

Monday of Holy Week, April 3, 2023

Recommended readings: p. 62, "June 24, 1731" and p. 63-64, "Conjured"
p. 190, "July 2, 1822" and p. 191-192, "Before His Execution"

"Conjured" is a poem by Honoree Fanonne Jeffers about an enslaved man named Samba, executed in 1731 only because he is suspected of plotting a slave revolt in Louisiana:

"...Samba had refused to accept
slavery: perhaps because he knew that death
is a blink, a pain before crossing
to a place of no bondage.
And aren't you reading
Samba's story right now?
Aren't you curling your
lips around his people's language
and tasting the blood of struggle?"

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. (Isaiah 53:7-9)

In Holy Week, we ponder our Savior's willingness to suffer and to sacrifice his life for the sake of fallen humanity. Throughout our nation's history, "willingness" has rarely entered into the question of suffering and sacrifice for our Black brothers and sisters. They have often been abused and killed solely out of the fear of what they could or might do. What will it take for us to eliminate any "perversion of justice" from our nation and our society?

Prayer

God of the cross and of the empty tomb, guide us on the path of suffering that leads through death and into eternal life. Invite us to walk beside all who suffer injustice and abuse as we walk the way of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.