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Waiting for Holy Week

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NCR Today

Forgive me reader, for I have sinned. I am tired of writing about abortion restrictions in the health care law. I am tired of reading documents from or to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith relating to the sexual abuse of minors. I am tired of reading about some rightwing nut job attacking a congressman's office or his brother's house or a religious sister with the courage to state her convictions. I am tired of writing only about serious topics ? and the three just mentioned could scarcely be more serious.

I am, I suppose, ready for Holy Week. I am ready to have the tragedies and the triumphs of this world put under the shadow of the Cross. I am ready to join the crowd on Sunday shouting ?Hosanna!? one minute and ?Crucify Him!? the next. I am ready to wait for a different, less fearful verdict against humanity (and against the Church) then the one rendered on that first Good Friday. I am ready to wait at the tomb, bewildered, wondering how I could have been taken in by this man Jesus with his promises of divine forgiveness, only to see it all come to such an ignominious end, such a total rejection of the man and his message. I am ready to hope the hope that is born only from the empty tomb.

We live in a culture that most days reduces us to cogs in its economic wheels, to worker bees or manager bees or writer-coolies. We live in a culture that is made uncomfortable by a crucifix because the world cannot see that suffering is not merely a thing to be avoided but is oftentimes, as on Calvary, the beautiful face of love amidst the evil world. Holy Week reminds me that I am not just a member of the species homo economicus, that the deepest yearnings of my heart only find expression when I let myself become what Holy Week insists I become, homo liturgicus, a person who is identified first and foremost as a creature that worships. I always love Holy Week. This year, I feel like I really need it, like we all really need it.

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