

28<sup>th</sup> March 2024

## Communion

**"I set you an example, that you should do as I have done for you."**

Bible, *John 13:1-15*

### ***Thursday of Holy Week – John 13:1-17, 31b-35***

*This week is about people in the Holy Week narratives  
in whom we might recognise ourselves.*

It was the end of a long and stressful week. The last thing I needed was to give Communion to a dying man. "There's no point," the Ward Sister had said. "Michael's been restless ... just got him settled ... unresponsive now." "But his brother's asked me to." "OK, then. But don't mess things up ..."

I slipped behind the screens. "Communion?" I said to the brother by the bedside. "Aye," he responded. "But that'll be for Mick. I'm off for a smoke." I was weary as I arranged the chalice and Communion bread on the bedside cabinet. I laid my hand on Michael's, hearing the Ward Sister's words in my head, *There's no point*. And Michael opened his eyes. It took him a moment to focus, but then he said faintly, "Communion, Tom?" I nodded, because I couldn't find my voice. And Michael nodded too.

A crumb of bread in the corner of his mouth ... wine on a little sponge on his lips ... a focussed intensity ... and a silent touch of our hands. "Peace be with you," I said. And Michael whispered, "And also with you."

Michael died that evening, in the presence of his brother and the nurses. He never lost his peacefulness. And I never lost my peacefulness either, the Peace that a dying man had given to a tired chaplain, as he ministered to me in the bread and wine of our shared Communion.

### **This Sacramental time**

Bread and wine, set out on a table, enough for you and me, and anyone else who might come along. Wine and bread, in a cup, on a plate, the ordinary becoming sacramental, in the mystery of not knowing how. Words and thoughts, set out in a book, enough for you and me, and anyone else who might hear these words. Thoughts and words, never trapped in a book, but offering a meaning beyond the pages, in the mystery of holy thoughts. You and me, round a table of communing, enough to fill this place with a congregation of saints and angels. Me and you, beckoned to this feast, enough to fill our souls, in the peace and wonder of this sacramental time.

*Adapted from "This Sacramental Time" from  
'A Blessing to Follow' by Tom Gordon – [www.ionabooks.com](http://www.ionabooks.com)*

### **A prayer for today**

*Me and you, you and me, together, in peace and wonder. Sacramental indeed! Amen*

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