



Some time this Holy Week most of the Christian world will hear a powerful statement from the Hebrew Bible. *"Redress the wronged, hear the orphan's plea and defend the widow!"* (Isaiah 1:17)

OK, the days when I could walk into a Romanian hellhole and liberate children with AIDS are over. So realistically what can an old guy like me do to follow that command?

There are a lot of terrible things happening on our planet. Each of

us has different situations that hold our attention when we hear about them or see something in the paper or on TV. What hits you hard? I know for me personally it usually has to do with a young child looking up at an adult who might guide him or her out of a horrible situation. On my desk is a picture I clipped out of something. It shows a woman with three children walking along the railroad tracks at Auschwitz. The children are following her with confidence as they always have. She knows this is the last time. I recently saw something just as powerful on television. It was filmed in Syria at night using that eerie green light. The young boy, about eight years-old, is in a group attempting to escape into Lebanon. He is looking at his young mother for direction. That boy's face is one I cannot get out of my mind. We are told his father had been stopped at the Syrian checkpoint and shot. This Muslim mother is trudging onwards exactly like the Jewish mother in the 65-year-old picture on my desk. Will it never stop?

The Catholic biblical scholar Carroll Stuhlmueller (1923–1994) says that those words from Isaiah “symbolize in the Bible *all* the helpless and indigent people of the world.” So can't I just look around me and find situations that need redressing, listening to, defending? I suspect much of the time it simply means not averting my eyes or attention from an unpleasant situation right in front of me.

Today, I will look around where I live and walk. Will you look around where you live and walk?

Brother Toby