

Wicker Park Lutheran Church

Rev. Jason S. Glombicki

April 18, 2025

We gather tonight in a barren place. The lights are low, the altar is stripped, and the baptismal font is no longer visible. As Pastor Tim Brown puts it, tonight, we sit in a darkened tomb. We heard the story of that fateful night, a story that we know all too well; and not only because we've heard it every year, but also because we've lived it. This is a familiar story.

We've all been betrayed by our friends and have all betrayed a friend. We've all denied something that we know is true, and seen others deny what they know is true. We've all been falsely accused and accused others without evidence. We've all witnessed power prey on the powerless. We've all been swept up in group think. We've all been tempted to or thrust into committing acts of violence. We've all witnessed how systems that are designed to administer justice end up falsely accuse others, torturing others, and killing others on *our* behalf. This is a familiar story. We know this story.

Yet, among the twisted thorns and the bloody bodies; in the midst of lies and sneers and shame; held up upon two crossbeams meant to silence and stamp out, we heard another voice.

We heard "put your sword back into its sheath"

– the echoes of non-violence.

We heard "I have spoken openly to the world [and] held nothing in secret"

– the reverberations of honesty and truth.

We heard "my kingdom is not from this world" and

“you would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above”
– the statements of a cosmic reality.

We witnessed the birth pains,
the push and pull,
the “already but not yet.”

And now we no longer sit and observe.

We no longer sing and stare.

Now, we are confronted.

The sung reproaches demand that we answer unanswerable questions. The cross obligates us to look at it, to approach it, and to wrestle with its meaning. And, in the end, we are left in a room with only the cross – this twisted tool of torture to which we now cling, hoping that something good can yet come from it.

And, together, we hold this feeling for a time, but then we gather again at dusk, around a fire, to hear God’s echoing once again, knowing that what the cross was meant to silence can never be unheard.¹

¹ I am indebted to Rev. Tom Brown for his helpful framing that permeates this homily.
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