

Two things have dominated my thoughts and prayers this week.

1) As I prepare for this Holy Week, I've been wondering about the Journey to Jerusalem

- (a) Jesus knew the dangers
- (b) Jesus and his followers would have seen up close and personal the dangers of confronting their oppressors
- (c) Crucifixions on the roadway (James Carroll)
- (d) Religious authorities collaborating with the Empire
- (e) Confronting evil is never easy

The anonymous gospel-story-teller we know as Matthew handed down a story about what happened after Jesus' realized the enormity of the consequences that he was about to face as a result of the path his passions had caused him to take.

— According to the story, Jesus wept in the garden of Gethsemane praying that the he might be spared the cup of suffering that was before him

— After that prayer Jesus returned to his followers who have fallen asleep
“While Jesus was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived – accompanied by a great crowd with swords and clubs.

They had been sent by the chief priests and elders of the people.

Judas had arranged to give them a signal. “Whomever I embrace with a kiss is the one,” he had said; “take hold of him”

Judas immediately went over to Jesus and said, “Shalom, Rabbi! And embraced Jesus with a kiss.

Jesus said to judas, “Friend, Just do what you're here to do!”

At that moment, the crowd surround them, laid hands on Jesus and arrested him.

Suddenly, one of those who accompanied Jesus drew a sword and slashed at the high priest's attendannt, cutting off an ear.

Jesus said, “Put your sword back where it belongs.

Those who live by the sword die by the sword.”

Even in that moment of danger, Jesus refused to take up violence against his oppressors.

Knowing that it would in all likelihood cost him his life, Jesus refused to resort to violence.

Violence begats violence and not peace.

Jesus passion for a new way of being in the world, a way of being in which LOVE of neighbour compells him to

Protest the ways of the world in which the Roman Empire proclaimed the PAX Romana – the Peace of Rome which insisted that peace is achieved through victory, Jesus insisted on his passion for peace through justice -

Knowing that his passion might just get him killed, Jesus refused to take up violence against the Empire, Jesus insisted on LOVE of neighbour and yes, even loving his enemies.

Jesus passion for this revolutionary way of being in the world compelled Jesus to refuse to take up the sword, to renounce violence even if it cost him his life.

2.) the second thing that's been on my mind this week as I prepared for this remembrance of Palm Sunday is the March for Our Lives

I have wept and wept and wept

Watching those kids speak with such passion has felt a little like being in the garden of Gethsemane

I can't help praying that they had never been offered the cup of suffering that has been forced upon them by the madness of the worlds obsession with violence.

The passionate response to the violence they have experienced has set off a whole new march

I have been particularly moved by the powerful witness of Emma Gonzalez

- Emma Gonzalez is a survivor of the Parkland shooting that killed 17 of people
- Emma Gonzalez is a powerful, articulate and passionate young woman who held multitudes of people in a silence that has been heard all over the planet
- Yesterday, in front of a slew of news cameras Emma Gonzalez took the stage and spoke with such passion:

"Six minutes and about 20 seconds," she said. "In a little over 6 minutes, 17 of our friends were taken from us, 15 were injured and everyone in the Douglas community was forever altered."

"Everyone who was there understands.

Everyone who has been touched by the cold grip of gun violence understands.

For us, long, tearful, chaotic hours in the scorching afternoon sun were spent not knowing.

No one understood the extent of what had happened."

No one could believe that there were bodies in that building waiting to be identified for over a day.

No one knew that the people who were missing had stopped breathing long before any of us had even known that a code red had been called."

It only took 6 minutes and 20 seconds, Gonzalez said, for a gunman and an AR-15 to extinguish the lives of the 17 students and faculty had died.

She repeated the names of each of the victims and the things they would never do again.

Then, she stopped speaking.

Silence gripped Gonzalez as tears rolled down her cheeks, and the crowd broke through with random chants. But mostly, silence.

It was a passionate silence.

I wept knowing that all over the world people were weeping with me.

After 4 minutes and 25 seconds, a timer went off, and through her tears

Emma declared:

"Since the time that I came out here, it has been 6 minutes and 20 seconds.

The shooter has ceased shooting and will soon abandon his rifle, blend in with the students as they escape and walk free for an hour before arrest."

Which such passion, Emma declared, "Fight for your lives before it's someone else's job," she said, and left the stage.

- Such passion.**
- Emma didn't seek the cup of suffering that has been put before her.**
- Emma and all of the Parkland survivors who have stepped up to forge a new pathway, have been rewarded for their passion with targets.**
- Each one of this passionate young people have been trolled and bullied on the internet and on various media platforms and they have seen and heard the violent hatefilled responses of some of their most ardent opponents.**
- But their passion for life and their dream of a world where gun-violence is not the norm is palpable**

Now I know that for those of us who have been marching for decades for peace through justice, it is so easy for us to be so jaded that while we applaud the passion of these brave young people, we shake our heads because we don't really believe that much will change

- Well maybe so,
- I've marched more than a few times in my life
- Vietnam
- No NUKES
- Amchitca
- Iraq, Afghanistan
- Greenpeace
- Ozone layer
- Project North
- Anti poverty
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women
- Kinder Morgan
- I'm sure that many of you have similar passions
- Palm Sunday commemorates an act of civil disobedience in which the one we profess to follow gave everything to his passion for peace through justice
- What passion stirs inside of you?
- What are you prepared to march for?
- What are you prepared to put everything on the line for?

- **What passion are you prepared to live for?**
- **There were a lot of signs in yesterdays march**
- **NAGs – Nuns Against Guns**
- **Gundamentalists need a new religion.**
- **The only 45 we want fired lives in the White House**
- **I've carried a lot of signs in a lot of marches**
- **So, I thought that we could pray the prayers of the people in a whole new way today**
- **Let's make some signs!**