



Judas' Wife by Chris Gollon

“Then Judas went and hanged himself.” Mt 27.5b

The painter Chris Gollon has captured a suspended moment of anguished despair. Though it feels almost intrusive to look, we see a woman whose face is distended with weeping, her nose and mouth reddened and puffy. Something lies under her right hand but she seems to be pushing it away as if it's unbearable. Her eyes are swollen with tears and have ceased to see anything around her. She is somehow isolated, frozen in this horror – whatever it is.

What is it? Who is she? This is Judas' wife with her husband's suicide note under her hand... Did Judas write a note to his wife? We'll never know. Did he even have a wife? We'll never know that either. But one thing Gollon's painting teaches us is that Judas' death had consequences, as all deaths do...

What do we see as we gaze at this painting in the context of coronavirus?

It's impossible not to be catapulted by Mrs Iscariot's devastating pain into the terrible losses of our own time. So many disappointments. So much separation from loved ones. So much mental distress. So much grief. So much anguish at the thought of those who are dying alone.

How are we to respond to our own losses and to those of others? Does the poem (right) by Ann Lewin help? Does it offer you any hope?

Bereavement

Dark place
where, vulnerable, alone,
we lick the wounds of loss.

Wise friends say little,
but hold us in their love,
and listen.

There are no guarantees,
only reports from those
who've been there,
that there is hope,
and life persists.

“To clasp the hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world.”

Karl Barth

Prayer

**Grieving God,
you weep with your world and long
for its solace:**

**as we walk with you to the Cross
deepen our understanding of its
power to save. Amen**