

Madonna Louise Veronica Ciccone - known to most people simply as Madonna - is perhaps an odd starting point to talk about Easter. In fairness, Madonna does some good things in Malawi, studies the Kabbalah (a type of Jewish mysticism, albeit she was baptised a Roman Catholic - not that these two things are incompatible) and I get the impression there's far more depth to her than the hosiery that first meets the eye.

For me, though, her brassy image, the provocative carnality of her performances, and such catchy numbers as the recent, "Bitch I'm Madonna" are not things I find particularly attractive - and I'm even offended by that song title's lack of punctuation! No, Madonna is not the girl for me. (I'm sure she's gutted...)

However, all the stuff about Madonna I can't abide, completely evaporates when I see her stunning and deeply moving portrayal of the eponymous role in the 1996 musical, "Evita." Great supporting performances from Antonio Banderas, Jimmy Nail and Jonathan Pryce, of course. Yet Madonna was phenomenal; everything she had done before or since, does not compare to this single inspirational role.

And all that makes me think of Easter. God has not always been too impressed with humanity; some of it has been ok, a lot has not. If only someone would totally be in His image, truly begotten, not made. There is one. Jesus proves that the fallible human lot can act out the Divine nature. Ironically, Jesus puts aside his own Divinity to do so - and there's only one way to do that: pass on God's gift of love to us irrespective of who we are or what we've done - even unto death.

This one performance stands out above everything else; nothing can better it, nothing before, nothing since. It continues to inspire and deeply move us. I believe God looks at this and thinks that whatever humanity has done that is not so good, it is forgivable because of this one pre-eminent role. And because Jesus did it, and God's gift of love therefore is completed, we all have access to this grace as brethren and sistren in humanity.

Now listen to Madonna sing, "Don't Cry for me, Argentina." The lyrics speak so much of the despair of Holy Week and the assurance in knowing the Resurrected Messiah...