

Palm Sunday—Year C
Luke 19:28-40
Isaiah 50:4-9a
Psalm 31:9-16
Philippians 2:5-11
Luke 22:14-23:56

It's *overwhelming*. This day is *always overwhelming*, and *chaotic*, and *confusing*, a *cascade of thoughts and feelings*. What we witness is **heroic and devastating and brutal**, and we are **powerless to do anything** to change the course of these events. *Sounds just like our experience of our world just now*. What we are **witnessing** in Ukraine is **heroic and devastating and brutal**, and we are **completely and utterly powerless** over these events.

On *Thursday*, **Anna and I** drove to **Asheville** to **renew our ordination vows** with other **diocesan clergy**. We were **talking about Holy Week**, and she said, *"Time does funny things in Holy Week."* She's right. We **mark these events from 2,000 years ago**, but they hold the **same immediacy**, the **same urgency**, *as if they were unfolding right now*, **right before our eyes**, because the **story of the Passion is ongoing**.

There are *always* those who **pin their hopes on the ONE**—**one person, one idea, one way**. There are *always* those who **do their best to stay loyal, only to flee when it really counts**. There are *always* those who are **jockeying for power and throwing others under the bus**. There are *always* those who are **mean-spirited, enjoying the thrill of power over another**, if only for a second. There are *always* those who would **keep the peace at all costs, and those who would destroy that same peace with unspeakable brutality**. There are *always* those who will **step in and help carry an unbearable load**. There is *always* **head-spinning injustice and innocents who suffer and innocents who die unjustly**. And, there are *always* those who are **steadfast and tend the dying and stay when the others have long since left**.

I don't think the purpose of Holy Week is to understand it; there is **too much going on to understand it**. Quite simply, it **blows our circuit board; our minds can't take it all in**. *But even if we could wrap our minds around this*, **right thinking doesn't always lead us to right action, especially if our hearts are still hard**.

The **purpose of Holy Week isn't to understand it**; the **purpose of Holy Week is to enter into it**. To **step into this week and walk in ALL the shoes that move through these events**. To **look through their eyes, to hear what they hear, to touch what they touch and taste what they taste and smell what they smell; to bear witness with them, to feel in our hearts what they felt in theirs, to experience where Holy Week intersects with the story of our lives and the story of our world right now**.

The **purpose of Holy Week is to enter into it**, to let it turn us **upside down and inside out and spin us round and round**, if it must, *until all the chaos settles at the foot of the cross* and the *only thing that is left is the Lord of Love, stretching out his arms, holding us and the world, anchoring us in a deeper place—a place deeper than violence, deeper than injustice, deeper than death*. This week **empties us of everything**, if we'll let it, *so that we are ready to receive and be filled with love that has been crucified, love that has lived through hell, literally, and yet, will be ready to dance out of the grave when the time comes*.

Don't miss this week. Don't skip from here *to* next Sunday. Risk the journey of this Holy Week; enter into it, *fully*. Life and this world will crucify us again and again and again. *This week*, discover the Love that is crucified, and even so, will dare to rise again. Amen.

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