

Easter Triduum

Holy Thursday, April 1, 2021 | Good Friday, April 2, 2021 | Holy Saturday, April 3, 2021

*"You will live in the land I gave your ancestors;
you will be my people, and I will be your God."*

Ezekiel 36:28

Communication is a two-way street, and there is often a difference between what is said and what is heard. For example, we have heard often that people who are COVID-19 positive should isolate, and that those in the same household should quarantine. Yet, we saw countless times people mask-less and in close proximity, going for a walk in a busy park. A child is told they may choose one stuffed animal for bed and end up surrounded by four different teddy bears instead. God promises to make a great nation of Abraham's children, but is unclear on what kind of great – powerful, mighty, culturally, in character and policy?

Despite the foretelling, despite the prophets relaying God's message, everyone is surprised by the events of the Triduum – Jesus's passion and death. According to their expectation, it wasn't supposed to happen this way. Judas and the other Zealots believed a warrior was to come to finally establish a mighty temporal kingdom. Jesus was not a warrior. His kingdom not of this world. The religious elite believed that a holy man was to come to live in the ways of the Mosaic Laws. Careful to follow the law, Jesus did not let it keep him from loving people, healing and including all. Every group expected a savior in their own likeness and image and because of this, they were all caught unaware.

In the collection of essays *Bird by Bird*, writer Anne Lamott recounts something a priest friend once told her, "You can safely assume you've created God in your own image when it turns out that God hates all the same people you do." Instead of considering how others are made in God's image, we comfort ourselves with a god made in our own image. A god who loves who we love, believes what we believe, values what we seek, and condemns those we condemn.

The king of kings was born into poverty and humility. The Son of God was flesh and blood. The holy man was unorthodox. The revolutionary was a pacifist. The sacrifice

was not in the Holy of Holies, but instead, in the most shameful and painful of deaths. A criminal's death. Like so many who would come after them, the Jews struggled to reconcile the Messiah with the man who would be Reconciliation.

The question of these Triduum days is, are we willing to follow Christ when we have no roadmap, no indication of a hopeful ending? Can we hear him on Holy Thursday when he asks to wash our feet? Do we hear him when he writes his story on cardboard and holds it up for us at an intersection? Can we follow him on Good Friday and believe in him hanging half dead between murderers and thieves? Can we serve him in our advocacy for those condemned to death today? Can we believe in him, remember his message as the stone gets rolled into place? These days, we are being asked – how deep is your hope?