



Ordinariate of Our Lady of the Southern Cross

Easter Message 2017 – Rev Msgr Harry Entwistle, Ordinary

We see crosses on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday, on fruit buns, on roadsides, on church buildings, jacket lapels and on jewellery. We see them destroyed in graveyards and in war-torn countries, and banned from the public arena in the name of political correctness and inclusivity.

Yet in 2016, some 90,000 people were slaughtered because they would not abandon their faith that the cross symbolises.

The first Christians would not understand how the Western world is able to treat the Cross as an empty symbol. They worshipped the God who they believed had revealed himself as a human and who suffered the most brutal, shameful, sadistic death of crucifixion.

To be faithful to a leader whose death was shameful meant owning the shame. Early Christians were ridiculed and persecuted for this and so it was the fish, not the cross that became the public symbol of their faith.

It was after the conversion of Emperor Constantine to Christianity, that the Church began to understand that the cross was not the place that shame overcame Jesus, but where the evil of shame was overcome by Jesus.

The Epistle to the Hebrews encourages believers not to lose heart because Jesus ‘endured the cross, despising the shame and is now seated in glory at God’s right hand.’ (Heb 12:2-3)

Jesus transformed the shame of the cross through showing that here, in the most brutal way possible, God suffers with us, because of us and on behalf of us so that in recognising that love, we can respond by worshipping him within the Church community and by living our lives in the way Jesus showed us.

Jesus being raised to glory on Easter Day is our assurance that if we follow his path, we will never be separated from God in this world and the next.

I urge all Christians to revere, wear and display the Cross with pride. Not as an empty symbol, but as a positive witness to the faith we not only believe, but which symbolises our way of life as servants of God and others.

Christianity is the most persecuted religion in the world at this time so lift the cross high because its shame has become the door to the salvation of all.

May you have a blessed and holy Easter.