HOLY WEEK BEGS US TO EMBRACE A SUBVERSIVE GOSPEL

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This year Holy Week finds humanity suffering the evils of war in Ukraine, Gaza, the Israeli Occupied Territories, East Jerusalem, Sudan, Venezuela, and Iran.

This year Holy Week comes after ICE agents invaded Minnesota, murdered two people in broad daylight, kidnapped a five-year old boy and his father and hauled them to another state without due process, and have been given what amounts to a blank check to cause havoc and mayhem wherever and whenever the Trump administration wants it.

This year Holy Week comes as people who complained about affordability and voted for Donald Trump in 2024 are paying more for fuel, groceries, housing, healthcare, and other necessities. Meanwhile, Trump, his billionaire enablers and religious nationalists, and their followers believe the lie are that our society is safer, healthier, and freer as they plan to celebrate the 250th birthday of the United States.

The Holy Week Gospel of Jesus presents militarized and imperialistic evil to us in the Roman occupation of Palestine, Pontus Pilate, and crucifying Roman soldiers. However, only a few preachers will have the wisdom – let alone the courage – to help congregants see the same evil being perpetrated by Israel and United States in Palestine, Iran, Venezuela, and threatened against Mexico, Cuba, and Greenland.

The Holy Week Gospel of Jesus presents sacralized evil to us in the religious functionaries who schemed to grab, falsely accuse, and urge politicians to execute the innocent Jesus.

The Holy Week Gospel of Jesus presents opportunistic, treacherous, and greedy evil by religious people in Judas Iscariot. It presents self-serving evil to us in Peter.

The Holy Week Gospel of Jesus presents human gullibility concerning evil that is masked by political power, religious authority, and devotion to private gain.

The Holy Week Gospel of Jesus forces us to face these and other unpleasant constants in human affairs. Cruelty, violence, greed, dishonesty, betrayal, hypocrisy, and other aspects of evil are not peculiar to one era, one religion, one political system, and one place. They happen everywhere and across every period of history.

Against those realities, the Holy Week Gospel of Jesus presents God's subversive courage, stubborn loyalty, and fierce prophetic love to us in Jesus. And through the women who refused to abandon Jesus and who were the first preachers of the resurrection power of God, the Holy Week Gospel of Jesus declares that we can choose to embrace, follow, and be instruments of that subversive courage, loyalty, and prophetic love.

The question for each of us is whether we will follow the subversive and liberating Holy Week Gospel of Jesus. Or will we be captives to the tomb-like realities of evil that are constantly tempting us to question if there is a Force at work raising people, calling people, and sending people to live with liberating courage, loyalty, and prophetic love?

Easter does not deny the reality of evil. Easter declares the supremacy of God's love, life, and peace over evil. Yes, that is a subversive claim. It is also true. God's sovereignty and supremacy over evil is true.

That is why we will never stop celebrating Easter.