

MM Palm Sunday Marches — March 25, 2018

Historic and amazing that millions of teen-agers should parade and demand that the powers end gun violence. All non-violent it seems.

Who knows what will happen?

Today we come to what Christian tradition calls Palm Sunday. Here comes 33 year-old Jesus entering Jerusalem. Probably he was coming for Passover along with thousands of other Jews. Somehow the story turns into a make-shift parade. A march on Jerusalem. The way the Gospels tell the story, Jesus had a number of run-ins with the powers. He was known for daring to speak against Caesar and Temple leaders. Luke would write several decades later: *“He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place.”*

According to biblical scholars like John Dominic Crossan there were two marches into Jerusalem that Passover season. The other was the annual entrance of the Roman soldiers sent to prevent uprisings. They were armed with the weapons of the day and with the authority to crucify troublemakers.

Two marches, one peaceful, the other coming to maintain peace with swords..

Jesus was eventually arrested and put through some trials.

He ended up crucified, as were many others.

Later followers of Jesus began to say that God sent Jesus to die as a sacrifice. A ritual designed to please God.

No, please! That’s not anywhere close to Jesus’ idea of a “Heavenly Father.” Jesus did not die to save us.

He did not shed blood like a bleating bleeding sheep so the heavenly father would allow us sinners to get into heaven anyway.

Jesus died because he lived, talked, walked, stood with the weak and sick and poor and hungry and troubled and dominated. He lived by his Jewish religion. His radical teaching about the power of love and forgiveness in the Sermon on the Mount didn’t sell. Those who do that are always going to be feared and “crucified.”

We don’t always see those who walk, stand, pray, work for just causes. Some stand against oil pipelines, or oil terminals along our rivers. Some stand on land sacred to native people against those who would desecrate it and exploit it. Some plead the case of un-documented people brought here as infants and now assigned for deportation. Some stand with the homeless. I can’t name all the situations where people are attempting to “let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.”

Those high-schoolers are a definite threat. They are approaching voting age. They are not owned by lobbyists. They owe nothing to either church or government powers. Watch them through Holy Week. They want something meaningful to be done about gun violence. Powers will oppose as they always do.

Through these young people those who died have a living voice today. Millions of voices. How can we not hear them?

Art Morgan, Palm Sunday, 2018