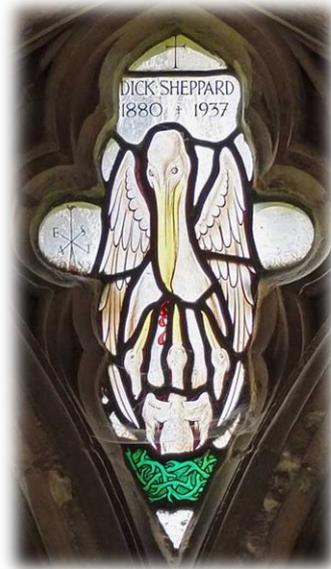


FAITH IN THE WORLD-15

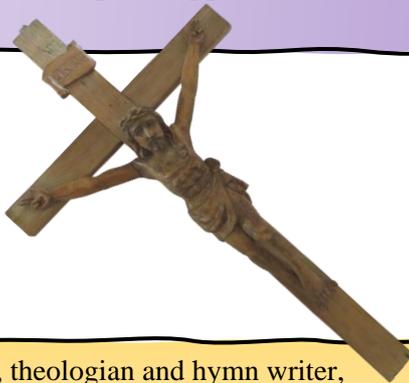
SACRIFICE

When you are poor you often feel very powerless. Chinese student Dan-Dan must have felt that way when her friend became very seriously ill with a brain condition that would have left her in a vegetative state without treatment. The treatment required was going to cost the equivalent of £15,000 and coming from a farming community, there seemed little chance of being able to get the treatment for her friend. But Dan-Dan was a resourceful young woman, having already gained a place at university in spite of her humble background, and she decided she was going to do all she could to save her friend.

She did something quite extraordinary, and put an advert online, offering her hand in marriage to anyone who would donate the £15,000 needed for her friend's treatment, effectively offering her own life for her friend's well-being. Critics accused her of going too far, but the chief surgeon at the Jinan Oilu Hospital supported her in her efforts.



The "pious pelican", a common symbol of the sacrifice of Christ in older churches. When food is scarce pelicans shed their own blood to feed their chicks.



In this song, theologian and hymn writer,

Vicky Beeching, sings about the wonder of the cross and the sacrifice of Christ.

<https://youtu.be/UCstpSI5Ys4>

As you listen to it reflect upon what this sacrifice means for you.

- What do you think of Dan- Dan's gesture?
- Is what she was offering noble, incredible, or going too far?
- What might you have done in her position?
- Do you think there might have been an ulterior motive for her advert?

"A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself." ~ Joseph Campbell



John 15 v 9-15

9 *“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.*

In verse 13 in the scripture verse it talks about a greatest kind of love- why is that both so noble and so difficult to live up to?

Why does Jesus make such a big deal about love here?

How do you feel to read that Jesus calls you “his friend?”

How has Jesus “laid his life down for his friends?”

How should we respond?



Teach us, good Lord,
to serve you as you deserve,
to give and not to count the cost,
to fight and not to heed the wounds,
to toil and not to seek for rest,
to labour and not to ask for any reward,
save that of knowing that we do your will. Amen.



In world war two some prisoners of war in the Far East were forced to build a railway line. Conditions in the camp were horrendous, and not only were the guards cruel towards the prisoners, but the prisoners fought each other over food, water, even shoes, just to survive .It really was every man for himself. After their day’s work, their shovels were counted by the guard. One day the guard became enraged; one shovel was missing The prisoners were lined up and ordered to stand there until someone owned up to stealing it. No one said it was them. The guard shouted, but still no one owned up and so the guard threatened to kill them all if no one owned up. One man stepped forward and said he had taken it. The guard immediately killed him. Later on, at the guardhouse, the shovels were counted again. NO shovel was missing! This innocent man had sacrificed his life to save others.

The news that this man willing sacrificed his life so that the rest of them could live, had a huge effect upon the prisoner and the men who had been only looking out for themselves and fighting, began to treat each other like brothers.

When they were set free from the camp, the allies who rescued them, were amazed that the survivors, who had been so badly mistreated, were even able to offer forgiveness for their former captors.

Two thousand years ago and more, another innocent man stepped forward, and sacrificed his life to save us that we might have eternal life.

“Greater love has no one than this than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”