

# *MM Final Winter Blue Sheet — St Patrick's Day 2015*

## *Morgan's Moment...*

"Have faith!" he said as I passed by  
the other morning at gym.  
Was that what he really said...  
my wandering ears wondered?  
Gym talk is mostly banter...  
we stick mostly to our routines.  
Was that a theological statement...  
or something I missed?  
So I turned back and asked...  
"Faith in what?"  
He might have said like many do...  
"My faith is in the Bible."  
I was already regretting asking...  
as I awaited his answer.  
He just pointed up...  
a wordless laugh.  
Faith and belief are sort of similar...  
and highly over-rated I suspect.  
So what happened to Jesus on Easter?  
Agreement is hard to find.  
I suspect my gym friend wouldn't say  
but he might point up.  
What would you say?

—Art Morgan

## **BOOK CORNER**

Although I haven't preached much in the past 35 years or so, I have maintained my life long discipline of biblical study and theological scholarship. Most clergy don't have the luxury of enough time to do as much of that as they might like.

This season I've re-visited the context writing about the Roman Empire and history during the period preceding and during the sudden emergence of Christianity as a religion. My main book has been Will Durant's volume III of the History of Civilization: "*Caesar and Christ.*"

## **ANOTHER GOOD HISTORY**

Diarmaid MacCullough's  
"Christianity — The First 3,000 Years"  
1000 pages. I suggest the first 230

All preaching needs context. Durant and MacCullough offer vibrant and interesting context that is especially pertinent to the Easter season.

## **CHRISTIAN ARROGANCE**

Does it seem that we are hearing more and more stories of racial violence and religious persecution and discrimination?

As I started writing this, my latest Christian Century arrived. The editor gave me a lead line:

*"...the almost daily news of lethal, religion-inspired violence: the Charlie Hebdo massacre, the deadly shooting in Copenhagen of a Jewish man, the executions of Muslims and Christians by the so-called Islamic State, and the incidents of anti-Semitism in France."*

Note he doesn't mention any from the United States.

Another feature article is called "Martyrs"

*"The persecution of Christians reached historic levels in 2014, according to Open Doors USA which estimated that 100 million Christians around the world face dire consequences for practicing their faith."*

Note that the article only talks of Christians being persecuted. Persecution of religions minorities is a terrifying fact of history.

On this St Patrick's Day we could add the Irish (and Catholics) to those of a different faith variety who faced persecution in the U.S. The arrogance of sending missionaries to Christianize native people away from tribal spiritual religions.

So I hope Christians will not think they are the only ones under attack and that others are the only ones doing the attacking. Read our history from the Roman times to this. It is full of horrible brutality of Christians towards other who differed, and even towards other Christians of different creeds and practices.

Easter is a feel-good day for Christians, but how arrogant it must seem to other religious traditions to see Jesus portrayed as the triumphant, worldly Christ, King of kings, Lord of Lords. We lament the those millions of Christians suffering for their religion. Let us also, in the spirit of Jesus lament the persecution of millions of others.

It is a season for humility, for encouraging people to live by the best guide they can find. If your path is Judaism, become the best Jew you can. That's what Jesus did. If your path is Buddhism or Hinduism or Mohammedanism or Mormonism or Christianity...or any other path that lights spirit life within you...truly walk that path. Live it. Do it. Stand by it. Don't force it on anyone else. Respect the light in others. And respect the wisdom of those who separate religion from state. Just my personal opinion.

— Art Morgan, March 17, 2015

## **WHAT I REALLY SAID**

If any are among the few who may wonder what I actually say at Easter at our annual Easter champagne brunch check our web page.

<http://www.97330.com/Moment-Ministries/>

(Press CONTROL then CLICK the Link)

Open the listing of Sermons. Several Easter sermons are included. Not having looked at them for some years (who reads old sermons?) I found myself hooked as I was reading them. I would be interested in responses from anyone who happens to read any of them.

## **MOMENT MINISTRY EASTER APRIL 5**

The brunch and celebration will be at our home on Airport Avenue.