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**The Cost of Love**

Dear Reader,

I am writing the day after we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus hoping that my words will challenge rather than threaten.

Although he was a religious leader, the whole of Jesus’ life was political. He was born in a conquered country. His parents fled to a foreign land so that he could grow up safely. The middle class occupation of Joseph meant that they were able to thrive and not be a burden in that country. After working himself as a carpenter, Jesus adopted the life of a mendicant preacher, a holy person who challenged the authorities of his time. Eventually, he became too much of an embarrassment and without the courage to use their own method of executing heretics, the religious leaders took him to the governor to have him killed. Three days after yet another of human history’s barbaric executions, rumours of his resurrection from the dead reach secular historians.

All religions by their very nature tend to be prophetic. We applaud Russian Orthodox priests who spoke out against the actions of President Putin while we condemn those who support him. When the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke against the proposal to export refugees the reaction revealed a cultural double standard using emotive and irrelevant argumentation. The reaction was irrelevant because it ignored that most basic ethical tenet, the golden rule: *Do onto others as you would have done onto you.*

The act of caring for our neighbour is political. It challenges the egoist and the cultural narcissist. It passively judges selfishness. It calls to account those who place self interest higher than justice. It calls for that unfashionable virtue self-sacrifice which we are happy to admire in the people of the Ukraine. It is the action of big hearts and bigger minds. It should and does make us uncomfortable.

I finish with the words of a hymn which have been going through my head as I write:

*This joyful Eastertide away with sin and sorrow*

Surely, we should be seeking the end of sin and sorrow not exporting it.

Easter Blessing at this time of hopeful redemption.

Michael