



HAIL

REFLECTIONS ON THE
MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

MARY

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THINGS WE CARRY

BE KIND, FOR EVERYONE YOU MEET IS FIGHTING A HARD BATTLE.

—lan Maclaren

French novelist Andre Malraux once described a country parish priest who had heard confessions for many decades and summed up what he had learned about human nature in this manner: 'First of all, people are much more unhappy than one thinks ... and there is no such thing as a grown-up person.'

A dose of this type of 'tragic realism' about life is quite healthy for those of us who wish to follow Jesus in his journey through suffering and death to new life.

For everyone who joins the human race and accepts their creaturehood (and it is amazing how many people do not!) inevitably experiences, not only the exhilaration of life, but also its darkness: disillusionment, ageing, illness, isolation, loss, meaninglessness, painful choices, and death.

We are all pilgrims on the journey of faith and life. We are all in this together. And it is the beginning of compassion for ourselves and for others when we realise each person we encounter is deep down carrying a heavy cross in their life.

That is precisely the consolation of the Spirit, even amid absence and desolation. Jesus, our brother and Lord, has taken the same pilgrim path.

Consider where Jesus is making his way up to his death carrying the very weapon that will change all our lives. He stumbles. He falls. It was too much for him to carry on his own. In his humility he allowed another to step in, possibly to relieve but most definitely to participate in the pain and suffering he was experiencing. He allowed both himself and another to be human.

So we must all stumble and fall. And that does not mean reading or just hearing about falling. We must actually be 'out of the driver's seat for a while'. Otherwise we will never learn how to give up control to the Real Guide. This is the

necessary pattern of Christian discipleship. Whatever happens to Jesus is what must and will happen to us. Christ has gone before us on the way of the cross.

He has first said 'let me go there'. Such is the Christ poetically described by RS Thomas in his poem, "The Coming":

*And God held in his hand
A small globe. Look, he said.
The son looked. Far off,
As through water, he saw
A scorched land of fierce
Colour. The light burned
There; crusted buildings
Cast their shadows; a bright
Serpent, a river
Uncoiled itself, radiant
With slime.
On a bare
Hill a bare tree saddened
The sky. Many people
Held out their thin arms
To it, as though waiting
For a vanished April
To return to its crossed
boughs. The son watched
Them. Let me go there, he said.*

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Here is the Christ pattern of the journey of faith. In becoming human, in living a life of ordinariness, trial, faith, death, surrender, Resurrection and return to God, he is our 'way'.



Ponder...

The 'things we carry' make us the unique human beings we are - some things are 'inherited' and others are collected along life's journeys. What is the heavy cross you bear? Can you ask Jesus to come alongside and help you to carry it?

'Be kind, because everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.' Does this statement resonate for you? If so, how? If not, why? How does it challenge us as disciples of Jesus?

As he carried his cross, Jesus not only allowed himself to be human - to 'stumble and fall' but he was also humble enough to ask for help. Identify a time when you have been fully human enough to do the same. When have you been able to help a 'burdened' friend? When have you resisted... and why?



IF YOU WANT

If you want, the Virgin will come walking down the road
pregnant with the holy, and say,
"I need shelter for the night,
please take me inside your heart, my time is so close."
Then, under the roof of your soul,
you will witness the sublime intimacy,
the divine, the Christ, taking birth forever,
as she grasps your hand for help,
for each of us is the midwife of God, each of us.
Yes there, under the dome of your being
does creation come into existence eternally,
through your womb, dear pilgrim – the sacred womb of your soul,
as God grasps our arms for help:
for each of us is his beloved servant, never far.
If you want, the Virgin will come walking down the street
pregnant with Light and sing.

—St John of the Cross