

PASSION SUNDAY
Year A April 13, 2014

"My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

Peculiar last words for Jesus Christ, don't you think?

Gospel writers Luke and John thought so; they changed his last words in their versions of his passion.

In fairness, **"My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"** is the opening line of Psalm 22, a prayer Jesus would have prayed often, and a prayer which, by the way, has a confident, trusting conclusion.

But all the Gospel gives us is this one, despairing line: did Jesus in the end die without hope?

As hard as this may be to fathom just think for a moment, how many human beings before him and since him have died with no hope:

How many millions have died with no hope of hunger and famine and malnutrition in the course of human existence on this planet?

How many have wasted away in diseases we had no idea how to cure - there simply was no hope.

How many died saying or at least thinking: **"My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"**

Consider the many innocents like Jesus sentenced to death by ruthless rulers or inept justice systems, even the abomination of our own church's medieval Inquisition.

How many disappeared without hope into political prisons, torture chambers, gulags, water boarding security houses, re-education and work camps?

Then of course there were the entire populations who were deemed inferior: the native peoples in the path of the Spanish Conquistadors and American settlers or the Jews, the mentally and physically disabled, the gays who did not measure up to the Nazi Arian status.

The millions slaughtered in wars declared by princes and presidents and prime ministers – they died in so many forgotten battle fields and naval graveyards.

All of these cried out to God, to someone, to anyone to help them, but no one did; they were abandoned.

They all died with their last words being: **"My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"**

Perhaps Jesus' last words were spoken for all of these, or at least in communion with all of these nameless ones who died with no hope, even in God.

Did Jesus die with no hope to become hope for hopeless humanity?