

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Apr 12th 2014

As we prepare for Holy Week, the need to unite is made clear in the first reading: “Never again shall they be two nations, and never again shall they be divided into two kingdoms.” In contrast, in the Gospel, the chief priests and Pharisees convened the Sanhedrin and asked, “What are we going to do? This man is performing many signs. If we leave him alone, all will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our land and our nation.”

The Sanhedrin did not stand united with Christ for fear of losing worldly powers and possessions. These Old and New Testament readings speak to me about the need for “oneness” with Christ. In our daily life it is easy to “divide” ourselves from one another, and ultimately from Christ. In *An Invitation to Dance Like No One is Watching*, Kelly Flanagan writes about egos as devices to create personal walls. He admits, “One of my favorite ego-cannons is to pretend everyone on the outside of my wall is wrong. It makes me feel right and righteous, but really just keeps me safe inside of my ideas.” He identifies various cannons we use to protect--that is, divide--ourselves from others. These cannons are gossip, criticism, attachment to possessions, and power. At some point, we need to realize these cannons reinforce our isolation and are transient and meaningless.

These Scripture readings and Flanagan’s insights shout out the need to seek and strengthen my relationship with Christ. The statement from Ezekiel calls for the unity the Sanhedrin did not want--unity with Christ. I ask myself, “Do I behave like the Sanhedrin? Am I truly united with Christ?” If I am one with Christ, then I am one with my brothers and sisters, regardless of their race, religion, sexual orientation, or ideology. The world is full of pain caused by division. I know that Lent is a season to strengthen our relationships, through our Oneness with Christ. I pray that we can rid ourselves of the impulses that lead to division and instead, ease the pain of others and in doing so, find greater joy in ourselves

Dear Lord,

As we come to you today with gratitude for life,

we ask that you grant us the ability to see all people as our brothers and sisters in you.

Help us tear down the walls that isolate us from you, others, and ourselves.

Help us recognize and ease the pain of those who are different from us.

Help us to remain faithful to You.

Amen

