

Column: Reflect on humanity this Holy Week


By the Rev. Dr. Amy K. Butler
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Christians around the world embark this week on Holy Week, the dayslong remembrance of the events surrounding Jesus' trial and execution, stories that underscore a shared conviction that love is the strongest power on Earth, stronger than even corrupt governments and human cowardice and unjust systems. This year we move into Holy Week telling ancient stories that are modern again, violence and greed front and center on the world stage, our own government largely responsible for this violence and devastation.

We do not yet know the full scope or impact the decision to choose a course of devastating violence will have on our lives and on our world, but we do know that what happens outside the walls of our communities of faith should always be in conversation with the spirit and practice of our faith. This is particularly true in moments when we feel fear, and poignantly apt for our island community of military personnel and living memories of past wars.

Our reflection and resolve during this Holy Week, then, seems particularly urgent and necessary.

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If we have come to think of others as our enemies, we must shift our prejudice to remember that every human being bears the image of the Divine, that civilians and elders and school children in Tehran and Tel Aviv are deeply loved by their Creator just as we are.

Further, this week will not allow us to look away from the truth that we bear the moral vision of our collective actions. We may and we must honor the service of those who protect us and still

question decisions made in our names and executed with our resources. We pray deeply and earnestly for protection of those in uniform and we pray just as urgently for wisdom, restraint and repentance when violence is disguised as righteousness.

As together we face the fear of this moment and gather holy resolve for this week, I invite you to join me in offering prayers for military families and service people who are feeling the deep dread of this situation as well as prayers for people on the other side of the world who are now living in the aftermath of violent attack and deep loss.

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Further, we urgently pray for ourselves, that we may boldly live what we say we believe in this moment and every moment:

For deescalation, Lord, hear our prayer.

For protection of the vulnerable, Lord, hear our prayer.

For the safety and moral clarity of our military, Lord hear our prayer.

For those in power, Lord, hear our prayer.

And most urgently, for peace, Lord, hear our prayer and accompany our work.

Love each other fiercely, tell the truth bravely, and refuse to allow violence and war to harden your hearts and make you forget that every life is precious.

Every. Life.

Holy Week is now unfolding, an invitation to pause and reflect, to consider whether we will be agents of love, healers of broken systems, and prophets of a future that does not belong to us.

The world desperately needs voices calling us to this important work. As we pause for reflection, may each of us shoulder the responsibility of caring for our neighbors, even our neighbors across the globe. And may the God of mercy cradle every trembling heart and help us gather the courage to choose love, this week and every week.

The Rev. Dr. Amy K. Butler is pastor of Community Church of Honolulu.

