

## Weekly Musing † April 4, 2011

About sixteen years ago, St. Luke's was a significant contributor to the Anne Frank exhibition which came to Billings. It was displayed on an upper floor of the library. I remember in particular a picture very similar to this one.

Yes, that is right, the two figures on your left are Roman Catholic bishops giving the fascist salute. Germany was traditionally 70% Lutheran and 30% Roman Catholic from the time of the Protestant Reformation. Both of those churches capitulated early on to the monstrous doctrines of fascism. The expression of fascism in Germany is arguably one of the most virulent forms of pure evil ever to visit human existence.

Not every one in Germany and in German churches embraced Hitler. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, remembered this week on our church



calendar, was one such person. From the very beginning he publicly denounced Hitler. He said the church must not "bandage the victims under the wheel, but jam the spoke in the wheel itself." He and others started the "Confessing Church" which repudiated Fascism.



It is important to remember that few movements spring full blown from their creator's mind. They start, like everything else, with one small act. As evil grows, it is harder and more costly to resist. Germany was heir to Martin Luther who in the midst of his new movement witnessed what is called the Peasant's War in Germany of the 16th century. The Peasants of Germany made a list of perfectly reasonable demands which were ignored by the Holy Roman Emperor. War broke out in which it is estimated 100,000 peasants perished. Many associated the uprising with Luther's uprising against the Catholic Church. Luther was quick to distance himself from the peasants and said it was the right of the German princes to put down the revolt. To make a long story short, this is the beginning of the German notion of the two kingdoms, one of the church and the other secular. This division of the sacred and the secular made Germans reluctant to be involved in politics and unfortunately many did little about Hitler until it was too late. It is a doctrine that appeals to many Americans.

Bonhoeffer could have escaped Germany but chose not to. He was imprisoned for a year and a half and then hanged a month before the end of the war. He is a martyr of the Christian faith. His book "The Cost of Discipleship" is a classic. If anyone knew the cost of discipleship, it was surely Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Dietrich Bonhoeffer is a corrective to those who assume they can be a good Christian and ignore politics completely. Sometimes to do so is to stand by while the gates of hell are opened and the demons are unleashed.

Bonhoeffer's statue on the wall of martyrs of Westminster Abbey in London. He is portrayed here with others including Martin Luther King Jr. and Oscar Romero.

## News from St. Luke's

Thanks to Fr. Jasmer, Fr. Knee, and The Rev. Linda McCloud who helped with church while I recuperated from knee surgery. It is good for you to hear a different voice in the pulpit.

Do remember that every Friday noon in Lent we have the Stations of the Cross in the church. We also continue with our Lectionary Bible Study on Tuesdays at 6 pm. A light meals is served and we look at the lections for the coming Sunday. The youth group meets Wednesday at 6 pm.

Don't forget the Women's Luncheon on Saturday, April 16th. Details are mailed to all women of the parish.

This coming Sunday is our second Camp Marshall Sunday. A barbecue will be held after church. Grace Camp is a particularly important ministry of Camp. It serves children of parents who are incarcerated. This is the sort of program we can brag about. Please give generously.

