

## **Views from the Pews – Mothers at the foot of the Cross**

Are we in a hurry to get through Good Friday in our anxiety to reach Easter Sunday? Do we put Christ's execution in our 'too-hard basket', because the crucifixion story is just too nasty to contemplate? One of the challenges of the Passion story is the contemplation – indeed the confrontation – of Mary's experience as the Mother of the man on the cross.

But all four Gospels are clear that she and a small band of supporters were there – so confront it we must.

It all seems so long ago – different time, different place, different circumstances. Or are they so different after all?

Consider the experiences of the second and third mothers – both in the news recently.

Consider first Lyudmila Navalnaya, mother of Alexei Navalny. There is little doubt that her son's death was no accident. The authorities did their best to disrupt his funeral. Yet she was there, despite the certainty that someone would knock on her door later.

Secondly, consider Diane Foley, whose son was beheaded by ISIS on social media. Her story is of interest to us all because against many odds she actually got to meet one of her son's executioners. She has written a book about it all, which we'll have to read before deciding whether there was any element of forgiveness present in that meeting. But she is reported as finding the meeting useful, which is interesting, given that so much of our current discourse is centred around revenge.

Consider these two mothers first, and then if you can, use the calm of the First Sunday after Easter to revisit the crucifixion narrative, in a different context. Mary's experience at the foot of the cross is followed by that at the tomb. A useful exercise for this season.

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