



Archbishop Jeffrey Driver
The Story of Holy Week and Easter - Church Guardian April 2007

The day that terror ended...

He called it the language of war. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed's confession of involvement in 9/11, to the Bali nightclub bombings, a plot to destroy Heathrow Airport, through to the admission that he killed a US journalist with "my blessed right hand" makes a chilling litany by any definition.

Nearly every time we watch the news, or go through Airport security, we are reminded that our world has changed. I grew up in a world that was fearful of nuclear war between the superpowers. Now it is figures like Khalid Sheikh Mohammed who strike fear into our world.

We see Sunni and Shi'a killed in endless retribution on the streets in Baghdad. Young men in Palestine, carrying the dreams of their mothers and fathers, strap bombs to their chests and offer their lives to old enmities. Australian soldiers patrol the desolate hills of Afghanistan, where the grief and payback seem to be without end.

This is our world; often bloody, exceedingly dangerous and "what goes around comes around", and we are all at risk of being caught in the cycles of vengeance: rich – poor, Christian - Muslim, Sunni – Shi'a, Black - White, Arab - Jew, and the treadmills of retribution and grief keep rolling on.

And on a Friday afternoon, after we had stripped him of his dignity; after his friends had forsaken him; after the soldiers had spat upon him and whipped him; after the trial, when everything was done according to the law; we dragged him up a hill, nailed his hands and feet, and executed him.

And as he hung there bleeding to death, he looked down at us, and he cried out: "Father, forgive."

And the eternal cycle of retribution was derailed. The wheels within wheels of vengeance and payback came to a grinding halt. With a broken figure and a Roman Cross, the cycle of violence was broken. The grief was absorbed and released in the final cry of a dying man: "It is finished!"

This is the story of Holy Week and Easter. It is still the story of hope and peace for our world.

+ Jeffrey