

Lenten Reflection

In the liturgies of Holy Week, we glimpse the power of the crowd and how easy it is for folks to be caught up in what others around us are saying and doing.

We also see how the voice of the crowd can overpower the voice of conscience and the voices of reason, sanity and even love.

What began in the crowd On Palm Sunday as cries of “hosanna” and “hail Son of David” became a few days later “crucify him” and “away with him”. and a disciple’s “I’ll be with you no matter what happens” became “Who’s he? I don’t even know the man.” That’s what can happen when the fear of the crowd gets the better of us.

On one day almost everyone wants to claim Jesus as theirs –as their friend, Messiah and Savior. But a few days later, the same folks are no where in sight - with the exception of a few brave and loyal women and a couple of soldiers and bystanders who jeer, laugh and mock him.

And if we look closely, we may find ourselves in among those crowds.

For at times, haven’t we sided with the crowd hungry for blood or revenge or a scapegoat to blame because we’re either afraid, disappointed or confused?

And, especially in good times, haven’t we claimed Christ as Lord boldly and joyfully but then when things got rougher for us, haven’t we sought refuge in the gods of the moment that can only give us temporary relief or escape.

And haven’t we sometimes chosen what is safe and sorry instead of speaking out for what is right and true and just?

Jesus, have mercy on us. Save us from ourselves.

Friends, at the beginning of the week we Christians call holy, in this Covid- 19 time when we are away from our communities of faith and long to be singing, praying and serving with the larger Body of Christ, I invite this “crowd” to renew our pledge to Christ and to each other. Let us stand with those who are vulnerable and suffering and, in these stay at home days, may we even more willing to carry our crosses and those of others too.

This isn’t a week of business as usual. This is our holiest of weeks when love is poured out graciously. And when love changes everything.

BIO:



Joe Lehman, pastor of St Bede Catholic Church in Williamsburg, Ecumenical and Inter-religious Officer of the Diocese of Richmond and the Vice-President of the Virginia Council of Churches