

Thursday after the Third Sunday in Lent, March 16, 2023

Recommended readings: p. 160, "January 1, 1808," pp. 161-162, "Sold South," pp. 177-185, "Capitalism" (part two)

In her short story, "Sold South," Jesmyn Ward vividly describes how Black families were destroyed when an 1808 Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves resulted in an increased trade in human lives within the borders of America. "They always came before dawn for us chosen to be sold south. We didn't understand what it would be like, couldn't think beyond the panic, the prying, the crying, the begging, the screaming, the endless screaming from the mouth and beyond. Sounding through the whole body, breaking the heart with its volume. A blood keen. But the ones that owned us and sold us was deaf to it. Was unfeeling of the tugging the children did on their fathers' arms or the glance of a sister's palm over her sold sister's face for the last time. But we was all feeling, all seeing, all hearing, all smelling: We felt it for the terrible dying it was."

Thus says the Lord: A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more. (Jeremiah 31:15)

We are horrified to imagine that our forebears could have torn children from parents and siblings from one another and yet this crime has continued throughout American history. It was done to Native American children in order to "civilize" them. It was done only a few years ago to refugees who were trying to escape violence. God's greatest and most misused gift is the gift of human freedom—the freedom to love or to hate, to act humanely or to dehumanize. May we use our freedom wisely to achieve the best for our whole human family.

Prayer

God of love, forgive our failure to love. Continue to pour your love into our hearts until they become truly human. Open our eyes to opportunities to love and to serve our human siblings. Amen.