

I need to look away

I need to look away from Ukraine and the Russian invasion, inspired in part by the faith I share, done in the name of Jesus, mother Russia reclaiming her lost children and would-be saving them from the west's profligacy.

I need to look away from Gaza, mauled by my Sunday School heroes, 'God's people', hurt and angry and avenging the terror of October, escalated violence with no seeming end.

I need to look away, but cannot. I lift my eyes to the cross and I see not my Jesus but broken and bloody lives, people crying in God forsakenness. How can there be an end? How can there be hope?

I need to look away again, but fantasy, imagination, love, and hope challenge my despair and Easter defies my reality. What ground have I to hope? What ground have I to live?

In silence, in the listening, in imagining the pain, in embracing the darkness, I hear the call not to give up, not to plummet in despair, not to turn away.

And then he's there again, on the cross, beckoning me to stay, not to run away. How could he believe in love? How can we? I want to stay – for him, for them, for myself. All else were shame and emptiness.