

Saturday 17th August 2019



This is me

*Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."
After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side.
Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.*

[John 20:19b-20]

Perhaps last week you may have been thinking I have a truly rosy view of life and the world – after all, living full of joy all the time is not that easy. In this passage from John, Jesus shows the disciples his scars: his great act of love for all creation has left a permanent mark – the scars of the crucifixion. This act will always be a part of who Jesus is.

This is also true of us: whether physical, mental or emotional, we all carry the marks of the past with us. Some of those marks fade in time, but many are permanently part of who we are. There is one song in *The Greatest Showman* which encourages us to accept our scars, to accept who we are. The song, 'This is me', is probably the biggest breakout hit of the film. All the social outcasts have found a home in Barnum's circus, but when he snubs them at a fancy party, they look back on all that has happened over their lives and choose to own who they are.

I appreciate that this is very difficult. Self-acceptance is really difficult, as is self-love, by which I mean liking yourself as you are rather than any sense of vanity. God calls us to love others as we love ourselves; if we cannot love ourselves, scars and all, it is even harder for us to love other people. One hymn that reminds me of this is 'Let love be real' by Michael Forster (*Singing the Faith* 615), reminding us to love others as God loves us, without manipulation, equally.

*Great God of Love,
you show us who we really are.
Sometimes we don't like what we see in the mirror;
we don't like the person we are,
yet you love us, scars and all.
Help us to love ourselves – truly love ourselves,
recognising our scars, the things that make us, us.
Through this, help us to truly love others,
not seeing them through the world's eyes
but through your eyes.
Amen*

Prayers for August 2019 by Revd Claire Rawlinson
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