

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY EASTER MONDAY APRIL 18TH 2022

Good Morning

“It is the opposite of the nature of God”. With these nine words the Archbishop of Canterbury captured the headlines yesterday. He gave his view on the Government’s plans to transport illegal migrants to Rwanda. He said “it cannot” “stand the judgement of God”. Thus on Easter Sunday he put the character of God firmly at the centre of the News. And central to the faith of Christians is the belief that God’s very nature is to be seen in Jesus - His character engraved in his flesh and blood.

When our children were small and in an idle moment I would take a coin and cover it with paper then shade over it with a pencil until the image of the invisible coin came through in the different substance of paper and lead. It never failed to fascinate them. So Christians believe that the image of the unseen God comes through in the humanity of Jesus.

All that you would expect of God you find in him – a thirst for justice, a hunger for mercy, an enslavement to freedom, the embodiment of Truth, a lover to the end.

The first revelation of God in all religions is creativity – God the Creator of Heaven and Earth. That makes the opposite of God’s nature - destruction.

And Christians believe that the first revelation of God in Jesus is that in spite of being the Creator of the Universe this God is also as vulnerable as a babe in arms.

Thus when we see pictures from Ukraine and elsewhere of children maimed and murdered we can confidently say that destroying them is opposite to the nature of God.

The Easter message is about defying destruction. The Resurrection is God refusing to give the last word to death and destruction. It's a fulfilment of the last petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Deliver us from evil", from all that is opposed to the nature of God.

Over the last few weeks I've taken to praying the Lord's Prayer twice – the second time I do so I imagine I'm in a church in Ukraine kneeling alongside those laid low by destruction. The prayer has taken me to a new depth of understanding and feeling – in a world so threatened by the opposite of the nature of God.

The Right Reverend James Jones KBE