

Sermon

Saint Peter's

Sunday 5 November

'Tragedy of war made worse by an ignorance of history'

In a local newspaper editorial on Tuesday titled, 'Tragedy of war made worse by an ignorance of history', we read:

'It would be impossible to be other than deeply concerned about the fate of civilians caught up in the war between the Hamas terrorists and Israel. But the dreadful plight of the innocent victims of the conflict – Gazan and Israeli – is not being helped by the short memories, mindless ignorance of history, and misrepresentations of those taking to the streets in Australia and cities across the world to demonstrate, they say, their support for a "free Palestine".'

Four weeks ago yesterday, on the 7th of October, the world witnessed pure evil once more – the barbaric slaughter of 1400 men, women and children – by Hamas terrorists. In the worst violence against Jews since the Holocaust. Where six million Jews perished, the result of anti-semitic hatred. The hatred that is itself murder, according to Jesus.

Met with universal horror at the time, now, less than a month later, demonstrators have taken to the streets within our nation, in public condemnation, not of the evil that did manifest itself on that dreadful day, the 7th of October, but of the Israeli response to evil.

On Monday, David Horovitz, the widely respected liberal editor of The Times of Israel, observed of this change of mind by many, “from brief, initial empathy for all those whose lives were shot and burned and butchered away, for their bereft and broken families, and for the innocent snatched away into Hamas’s underground hellholes, to a rising global effort to deprive us of the right to ensure it will not happen again. A rising global effort propelled by Israel-haters and anti-Semites, assisted by falsehoods and misrepresentations, everywhere from [social media], to supposedly responsible media, and inflated by fools”.

‘Demonstrators the world over, including in our cities, have mindlessly adopted the sinister anti-Semitic slogan, “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free”, the local editorial said. ‘That is identified with Hamas’s founding objective to kill Jews, destroy the Jewish state and form a unified Palestinian state stretching from the River Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea. British Home Secretary Suella Braverman has warned police the slogan should be “interpreted as an indication of a violent desire for the elimination of Israel”.

The editorial continues,

‘As shocking as the demonstrators are, however, they are more than matched in their painful ignorance by many in the media. Reporters... are showing themselves to be all too “quick to swallow Hamas lies” and “now see their role as upholding moral virtue **...(the) trouble is, they are too ill-informed to know where virtue lies**”.

‘Evidence is, indeed, everywhere, of widespread ignorance among journalists. Few seem to know anything of the reality that causing collateral damage is a major aspect of the Hamas terrorists’ murderous business model.

‘Neither do they understand the history of World War II, which shows that as regrettable as bombing was to defeat an odious, totalitarian enemy, it was essential to achieve an end to the conflict and the survival of the world’s democracies and free societies’.

‘Few now appear interested in confirmed accounts showing that Hamas high command is operating from tunnels beneath Gaza’s Al-Shifa hospital, which the Israelis are reluctant to attack.’

‘Or the fact that for two decades now Hamas has been launching its missiles at Israel from within Gaza’s schools, hospitals and mosques.

Using innocent civilians, including woman and children, as human shields. In order to protect themselves. Under international law, a war crime, and a crime against humanity.

‘It would be well to “reflect”, the editorial continues, ‘on how Hamas uses the suffering of the Palestinians to win the public relations war in the West against Israel.

‘A little historical perspective, rather than the juvenile acceptance of Hamas’s claims, would help. So would some knowledge about the history of previous conflicts, such as World War II.

‘The mobs of protesters and many in the media are making fools of themselves.

‘They would do well to learn from Horovitz’s heartfelt “horror and fury” over the “global immorality” that now confronts the Jewish state:

“Israel,” Horovitz argued, “is fighting not in retaliation, or out of revenge, but in order to ensure Gaza’s terror government cannot survive to repeat its barbarism”.

‘It is overwhelmingly in the interests of the free world and human decency’, the editorial concludes, ‘that it remains resolute in doing so.’

In the words of Bob Hawke,

‘If the bell tolls for Israel, it tolls for all of us.’

The global immorality a reminder of the universality of sin.

And the universality of the salvation of God.

The reconciliation of the world to God in Jesus Christ, the Messiah of God, by his death, once, for all people.

God’s free gift of peace to the world.

In a world in need of peace.

Prayers of intercession for the world and for the church.

Father,

We pray for peace.

We pray that peace will prevail over hatred.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

We pray for freedom.

We pray that freedom will prevail over evil.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

We pray for America in its leadership of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

We pray for the Christian family of western nations as they follow America's lead of bringing freedom, justice and peace to the world.

We pray that America and the family of Christian nations will overcome the terrorists and tyrants who seek to destroy freedom, justice and peace in the world.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

We pray that America, the western democratic order, and the whole world will overcome the present siege at the hands of anti-democratic forces in the world.

We pray that you will bring freedom, democracy, justice and peace to those living under the evil of authoritarian rule in China, Russia, North Korea, Iran and the Gaza strip.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

We pray again for America. Uphold and strengthen it to overcome the evil that is there in the world. And keep it safe from the temptation to itself doing evil.

We pray for Israel, and America, that they prosecute the war against Hamas within international law, with minimum civilian casualties.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

We pray that America, along with the international community and Israel will prevent the present conflict between Israel and Hamas from spreading, thereby giving the green light for other tyrants in other conflicts around the world, including in our own Asia Pacific region.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

We pray for the nation of Ukraine in its war against Russia and for the nation of Israel in its war against Hamas.

We pray that each would prevail, and that the global democratic world will prevail, against the threat of authoritarianism everywhere, including in China, Russia, Iran and North Korea.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

We pray for the containment of these wars, through early intervention, that they will not lead to protracted war, such as we saw in Iraq or Afghanistan.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

We pray for the United States and the Christian family of western nations – that you will uphold and sustain them in their powerful declaration of international support for Israel in its struggle against the “evil” of Hamas.

We pray for the innocent civilians, both Israeli, and Palestinian, caught up in the conflict between Israel and Hamas – that you will protect them, uphold them, and sustain them.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

We pray for your people throughout the world at this time.

We pray that you will uphold them, sustain them, and protect them, as they undertake their global responsibility as Christians:

+ to uphold and protect democracy, the principle of freedom, societies of justice and peace based on freedom throughout the world, against the evils of terrorism, and authoritarianism.

We pray that, by your mighty power, and through your faithful people, you will overcome the evil of the world, with good. That you will overcome the tyranny of the world with freedom. That you will overcome the terrorism of the world with peace.

We pray that, by your almighty power, and through your people, you will overcome all who lust for war, with peace.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.