

Good Friday is the winter solstice of the liturgical year.¹ Last night after processed the body of Christ to the garden, we stripped the altar and emptied out the aumbry – and extinguished the candle that burns 27/4 all year except on these few days.

The light disappeared, just as the Light of God appeared to be snuffed.²

All these centuries later, and we still gather in darkness tell this story and remember Christ's death. As we read Mark's Passion on Sunday, and now John's Passion today, I found myself thinking, not for the first time, **enough**.

Why are we humans so addicted to violence?

This is one of my enduring questions – my abiding prayers.

And the story of Jesus' final hours is steeped in it.

An act of love – a kiss – is turned into a betrayal. A detachment of soldiers and a crowd descended with weapons. A beloved friend reacted in fear and struck out with a sword. Jesus was flogged and crown of thorns. He was crucified – nailed to a wooden cross – and his dead body pierced with a spear.

Enough. And still it continues.

¹ James E. Lamkin, *Pastoral Perspective, Feasting on the Word*, Year B, Volume 2.

² James E. Lamkin, *Pastoral Perspective, Feasting on the Word*, Year B, Volume 2.

I double majored in history and political science in college. So much of what I studied was either acts of or the results of violence. Enough.

And enough now, when I turn on the news, open the newspaper, turn on the computer.

It's like we learned nothing from Jesus, nothing from the cross.

Why don't we turn the other cheek? Why do we ignore Jesus, who told Peter to put away the sword when his reaction was to respond to violence with violence? Why does it too often seem that we worship the cross – an instrument of violence and death – rather than God?

Christian author Mike McHargue said this about the cross and violence:

The cross was not God's invention – it was ours.

In all our need for an eye for an eye, I have to wonder sometimes

if God listened to us cry for blood and offered his own –

if Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was not to sate God's wrath,

but to show God's response to our own.

God's response to our fear and anger and violence is the same love he commanded at his final meal with his friends. Another attempt to show us another way.

The power of the sword – of the cross, of the gun, of the bomb – is temporary.

Enough.

Because God's way is not about power over – it's not about fear – it's about mutuality and vulnerability and hope.

This is the real power of the cross for us on Good Friday.

Not that it was an instrument of state sanctioned death.

But that God's response to our worst – was to surrender to our worst to show us something new.

That something new is Easter. The empty tomb – the resurrection – a love so profound that nothing can separate us from it, not even death.

Today – and every day – that is truly enough.

~ AMEN ~