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Dear friends and parishioners,

There are very few pictures of the resurrection – unsurprising really when you think about it, for how do you paint that? Those that exist struggle to capture the moment (for there are no descriptions of it in the bible); usually there are Roman soldiers snoring in the comers, propped up on their swords, broken stones or the top of a tomb lying to one side, and Jesus, rising or risen, robed usually either in the white of grave clothes or sometimes draped in the more symbolic red of kingship – halo often glorious and glinting...

If your eye is drawn only to the red and to the gold you can easily miss the most profound part of many of the images. Jesus almost always has arms outstretched, as though still on the cross, and in his palms are the red marks where the nails pierced, and in his feet the same, and the gash in his side where the soldier's spear was thrust.

The risen Jesus is the wounded Jesus – he is one and the same. What does this mean? Well, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote in the concentration camp from which he was taken to his death "Only a suffering God can help." To have written these words from such a world's end place as a Nazi concentration camp gives them a validity which neither you nor I could hope to give them.

God suffers because he loves, because he chooses to love, not to reserve the power which is his, but to expend it so that we can know that he experiences the pain, the suffering and the struggle that we as humans experience. God's love, like all authentic love, is not destroyed by the response that Jesus received from the hands of the humans who condemned him. God's love is crucified, but it is not killed; because it is faithful love, and therefore ceaseless and timeless. The rebuffed, the strained, the struggling love of God is to be trusted. It is held up before us on the cross, and it is still there on Easter Day; seen in the wounds of Jesus. The risen Lord is a wounded Lord; it is the suffering love of God which is indestructible and everlasting. To the one whose love they had known and whose suffering they had seen the disciples found themselves committed for all the future.

With my love and prayers, this Eastertide and always,

Nicola