

Holy Week Heartbreak

Growing up just 15 minutes north of Boston, it should come as no surprise—as most of you know—that I am a Boston sports fan through and through: Red Sox, Patriots, Bruins, Celtics, and Revolution. Now I imagine those first four teams are familiar to you . . . but maybe not the last one . . .

The New England Revolution are a professional soccer team that was founded in 1996. Soccer being my favorite sport, I quickly came to follow the team from their inaugural match and have hardly missed a game in their 29-year history. I even had season tickets for a while when I lived closer to Gillette Stadium.

With all that said, though, there's something different about the Revolution from all the other teams in that list . . . they have never won a championship. That's right, while all the other Boston teams have been racking up trophies over the years the Revolution have managed to make it to MLS Cup (soccer's Super Bowl) five times, only to lose every single one.

This team gives new definition to the word heartbreak. And I think maybe even a new way for us to understand Holy Week.

For as we all know, churches are full of people on Palm Sunday, waving palm leaves and shouting their hosannas. And then just a week later they are full of the overwhelming aroma of lilies as brass quartets play some of the most joyful music of the year on Easter morning. And it makes sense. We love the joy and celebration of these holy days.

But there are also days in between where the church is much less full, the music much more somber, the talk of anything but celebration. Of course, I'm thinking of Maundy Thursday—the night Jesus shares a final meal with his disciples, and then Good Friday—the day in which Jesus breathes his last. Honestly these aren't the most fun services to attend, but they may be some of the most important.

Why? Well, without delving into the depths of tears and betrayal and suffering and death during the week, our Easter celebrations are that much less poignant. We need to go through the sad times to really appreciate the good ones.

That's why I encourage all of you to join us throughout Holy Week—in person on Maundy Thursday at 7:30pm and in person or live-stream on Good Friday at 7:30pm. Come experience the heartbreaking emotions of Holy Week, feel the depths of what the disciples went through, walk the final steps that Jesus walked on this earth, and then see how much more joyful your Easter celebration becomes.

The good news is that we know how the story ends in the church. . . and I have faith that someday there will be a celebration at the end for the Revolution too. And having been through so many heartbreaking “Holy Weeks” with them, I can only imagine what a celebration that will be.