



Daily Reflections

NEVER FORGET

By Julie Mussché

A Quote

“Around us, everyone was weeping. Someone began to recite Kaddish, the prayer for the dead. I do not know if it has ever happened before, in the long history of the Jews, that people have ever recited the prayer for the dead for themselves.”

ELIE WIESEL, NIGHT

Reflection

Originally, I had planned the reflection for today with a very different focus, that is until serendipitously, I stumbled across information that today, January 27, 2024, is International Holocaust Remembrance Day. It is the eightieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. The quote from Elie Wiesel above, from his memoir of his experience in Buchenwald, starkly reveals the reality of the tribulation.

This is a time for remembering, for reciting Kaddish, for naming those that perished. It is also appropriate to recall how the travesty started, the cause and effect of such hateful actions.

As presented in prior reflections, Fascism grew globally, particularly in Europe but also in North and South America, following World War I. In the case of the Nazis, what started as a small group of malcontents, many of them veterans, grew to influence society and become a war-centered autocracy. Using selective language to separate themselves as superior along racial, ethnic, and religious lines, Fascist rhetoric and imagery targeted and diminished anyone who was different: Jews, Roma, blacks, Slavs, socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, the disabled, homosexuals, and anyone who collaborated with or married designated groups or was a threat to the "status quo."

One distinguishing feature of the Nazi genocide: it was institutionalized and industrialized. There were forty-some extermination camps strategically located along transportation routes, some near large populations and others removed for purposes of obfuscation. Mass extermination of peoples was woven into the fabric of society, an insidious and malignant condition of hate, indifference, and fear. How does one sort out that reality?

How are you invited to remember those that perished? There are events and services occurring around the globe as well as locally, with general information and reflections accessible. Should you wish to find out more, just do a general search on International Holocaust Remembrance 2024. The **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** is a good resource.



Lighted Pillar Candle
Photo by Brett Sayles

For Pondering

It is estimated that eleven million people, including six million Jews, were murdered during the Holocaust. Some names you no doubt recognize: Anne Frank, Edith Stein (St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross), Maximilian Kolbe, Etty Hillesum, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

How are you invited to remember?

For Prayer

If you would like, light a candle as you remember. Psalms 16 and 23 are often prayed during a remembrance.

Here's a prayer from Etty Hillesum that was written shortly before she died.

"You have made me so rich, oh God, please let me share Your beauty with open hands. My life has become an uninterrupted dialogue with You, oh God, one great dialogue. At night, when I lie in my bed and rest in You, oh God, tears of gratitude run down my face, and that is my prayer."

ETTY HILLESUM, AUGUST 18, 1943

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