



ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF REGINA
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Good Friday/Easter Message, 2026

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Warm greetings in the crucified and risen Lord!

We enter the Holy Week this year at a time when much of the world is impacted by war between nations, crippling internal conflicts, deep economic and social instability. These are turbulent times, and we enter into Holy Week and the Triduum mindful of the great tensions in the world around us. Our Holy Week and Easter celebrations can help us keep a faith perspective on the world events swirling around us, and tell us something about how Jesus interacts with the power structures of his day, guiding how we as Christians are called to do likewise.

On Palm Sunday we heard the Passion narrative according to St. Matthew, and on Good Friday, we will hear St. John's account. So much in these accounts is about Jesus's interaction with those with political power and about how he exercises his authority. When Jesus is arrested in the garden of Gethsemane, Peter wants to fight back to defend him, and takes up his sword. Jesus tells him to put his sword away. One who lives by the sword will die by the sword. He asks rhetorically, could he not ask the Father to send down legions of angels to protect him? Yet he does not.

We have different accounts of Jesus being brought forth before the high priest. In John's Gospel, when asked about his teaching and his mission, he says simply, ask those who I taught, they will tell you what I said. One of the temple guards hits him saying, "Is this the way you answer the high priest?" Jesus responds, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?"

In standing before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, we again have differing accounts. In Matthew, Jesus does not respond to Pilate. In John's Gospel there is a dialogue between them. At one point, when Jesus does not answer, Pilate asks, "Do you not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you and I have power to crucify you?" Jesus challenges that his power is only temporal, and not of his own making, not lasting.

Finally, when he is crucified, we hear jeering responses from onlookers, saying "if you are the Son of God, and come down from the cross!" And again, "he saved others; he cannot save himself.... Let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him."

Dear friends, as we prepare to celebrate the Resurrection, let us learn from the Lord, and from these accounts of his passion.

First, Jesus does not run away from the persecution he faces. God is not in fact powerless in this situation. Flights of angels could have rescued Jesus. God's power is ultimately revealed in the resurrection. But Jesus chooses not to use divine power - in the sense of force - to confront injustice, to come down from the cross. That would in effect be to take leave of his human nature, to step back from the Incarnation. And it would also be to step back from what he came to do and to reveal, which is the fulness and depth of God's love for humanity, and God's desire to transform and redeem the world by love.

Second, Jesus rejects the notion that we respond to violence by violence. One who lives by the sword dies by the sword. That is faithful to what he taught in the Sermon on the Mount. He does confront the soldier who hits him, and elsewhere in his teaching, we do see him resist and confront injustice and evil, but he does not do so by violence. He confronts in order to bring change.

Finally, his response to injustice and political force is ultimately to remain faithful to why he came: to serve and to give himself fully - this is my body broken, my blood poured out for you - and to trust in the Father, who raises him from death to life, revealing in a lasting and definitive way that with God, love conquers hate, cruelty and misuse of power do not have the last word, and love ultimately reigns supreme. Dear friends, this is what we celebrate in every Eucharist, and what we celebrate in a very special way in the liturgies of Holy Week and Easter.

May we as Christians, individually and as communities, give courageous witness to this message of love, this way of carrying authority, this way of confronting injustice in our tumultuous world of today.

Christ is Risen, trampling on death by death. Love and life have the last word. Let us rejoice!
Happy Easter to all of you!

✠ Donald Bolen
Archbishop of Regina