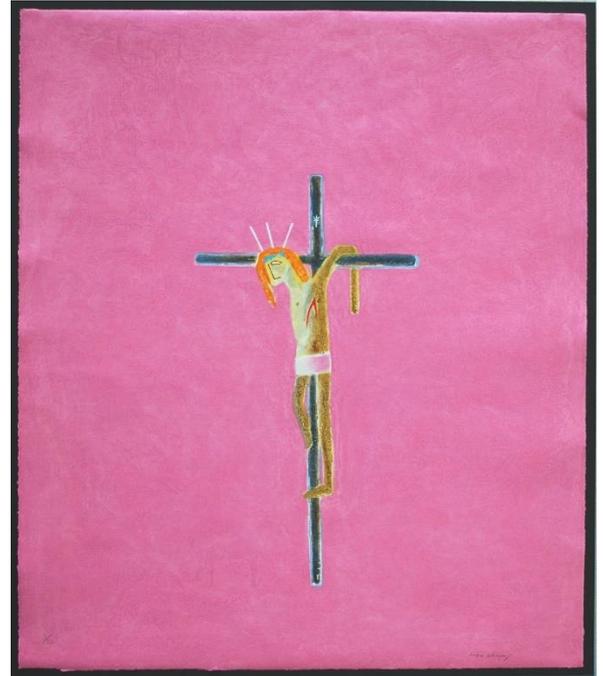


Create a peaceful space to pause, and allow yourself to feel God's presence alongside you, as near to you as your own breath. In following the reflection below, as a church we will draw closer to God and to one another as we grow in faith and deepen our sense of belonging to God.

Mark 16:25, 29-32 'Derided, Mocked, Taunted'

²⁵ It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. ²⁹ Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, 'Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, ³⁰ save yourself, and come down from the cross!' ³¹ In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. ³² Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe.' Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

If I was braver, I would have included this Devotion during Holy Week, but somehow, I can't quite bring myself to!! What an astonishing piece of art... though there may be some of you looking at it seriously debating whether it is in fact art at all. Others may be wondering what on earth was the Methodist Church doing buying it for the Modern Art Collection?



'Pink Crucifixion'
2004, Craigie Aitchison (1926-2009)
Etching on Paper

It's not just pink but *bubble-gum* pink. Jesus has orange hair, an arm draped over the cross and his 'crown' is anything but. Also, Craigie Aitchison was apparently a huge Bedlington terrier fan, and originally such a dog was at the foot of the cross. It got painted over, but the eagle-eyed will still be able to see the outline. Are you thinking what I am thinking? Was the artist actually trying to be offensive, provocative, shocking? This depiction is like no other I have ever seen for sure.

I don't know whether the artist intended to put himself in the shoes of the passers-by, the chief priests, the scribes, and those crucified with Jesus – all of whom 'derided... mocked... taunted' him. At first glance it might appear he did, but actually Craigie Aitchison painted many works showing of the crucifixion, calling it 'the most horrific story I have ever heard' ¹. Perhaps any depiction – even this one – recalls Christ's suffering, sacrifice, and death. Maybe such a shocking piece makes us think even more deeply about such things, because we're sifting through layers of garish colour and jarring detail. At its heart, of course, it still shows the central image of the love of God, Jesus Christ facing appalling death. Art often provokes strong feelings, and I would be surprised if many said they loved this picture. But if it provokes us to contemplate the crucifixion with a fresh perspective, and to be shocked anew... perhaps that's no bad thing.

Prayer: Crucified God, you were followed, adored, praised, and listened to;
then turned on, ridiculed, laughed at and abused; put to the most awful death.
Crucified God, you are often today ignored or overlooked by our world, drenched in apathy.
Grant us the courage to follow your journey to the cross, in all its difficulty and pain;
courage to tell others how your love for the world was so deeply, shockingly expressed;
courage to hope that your resurrection love is stronger than death. Amen.