

PREPARING FOR GRIEF

Traditional Christians remember Jesus' last days before Easter...

It's a 40 day story according to the Bible reports...
so some Christian pilgrims today flock toward Jerusalem
to carry rented crosses
trying to remember how it might have been for Jesus.

We now know that the Bible stories were written by different ones
living in different decades from one another
in the first century after Jesus was executed...

so there is a question about whether this could be history or not.

Many are surprised to learn that the church preceded the Bible...

that it was a couple of centuries or so before the Bible was finalized...
which makes us wonder...at least it makes me wonder.

I can imagine Jesus and friends going to Jerusalem as Jews did
to celebrate Passover...

which provides a framework for telling a story of how Jesus died...
tradition with some ancient memory and creative imagination.

The Gospel writers prepare us for his death having him say more than once...

that he was going to Jerusalem to die...
a terminal diagnosis with limited years and months left...
disbelieving denial continues to hope against reality.

So the Easter story begins telling of a death march of friends

with the one they called master and rabbi...
first we are groomed for a great grief.

And when the story of his actual death is told

the grief response is not different from all human grief...
weeping and denial and attempts at running away from it.

What a loss it would be...

they describe his death blending his suffering with grace...
forgiving his executioners
before breathing his last.

No fair skipping to the end of the book...

first must come the dark...
just as in our own grief journeys...
it's too soon talk about light when it's so terribly dark.

Art Morgan, March 14, 2019

PASTORAL COMMENT

My pastoral experience is that ministry moves you from one grief to another. Sometimes there are weeks in between, but sometimes only hours. If you are going to be a "Reverend" you better become acquainted with grief and grieving. I'm not sure anyone, "Reverend" or not, can prepare for grief. Grief happens ready or not.

And some times are for waiting through a pending grief, expected but not quite yet. I wrote the above words during such a time. I've not yet processed a recent dying time but here comes another. You can know its coming but the arrival has its own weight. And I am aware of several others on their own pre-Easter journeys. The Easter stories are not likely historical, but they are unbelievably true.