

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY 15<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2019

Good morning

Today is the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Hillsborough disaster. The tremors of the tragedy shook the nation. But that's all that can be said for now because the trials are ongoing.

This past weekend also saw the anniversary of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar which happened tragically one hundred years ago on Palm Sunday.

These and the anniversaries of other public tragedies raise the question as to whether there can ever be closure for those traumatised by such disasters.

Having chaired the Hillsborough Independent Panel and then the Gosport Independent Panel I've been approached by some of the survivors of the Grenfell Tower fire and also by the communities affected through the contaminated blood scandal. These are all subject to various judicial processes.

Those who look on these events from afar often ask me about what the families are after and if it's closure that they're seeking.

I can't speak for any of those caught up in these tragedies, but the more I've immersed myself in their stories the more reticent I've become to answering the question. To be honest, whatever happens in and to the various judicial processes of Inquests and Trials, Inquiries and Panels I don't think there's ever such a thing as closure.

Why? Because there can never be, nor should there ever be, closure to the commitment you have to someone you love and have lost. There may be closure to the judicial process but not to the emotions.

Grief is a journey without destination. There are many milestones along the way when you stop and think of what might have been and what should have been. But as you travel through grief you're not looking for a signpost that reads: The End. There's no finish to the cherishing of someone you love.

This week traces the events leading up to Easter - the betrayal, trial, torture and execution of Jesus. It's the very opposite of closure. Holy Week is designed to keep alive the memory of Jesus who countered closure by telling his followers to keep remembering him.

For two thousand years Christians have refused to call closure on the death of Christ. It's not a morbid obsession, but the cherishing of a life well lived though cruelly cut short.

Holy Week is a defiant remembrance of the injustice that killed him, a symbol of all the injustices that have ever trammelled the goodness of the world.

And closure is not an option when the one you love calls out to be remembered.

The Right Reverend James Jones KBE