

COMMENTARIES ON 'THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST' by Mariane Holbrook: We don't weep

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COMMENTARIES ON 'THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST': We don't weep enough

By Mariane Holbrook

I've never owned, nor would I wear a gold cross. Or one with diamonds or rubies or other precious stones. I submit that all costume jewelry crosses should be made of rough, unfinished wood, with splinters that pierce the flesh and disturb the soul.

I have seen obscenely large gold crosses hanging from the necks of ungodly rock stars and Hollywood celebrities who have no right to wear this precious symbol. I have seen crosses dangling from the ears of brazen, scantily clad dancers and singers who bring shame on the very One who hung on that cross for their sins.

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—Mariane
Holbrook**

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As Protestants, we rightly dwell on the resurrection of Christ rather than what he endured on the cross. Not for a minute would I imitate other religious groups who seem permanently transfixed by the cross. Last year, a figure of Christ was removed from the cross in front of a local church. The priest lovingly explained that he wanted his congregation to begin emphasizing a risen Christ rather than a Christ still nailed to the cross. Protesting church members forced him to replace the figure, and his congregation was once again satisfied with tradition.

But do we, as followers of Christ, spend enough time contemplating his suffering, his agony, his bleeding, his crying out to his Father, his gasping for his last breath and finally, his death?

Do we, in our haste to celebrate Easter Sunday, hurry past, or worse, ignore the somber, dark hours on Friday, that time when we should be prostrate before him, remembering, thanking, praising him? Shouldn't this be a time of discomfort, confronting our sins and realizing what an incomprehensible and terrible price was exacted from this God/man on our behalf?

The churches I have attended normally do not schedule Good Friday services. Indeed, most of us follow our regular routine, only casually glancing at the clock from noon to three o'clock, the time traditionally set aside to remember this awesome event. In our zeal to emphasize the emerald brilliance of the resurrection, we have all but forgotten the stark and total blackness of Calvary.

Philip Yancey, in his remarkable book, "The Jesus I Never Knew" wrote: "I still cannot fathom the indignity, the shame endured by God's Son on earth, stripped naked, flogged, spat on, struck in the face, garlanded with thorns. 'The idea of the cross should never come near the bodies of Roman citizens,' said Cicero. For the Romans, crucifixion was the cruelest form of punishment, reserved for murder, slave revolts and other heinous crimes.

Roman citizens were beheaded but never crucified.”

On Good Friday, I hope to spend some time alone in a secluded spot where I can reflect upon Christ’s unbelievable suffering.

I want to weep over the long, angry nails ripping into those beautiful, sensitive hands that tenderly stroked the heads of little children.

I want to cry over those feet that walked through the heated terrain to bring healing and comfort to the hurting and oppressed.

I want to dwell on those loving eyes from which tears of tender compassion freely poured, when he cried, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

I want to remember his agony, his humiliation, his pain and finally, his awful death to which he finally submitted to pay for my sins.

As the old gospel song so heartwrenchingly sobs:

I should have been crucified,

I should have suffered and died.

I should have hung on that cross in disgrace

But Jesus, God’s Son, took my place.

Yes. Dear God, yes.

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