



A weekly reflection by members of the Precious Blood Community

November 22, 2023

**Dennis Coday**

**“It happened that seven brothers with their mother were arrested and tortured with whips and scourges by the king.” (2 Maccabees 7:1)**

“It happened ...”

Have you ever seen a scripture passage open so matter-of-fact, so mundanely? What happened? A “mother ... saw her seven sons perish in a single day.” So tragically mundane.

Mundane means “very ordinary and therefore not interesting.” It means humdrum, dull, boring, tedious, monotonous, tiresome. A mother saw her seven sons perish in a single day. It happened.

Mothers have been very much on my mind these last couple of days. Yesterday was the Memorial of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was also my mother’s birthday. She would have been 93 yesterday if she were still with us. So yeah, mothers have been very much on my mind, and then I read today’s passage from Maccabees. The daily lectionary skips from verse 1 to verse 20, sparing us the gruesome details of how the first six brothers were tortured and killed. “It happened ...”

And the mother? Oh, she “bore it courageously.”

Reading this passage, how can we not recall what we have asked Israeli and Palestinian mothers to bear over the last six weeks? How many mothers have watched their children die? How many more will see their children die, not to mention their husbands, sisters, brothers, parents, cousins and neighbors?

How inappropriate today’s Psalm seems. Today there can be no hiding in the shadows of God’s wings, no joyfulness. We need instead a primal, heart-sinking lamentation, like Psalm 13: “How long, O Lord? Will you utterly forget me?” Psalm 10: “Why, O Lord, do you stand aloof? Why hide in times of distress?”

How can we not all be sick at heart over what we ask mothers to bear and to bear courageously? Yet, so many of us do nothing. Paralyzed by fear and dread, we wring our hands and pray for God to do something.

Hearing that, God, must surely reply: “Why cry out to me? This tragedy is of your making, not mine.”

Today’s reading goes on to describe the mother as “most admirable and worthy of everlasting remembrance ... [because she] bore it courageously.” I can’t help but think that we misinterpret this passage. We should not settle for praising the mother. We must see her tragedy as a call and spur to action.

We can and we must as a faith community speak out against the injustice of war. Killing a child cannot be justified. That must be plain. Letting children die because they have no clean water, no medicine, no medical care, and too little food is killing them too. We must call for an end to this madness.

**Dennis Coday has done communication and marketing work for [Precious Blood Renewal Center](#) in Liberty, Missouri, since 2019 but his family ties to the Precious Blood extend farther back in history. He attended Precious Blood Seminary High School and college formation at Rockhurst University. His brother Fr. Timothy Coday has served in Tanzania for more than 35 years.**

*This weekly reflection is made available to all who are part of our Precious Blood family. Feel free to share it with others. Would you be willing to write a reflection? If so, please contact Vicky Otto at [votto@pbspiritualityinstitute.org](mailto:votto@pbspiritualityinstitute.org)*