

WAR IN IRAN AND HOLY WEEK COLLIDE

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My response along with Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe's good counsel. Our Presiding Bishop has a challenging message for the Episcopal Church in particular, and American Christians more broadly. 6/6/2025 Writing in Religion News Service (and reposted at Episcopal News Service), Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe said the Episcopal Church — for generations the church of presidents and the political establishment — is being called to a different kind of patriotism: When we are awash in propaganda, even our resistance can be bound by its definitions and incline us to see the world in the same categories - foreigner and neighbor, cisgender and transgender, white and people of color, Christian and Muslim - that we seek to transcend. These historical lessons are urgent. Churches like ours, protected by the First Amendment and practiced in galvanizing people of goodwill, may be some of the last institutions capable of resisting this administration's overreach and recklessness. To do so faithfully, we must see beyond the limitations of our tradition and respond not in partisan terms, but as Christians who seek to practice our faith fully in a free and fair democracy. Regardless of partisan affiliation, he said, Christians are called to decide which master they serve: We did not seek this predicament, but God calls us to place the most vulnerable and marginalized at the center of our common life, and we must follow that command regardless of the dictates of any political party or earthly power. We are now being faced with a series of choices between the demands of the federal government and the teachings of Jesus, and that is no choice at all. This is not the same kind of patriotism that has guided our church since its founding in 1785, but this July Fourth, it may be the most faithful service we can render — both to the country we love and the God we serve. A partial letter from Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church, Sean Rowe, on the military strike on Iran. 2/28/2026 "As news reports tell us of fear and panic in Iran, ask you to pray especially for the people of the Diocese of Iran and for all of the Iranian people. In recent weeks, we have mourned as the regime in Iran has killed peaceful protesters, and watched with alarm at both its increasing repression of the Iranian people and the escalating response of the U.S. government. As Christians who follow a Prince of Peace, we mourn that today's attacks will surely mean further hardship for the most vulnerable Iranians and, as retaliation inevitably follows, suffering that will spread across the entire region.'

"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:6-8 This is one of my favorite texts from Scripture for it challenges me to look at my own life and how to act in the places I find myself in. "To act justly" calls us to question how others are treated in a world that seems to have gone crazy with power and greed. Blaming others instead of looking at how I am responsible as a citizen of this country and the world. I am called to advocate for those who are not being treated justly whether, immigrants, the poor, innocents in prison, the uninsured, the children of which 20% in this country and more in the world go hungry each and every day. We grow and make enough food to cover everyone but some businesses and governments like to withhold the food, even destroying it, to keep the prices high. "To love mercy". We all want our God to be merciful to us so why do we rain hate and spew lies

about others just because they are different from us, pray differently or have a different skin color and/or language? Mercy helps us to advocate for those who need our love, our willingness to celebrate all of God's children. "To walk humbly with our God" means to recognize that God calls us to discipleship not complacency and gives each of us gifts to use at such a time as this. So here we are starting the 4th week of an unjust war and Holy Week. A War motivated by hate, greed and the misuse of power just because we can. Isn't this what Jesus faced from the powers and principalities of the world when he was alive? The Roman Empire wanted control and so did some of the temple leadership because they didn't want to lose the privileges and power they had, so "they went along to get along" instead of standing up for what the Law and the Prophets had warned them about. So here we are about to begin Holy Week a time when we remember a time like no other when our savior Jesus Christ gave his all so that we would be able to follow his example and really act justly, show mercy and walk humbly with our God. Bishop Thomas and our Presiding Bishop both spoke about this unjust war waged against a people controlled by a theocracy that also punishes its people for speaking out. Join us this week at St. Ann's to remember with love how Jesus gave his full measure so that we can experience grace upon grace. Palm Sunday calls us to remember how Jesus was hailed as the Messiah one minute and called a blasphemer the next. How many of his beloved disciples ran away due to fear but would return later due to grace. Our Maundy (Maudatum) Thursday service at 6pm helps us to remember the Passover supper where Jesus humbly served his disciples, instituted the Holy Eucharist commanded (Maudatum) them to love one another. The altar will be stripped and we will all leave in silence as we now move into Good Friday the next day. The church will be opened at noon; the way of the Cross will be held at 3 PM and the Good Friday service at 6PM with communion from the reserve Sacrament. Then on Easter Sunday we will have joy filled services at 8 and 10 am. Alleluias will ring out; love will abound with gratitude for Jesus our Savior.