

Tuesday of Holy Week, April 4, 2023

Recommended readings: p. 244, "July 30, 1866" and p. 245-246, "An Absolute Massacre"

ZZ Packer's essay "An Absolute Massacre" is a horrifyingly evocative account of the events of July 30, 1866, in which "A white mob consisting of many Confederate veterans attacks protestors outside a convention in New Orleans, which has been called by Republican leaders in response to the state legislature's passage of a law denying African Americans the right to vote. Among those killed in the ensuing violence is Anthony Paul Dostie, a white abolitionist who led the march on the convention. The mob also kills more than thirty-five other people, mostly Black men."

Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account. (Isaiah 53:1)

Throughout our history, whites who stand in solidarity with the enslaved and the formerly enslaved have been subjected to contempt and violence. The ability to see all human beings as belonging to one family is viewed by some as treachery to a race. In John's gospel, Jesus says that, when he is lifted up on the cross, he will draw all people to himself. Our task is to work for the day when all people are united by the self-sacrificing love of Christ.

Prayer

God of peace, and joy, and love, and life, heal our wounded hearts and make us ambassadors of the peace, and joy, and love, and life that flow from your own wounded heart. Amen.