

Dear Friends,

Most Holy Weeks, one of my very few rituals is to listen to or watch “Jesus Christ Superstar”. Some people may object to the music or costume style, but I find much depth and things to ponder in hearing the story in a different way. If you can connect to the music, it does bring the story to a whole new level emotionally and, for me, spiritually.

First is the story of Judas, not portrayed as a thief, liar, and selfish, but as a man who is committed to the cause, but his ‘morality’ causes him to break his connections with Christ as Judas sees Jesus going too far and trying to separate Jesus from the ‘movement.’ Jesus is portrayed as human who has needs, weaknesses, and despair in this midst of this last week, but never relinquishes his love of the people around him, even those who nail him to the cross.

This play weaves in some modern themes of the media and showing modern weapons being sold in the Temple marketplace. Jesus’ life and death is not based upon love or God’s kingdom, but political movements and what could be sold to the people for some who were ‘with’ Jesus and many who opposed him. Today’s Christianity is much the same, in that it is power and perception over what truly matters, haunting our country with Christian Nationalism.

For me, this is very much a flesh and blood story. Putting aside the questions of physical resurrection, we are still struggling with occupation in our world (and for many, we are the oppressors) and how much do we live in our society and the ‘rules’ that keep the ‘peace’ and how much do we struggle to change things for the better even if we upset the apple cart and puts our freedoms, our reputations, and our very lives on the line.

I very much struggle with what is happening in Palestine. How much do we try to stop what is happening there and how do we weigh that against upsetting our neighbors and people in our county? How much wisdom do we have to try to make a statement? I imagine that Jesus would tell everyone to put down their weapons and ask for forgiveness for the soldiers and terrorists who kill innocents and don’t really know what they are doing. May we pause on Friday and reflect about Jesus’ death in the light of the killing that still happens today in the name of governments, religions, and security.

Peace