

During the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1959, Buddhist monks were the targets of many atrocities and cruelties in order to undermine the deeply-rooted spirituality of Tibetan society. As the Chinese forces would invade each village, the monks would flee into the mountains...

...except in one particular village, where all the monks fled – except one. On learning that one old monk dared to remain, the enraged Chinese commander marched up to the monastery and kicked in the gate. There in the courtyard was the one remaining monk, sitting calmly in prayer.

“Do you know WHO I AM?” the commander screamed. “I am he who can run you through with a sword without batting an eyelash.”

The monk replied, “And do you know WHO I AM? I am he who can let you run me through with a sword without batting an eyelash.”

The attitude of the brave monk mirrors the attitude of Christ in Mark’s gospel we just proclaimed. Jesus takes on the suffering, the humiliation, the anguish of the passion fully aware that this will not be the end of the story. Jesus’ certainty of God’s love and faithfulness enables him to fulfill his role as Redeemer.

This Holy Week calls us to Easter faith: faith that enables us to take on suffering for the sake of compassion, isolation for what is right and good, ridicule in the face of injustice and prejudice. Despite the swords that threaten to run us through, this Holy Week is God’s promise that our Good Fridays will be transformed into Easter mornings.