

## **Simon of Cyrene - A face in the crowd.**

A crowd in a market place.

Why are they here? That sea of faces; looking, listening, wondering.

Some are there on purpose - they knew it was happening.  
Some are passing by - they're wondering what is going on.

What can they see?

A man, bloodied and bruised by a night of torture, weighed down by a cross of wood.  
Barely able to see through eyes near blinded by blood and tears.  
But he can see. Just! And what can he see, in that crowd?

He sees a face. One face amidst a sea of faces. His eyes meet those of another.  
It's just a glance. But it's noticed.

Simon was his name. A migrant from Libya, the city of Cyrene. A long way from home.  
An outsider amidst the crowd. Feared by some. But in that glance there was love,  
amazing love.

Jesus fell. Weakened, by exhaustion he might not make it to the place of execution  
They wanted a spectacle to entertain the crowd.  
Someone else must carry that Cross, for a while. He'd do!

The soldiers dragged Simon from the crowd. He'd carry the Cross.

"Take up the cross and follow him" someone jeered. Many laughed.

Simon carried Jesus' burden but a short distance.  
But Jesus carried Simon's burden further - even to death itself.

He carries my burden too, and yours. Our guilt, our lies, our betrayal, our hatreds.

These are the burdens that Jesus carries to the cross.  
For Simon of Cyrene, for me and for you.

Our burdens are transformed on the Cross  
where love is stronger even than death itself.

For Christ is Risen from the dead!  
Alleluia!

Mike Claridge