Presiding Officer, and Members of the Scottish Parliament, thank you for the opportunity to be with you today.

This week is Holy Week, the most important week in the Christian Calendar. A week in which many Christians follow the story of Jesus route to the cross. For me this week always has the feel of a pilgrimage.

As I follow Jesus footsteps through to his Crucifixion I am reminded of the fear, the pain and the uncertainty of those days for Jesus and those closest to him.

Jesus knew the Cross he had to bear. He knew what was to unfold was his destiny. But that didn’t stop it being agonisingly difficult. And yet he did it with dignity.

My husband and I were recently in Geneva on holiday and we visited the United Nations building there. Outside the compound there is a statue dedicated to Mahatma Ghandi. On it is the inscription ‘My life is my message’.

Many people today in our country, in our world live lives carrying their own crosses. They live in pain, in fear and in uncertainty. It is a huge challenge to bear these crosses with any sense of dignity in a world that at times seems to care little.

Some crosses are easy to spot but many remain hidden. How do we then know if our words and actions are making these crosses heavier and harder to carry?

What message do your words and actions portray?

How much heavier are they making the crosses that others carry?

What is the message of your life?

Jesus said we were to love one another. When we love one another we lighten the load, we share the heavy weights others carry and we offer the chance of fullness of life. We offer restoration, resurrection even, in the here and now.

I will continue my Holy Week pilgrimage over the next few days and after the pain of Good Friday I look forward to rejoicing in the Resurrection of Jesus on Sunday morning. It is truly a joyful time of celebration. May you too have that sense of joy that Easter brings me in your lives. Have a very Happy Easter when it comes.