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**Life on the Hard Shoulder**

Recently I met someone who had given up working for a major breakdown company. He had lost three colleagues on hard shoulder incidents. Saturday evening on my way back I was in a situation where fear was both natural and sensible.

To cut a long story short, I was lying on the hard shoulder replacing a wheel on the outside of our car on the N145 in France. Trucks and most cars were moving into the fast lane for our safety. A box van decided to see how close it could get to my head whilst exceeding the 110 kph speed limit. My words were not what you expect from a person of the cloth.

Immediately afterwards I made a series of decisions based on adrenaline and an inflated sense of duty. I had to get back! I had people to meet and work to do! I was going to drive on skinny tyre all the way to Bedwyn. On my own, I might have spent a very long time driving all the way, breaking the law, and regretting every mile of my decision.

My family talked me out of my stubbornness. I had an involuntary two-day retreat which moved me beyond myself and into a shared empathy with Jesus’ followers in grief. I reflected on departed friends. I meditated on how our thought processes can be ruined by emotion.

When we look at this wonderful time of Easter we find a cornucopia of feelings in the disciples. Peter’s repeatedly impulsively acts to his great regret. Thomas demands a gruesome proof. The women who hear of Jesus’ resurrection are afraid to share the news.

I spoke last month of *stepping beyond oneself.* This means transcending our emotions. A very different thing to suppressing emotions, which many of us were taught as children. Suppression can lead to trauma. The process of coming to terms with the Death and Resurrection of Jesus was conducted within a community that took time to understand. The women move from fear to sharing the news.

Our communities allow us to step beyond ourselves. In Christianity those early years provided the vessel to turn a small ‘rebel’ movement into the rich kaleidoscope that we see two thousand years later. Much as the new spire has been raised at Notre Dame after the flames, out of disaster can come triumph.

I wish you Blessings, Support and Hope this Eastertide as those around you encourage you to transcend yourselves.

*Jesus Christ is risen; He is risen indeed Alleluia.*

Michael