

### ***CRIBBS<S>NOTE***

This has been a very painful and disappointing week in so many ways. The wounds of American society are open and the boil of racism has been lanced once again. It was bound to happen. It had to happen. The unfinished business of America's perennial problem has bubbled up and grabbed us by the heart, mind and throat. The mild attempt to cover up the scars of abuse, neglect, ignorance, and jaded illusions about racial tolerance has been unmasked. It is happening because a Black man is a viable candidate for president of the United States of America.

Clever people who have control of the media are very busy manufacturing storylines and dishing out perspectives with precision to create a particular social drama. In the past, the tactic was to find someone for a scapegoat and blame him for the discomfort and ills of society. One person was murdered by mobs raging against sanity and lynching the innocent unfortunate. With prodding and persistence, in very little time madness brewed a deadly atmosphere. That is where we are heading now once again in America.

It has been a very difficult week as anger and accusations flew wildly across television screens, on radio stations, and over the Internet. Fears were tapped as has been done too many times before as a means to manipulate the public. The unfinished business of America continues to hold sway. When there is doubt about what to do, the most reliable tactic to bring a situation under the control of a few is to raise the issue of racial tension.

Our ignorance about each other in this 'melting pot' makes it so very easy to produce and disseminate half-truths, distorted messages, and home-spun stereotypes about people we don't know. It is easy to get us excited and afraid to confront real issues affecting our lives. Our minds do not think beyond the convenience of simple, soft-fed lies and false impressions. Too many believe what is said. Too many take the message and run with it.

Also this week oil companies announced profits that exceed 60 percent as gasoline prices continued to soar. The U.S. Supreme Court said it is okay to deny citizens their right to vote if they don't have specific identification cards. While the argument was the court intended to guard against voter fraud, the reality is most people in America don't vote. Less than half actually go to the polls. A bloc of less than 20 percent of the population can determine the outcome of a national election. Common sense in a democracy would suggest the focus should be on how to get more people involved in the most elemental aspect of a democratic society rather than conceiving new ways to keep people away and give an advantage to the ruling party.

So it goes this week in America. Complaints from anyone who feels the pinch of injustice are not acceptable and don't want to be heard by people living comfortable lives away from the fray. The Supreme Court also ruled this week that workers who are not fairly compensated for their labors have very limited protection and must file their charges against the offender within 180 days of the act of discrimination. It does not matter that such knowledge too often can't be known until long after the offense has occurred.

Imagine how Jesus felt as he prayed for his disciples just before he was led to the cross. Consider the depth of his agony as he realized there was very little sympathy for those who were oppressed. Think about his pain as he knew the poor would not be cared for with compassion. "No justice/No peace!" was a cry that spread across America a decade or so ago. This week echoes of that chant could be heard from the echelons of national government to the back alleys littered with forgotten homeless souls who have long ago been removed from the rolls of general assistance, workman's compensation, and payrolls. It's been quite a week in America. So, what do we pray for and to whom?