



Stations of the Cross 2015

It is really good, for a second year, to be able to welcome *ArtBelow's* Stations of the Cross exhibition to St Marylebone Parish Church.

For centuries, the Stations of the Cross have provided Christians with a tangible way of entering into the journey of Christ from his judgement before Pilate to his death on the cross at Golgotha and a way of dealing with some of humanity's darkest and deepest emotions.

Once again this year, a number of highly regarded contemporary artists have offered their responses to the *Via Dolorosa*.

The Stations of the Cross can help Christians - and non-Christians - to reflect on themes of sin, betrayal, torture, death, execution and loss; as well as themes of resurrection, new life and hope offered through Christ's vanquishing of all the forces of evil and decay, darkness and destruction.

Last year's exhibition was a great success and brought many thousands of new visitors into the Georgian splendour of St Marylebone Parish Church and I hope that the same will be true this Lent.

Perhaps most prominent among this year's works are Paul Benney's great work *Pentecost* - which hangs above the altar and which takes us on through Lent and Easter to the coming of the Holy Spirit on the gathered Church at Pentecost, and the world premiere of Schoony & Reynolds' *For Pete's Sake*, which uses a body cast of the musician Pete Doherty.

Most of the images in the show bring together centuries' old depictions portrayed in new and challenging ways and people might well wonder why an artist has chosen to portray and exhibit Doherty's body cast as the crucified Jesus.

Christians believe that Jesus' death on the cross, followed by his resurrection from the dead, not only draws the whole of creation deeper into God's love but also remakes the universe in God's image and likeness.

Sin, death, decay - all that wars against life and light and love (just read the words printed on the suspended cross) - are done away and the endless possibilities of God's new creation are opened up for all.

Doherty's battle with addiction and a self-destructive lifestyle have been well catalogued in the press throughout his career; today, having successfully completed rehab treatment in Thailand, Doherty seeks to live a new life free of the things which had come very close to destroying him.

Hopefully Schoony & Reynolds' work will help visitors to the exhibition stop and reflect not only Christ's Passion and Resurrection - and what this means for them, but also to reflect on what in their own lives might be life enhancing or life denying.

I hope that this exhibition of the reflections of the twenty contemporary artists who have contributed to it will not only serve to highlight the *Missing Tom Fund* but will lead visitors on a spiritual through the agony of the cross to the light and hope and joy of Easter.

The Revd Canon Dr Stephen Evans, Rector of St Marylebone, London, NW1 5LT