Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





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March 6, 2022
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“Be holy, for I, the LORD, your God, am holy” (Leviticus 19:1}.

Lv 19:1-2, 11-18; Mt 25:31-46

Today’s Word affirms its own relevance as a Living Word and not just a text on a page or in a book in the pulpit and on the altar. In Leviticus, Moses proclaims the commandments to the assembly, the basic minimum without which civilization collapses. Killing, lying and stealing threaten the social order. Fraud, revenge, cruelty to the most vulnerable and all forms of hatred and injustice damage the very essence of our humanity. Today’s Gospel takes this even further by making the Corporal Works of Mercy — compassion for the most vulnerable among us — the basis for final judgment and the place where Jesus is most present in our world.

War offends against everything by sinning against both the Commandments and Works of Mercy. Eileen Egan, cofounder of Pax Christi and peace activist with Dorothy Day, described World War II, which killed an estimate 85 million people and reduced much of Europe to rubble, as reversing the Works of Mercy. Instead of feeding the hungry, it starved millions; Instead of clothing the naked, it stripped them of everything; Instead of welcoming strangers, caring for the sick and the imprisoned, it rejected and wounded millions and sent millions more to death camps.

Among the many voices crying out against the violence now raging in Ukraine is the Word of God addressed to us at every Lenten Mass being prayed throughout the universal church. Believers reading and listening to the same Scripture passages

proclaimed today will recognize the scenes on their television screens as the crucifixion of human hope for a more just and compassionate world. As we face multiple crises that threaten the global community and the planet itself, war is bringing us to our knees.

Our prayers, fasting and almsgiving have their focus. Our hearts are called to join with our brothers and sisters in danger and to plead to give peace a chance. Only love can build what hate destroys, and history has shown too many times that only when the violence stops can peace begin.

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