

The Very Rev. Cynthia Byers Walter

HERE AND NOW
Meditation for Palm Sunday
LPC, 3/24/13

Last Monday, seven marines were killed in a munitions explosion in Nevada. One was only 19. None was older than 26. Two were engaged to be married. Four had returned healthy from tours in Afghanistan only to die stateside. Where was God when this tragedy happened?

Where was God during the Sandy Hook shootings?

Where was God on 9-11?

These are legitimate questions for Christians. They are hard to answer, just as the Passion story we just heard is hard to hear. Where is God when innocent people suffer and die?

As hard as the Passion is to listen to, it provides the answer to that question. When innocent people suffer and die, God suffers and dies with them, so that no one suffers and dies alone. Every human life is dear to God. Every death has meaning to God, who has, in Jesus, known death personally.

Where is God? God is on the cross. God was in the towers and on the doomed aircraft. God was in the bloodied classrooms. God was in that munitions facility, and God remains with the grieving families of those seven marines.

We must not skip directly from the Hosannas of Palm Sunday to the Alleluias of Easter. To really understand where God is, we *must* go through the next few painful days, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday. If we don't consider Christ's sacrifice, we totally miss the point of Christianity. And the problem of innocent suffering would be close to unbearable.

I strongly encourage you to participate in the Holy Week observances we have planned here at Lawrencefield Parish Church. If you don't attend Thursday, Friday or Saturday services here, please attend somewhere else. Jesus' suffering and death gives meaning to our suffering. Jesus' suffering gives meaning to Easter resurrection. Jesus' suffering gives meaning to life.

Where is God? On the cross. Where is God? Here. Now.