

Kevin's Corner

My Lenten journey this year has been informed by Richard Rohr, my favorite Christian mystic, who sends out a daily devotion designed to help us think in a new way about God and ourselves. He reminded us that each of the four Gospels in the Bible tells of Jesus "finally standing alone, without anyone really comprehending what he's talking about," when he teaches us about the kingdom of God, but with metaphors that challenge the way we think about God's present/future reign on earth. Jesus finally accepts that people are not "hearing" his message about the "reign of God," so he must finally show them God's kingdom, and he must use his own body for this lesson.

In today's "human reign," or rule, it seems that someone must die first, for people to pay attention. And that's what Jesus decided to do. Jesus was literally dying to get our attention, to get us to look at the world in a new and different way, to get us to ask "bigger questions." As I see it, what Jesus was trying to show us was a different way of relating to God. Before Jesus, most religions believed that someone had to "spill blood" (human or animal sacrifice) in order for humanity to approach God. What Jesus showed us was that God was the one willing to spill His own blood (Jesus) in order to reconnect with us.

It wasn't anything that we did that brought God's kingdom into our world. We did nothing to allow for reconciliation with God, instead continuing the human tradition (think of Adam and Eve) of choosing our own way, rather than God's. It was God who loved (loves) us enough to come into our world as a human. It was God who loved us enough to show a new way of living in this world. It was God who loved us enough to shed His own blood, through Jesus, to show us that we could stop shedding blood once and for all.

All of the ancient religions spoke of an angry god (or gods), who required that someone or something had to die in order to appease that god's anger. Our God (the only true God) became angry too, at the continued and continuing rebellion of humans against God's reign of love. Our biblical story of God shows us God's continual (and continuing) response of forgiveness and covenantal love. God keeps His covenant of love every time, while humans, on their own, always choose their (our) own way rather than God's.

This Holy Week, I invite you to consider this God who never gives up on us but always gives us the choice to follow God's way or our own. How many times will we make God (Jesus) weep before we accept the relationship of love that God offers to each of us and follow the way of Jesus?

Truth? It seems that we can't even follow, without Jesus carrying us every step of the way. Remember the poem "Footprints in the Sand?" (<https://www.poetseers.org/the-great-poets/misc-2/footprints-in-the-sand/>) The Bible makes clear that God (Jesus) will carry us every step of the way, if only we will accept the ride.

Will you ride with Jesus this Holy Week, Easter, and eternity? Jesus is waiting for your answer.

Blessings, Pastor Kevin

Happy Easter!