

## WELCOME

Before we begin our time of prayer and reflection I want to say a little about the artist who will lead and inspire our afternoon – Sieger Köder. He was a contemporary German artist who died aged 90 in 2015. He began his working life as a silversmith and painter – then trained and became an art teacher. He was imprisoned in a POW camp during WW2. And ordained priest in 1971. These are the bare facts and I hope that you will want to find out more for yourselves at the end of the afternoon.

His work is prolific – paintings stained glass windows altar pieces murals – and for those of you who have been on the Camino will be interested to know that he also created 11 stations along one of the camino routes as well as a distinctive camino direction sign.

He himself said that he hoped to preach with each painting and I have personally found deep theological understanding and inspiration from his work for many years. Preparing this reflection for today has made me focus on what it is about his work that has been so significant for me. By the end of the afternoon you may well have had different thoughts and encouragements but I will share some of mine.

I find great freedom in his interpretation of Scriptural figures. He isn't bound by conventional norms but depicts each figure with new insights and sometimes they surprise.

For example he has elsewhere depicted Jesus as a clown – a harlequin.

If you join us on Maundy Thursday, you will see a depiction of the disciples at the Last Supper and they include a Jew a beggar a prostitute an African Gastarbeiter in the striped uniform of a concentration camp. Many of his characters are depicted with great love and tenderness – and his range is utterly inclusive. Everyone

finds a place at Jesus's table in Köder's world— in the full range from affluence to lowliness. Köder's Kingdom is inclusive and committed to social justice.

At times the figures are warm and humorous – at times those figures who represent the crippling institution are shown as harsh and merciless. I find a real earthiness and grounded humanity in Köder's world – I see myself in many of the characters at different times – the harsh and cruel alongside the tender and loveable. Surely much of the depth of his humanity was drawing on his own life experiences. And his message that I find is one of understanding the whole of humanity and finding in each, a moment for redemption and restoration emanating from the healing love that is shown as offered to all.

The journey we will follow is a series called The Folly of God – a path to light. We have used many of the words from the collection itself and some of our own, interspersed with music by Voces 8.

Please allow yourself to be totally absorbed by the art, words and music which will take us on a journey which offers us the colours of the whole of humanity and a glimpse into the depth and mystery of Christ's life and death.

Just a couple of practical points: The text is interspersed with pauses – please don't be disconcerted by them but use them for your reflection

After the 7<sup>th</sup> station we will have a 15 minute break

There will be a slide left on screen with music playing until we are ready to start again

Our final station leaves Jesus in the tomb

After the final reflection, there won't be a coming back together but that last slide will be left on with music – so please leave when you are ready.