



Around the country, and in so many different parts of the world, people are waiting. Waiting for the latest news of how the coronavirus is spreading. Waiting for the next government guidelines on how we must live so that lives are protected. Waiting in queues in the supermarket. Waiting for things to go back to normal. Waiting for the next time we can see our loved ones. Waiting for test results. Even just waiting in boredom as we stay at home.

This is a peculiar kind of waiting, because there is so much uncertainty. None of us have been in a situation like this before. We do not know what is going to happen, nor can we control the outcome.

For the friends and followers of Jesus, his crucifixion turned their worlds upside down. All their hopes and expectations were invested in this carpenter from Nazareth. They had put their livelihoods on the line, uprooted themselves, changed all their priorities because of what they saw in this man. They had risked everything because they had dared to believe Jesus was the answer to all their longings and barely-voiced hopes.

I wonder what each of Jesus' friends and followers did on the day after his crucifixion, the day we now call Holy Saturday. Waited? But for what? So much of our waiting in uncertainty and grief often gets channelled into activity - so we can act like everything is normal and do our best to hide the pain. We hear later in the gospels that many went back to their jobs, the securities they had been used to. And yet things weren't normal anymore. Everything had changed.

In the midst of waiting there is the stirring of a new thing. There are memories of before, yearnings of what could have been. There are hopes that have been dashed, fears for the future and the uncertainty of the unknown. But waiting suggests we are hanging on for the actions of someone else - the call of the receptionist into the next room, the invitation to walk into the supermarket, the ring of the telephone - so that we can move on to whatever is next.

On the first Easter Saturday, the world was waiting for God.

The disciples didn't know Sunday was coming; that new life was imminent. They had to go through the utter darkness, grief and pain of Saturday before the resurrection of Sunday. Things would never be the same again. That man from Nazareth would be known as God come among us, so that death would not have the last word.

2 min read

Source URL: <https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/speaking-writing/articles/holy-saturday-reflection-archbishop-justin-welby>