

# Daily Prayer

*Martyrs of Uganda, 1886*

*Wednesday, June 3 2020*

*We enter into a time of quiet. We offer to God our selves and in the silence know that God embraces us as God's very own. We offer to God our hopes and our concerns through our prayers and in the silence listen for God. Today we commemorate the Martyrs of Uganda, 1886.*

*We begin by saying*

You need endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what is promised.

*Hebrews 10.36*

## The Psalm

How shall I repay the Lord \*  
for all the good things he has done for me?

I will lift up the cup of salvation \*  
and call upon the name of the Lord.

I will fulfil my vows to the Lord \*  
in the presence of all his people.

Precious in the sight of the Lord \*  
is the death of his servants.

O Lord, I am your servant; \*  
I am your servant and the child of your handmaid;  
you have freed me from my bonds.

I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving \*  
and call upon the name of the Lord.

I will fulfil my vows to the Lord \*  
in the presence of all his people.

In the courts of the Lord's house, \*  
in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.

Hallelujah!

*Psalm 116.10-17*

## **The Reading**

*We continue with the reading and the reflection that follows. In silence we ask what the reading has to say to us today. Is there something in the reflection that draws us more deeply into the reading? What does God have to say to us? What do we have to ask God?*

'Then they will hand you over to be tortured and will put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of my name. Then many will fall away, and they will betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold. But anyone who endures to the end will be saved. And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come.

*Matthew 24.9-14*

## **The Reflection**

*Paul MacLean*

I am writing this meditation on Tuesday June 2, with the image fresh in my mind of the president of the United States standing in front of St John's Episcopal church, bible in hand, for a photo op, while, by all reasonable accounts, fuelling the flames of violence engulfing the country with his threats of military domination. In a dreadful symbol he added to the violence happening elsewhere by ordering the White House guard to clear his pathway of peaceful demonstrators with teargas and rubber bullets as if to give credence to his call for forceful suppression of all demonstrations.

The Episcopal bishop of Washington said, 'Let me be clear. The president just used a bible, the most sacred text of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, and one of the churches of my diocese, without permission as a backdrop for a message antithetical to the teachings of Jesus. We align ourselves with those seeking justice for George Floyd and countless others. ... We hold the teachings of our sacred texts to be so, so grounding to our lives and everything we do, and it is about love of neighbour and sacrificial love and justice.'

On Wednesday you may be reading this meditation. On this day in our church calendar we remember the Ugandan martyrs of 1886. But as Stephen Reynolds reminds us, history repeated itself under the murderous regime of Idi Amin and in 1977 Archbishop Janani Luwum was added to the company of martyrs for protesting against the slaughter and oppression. Some of you may remember, as I do, that bishops and clergy fled their country, and many were given shelter in Canada and Anglican parishes.

All of this is to say that our Christian faith compels us to identify and protest against injustice, and to stand with the oppressed, in today's case meaning those who experience racial discrimination because their skin is black or brown. The lesson today is that martyrdom comes not just from our fierce loyalty to God and our need to worship God in freedom, but also from the knowledge that the God we worship has justice and the care for all humanity at the divine heart. When this divine compassion is violated by political leaders and regimes, there is a cost to our discipleship. The Ugandan martyrs of 1886 were killed for their faith. Janani Luwum was killed for his faith in action. What we are seeing south of our border is nothing short of sacrilege, whereby the symbols of our faith are being co-opted and perverted for an agenda that has nothing to do with Christianity. During these troubling times we need to keep the way of Jesus firmly in our minds and hearts. That way is characterized by compassion, reconciliation and non-violent action.

It's tough to walk this way when all around us we see images of violence. It's tempting to retreat into a private faith and stop

walking until things calm down. But if we don't speak up and join the march for justice in whatever way we can, we risk losing the very essence of our faith to those who will take our sacred symbols and twist them to justify violent means and self-serving ends. Our way, our symbols, express non-violence and self-sacrifice.

By coincidence my daily prayer (Tuesday) has included psalm 146, written as if it were a comment on and spiritual antidote to the events of yesterday: 'Put not your trust in rulers, nor in any child of earth, for there is no health in them ... Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help, whose hope is in the Lord their God, Who made the heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them, who keeps his promise forever; Who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger. The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous; the Lord cares for the stranger; he sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked. The Lord shall reign for ever ... throughout all generations. Hallelujay!'

I invite you to read Fr Stephen Reynold's account of the Ugandan martyrs, and to be strengthened by their example for our response to the challenges of the present times.

The nation of Uganda lies in equatorial Africa; its southeastern border runs along the shores of Lake Victoria. European explorers and missionaries first came upon the peoples of the area in the 1860's. Especially along Lake Victoria, in the region known as Buganda, they found a highly sophisticated society, a federation of kindred tribes under an hereditary monarch called the *kabaka*. Christian missionaries, both Anglican and Roman Catholic, found a ready hearing among small but important groups of the Bugandan nation. The growing strength and influence of the Christian presence led the *kabaka*, Mwanga, to launch a vicious persecution in 1885. This persecution culminated in a holocaust of Anglican and Roman Catholic converts at Namugongo on June 3, 1886. All told, some forty-five Ugandans suffered death for the sake of Christ. Their witness proved to be the seed of the Ugandan church, and by the

time Uganda gained independence, it was the most Christian nation in Africa. Indeed, there were more Anglicans in Uganda than in any other church of the Anglican communion.

But history has a way of repeating itself. In 1972 Colonel Idi Amin overthrew the elected government of Uganda, and his regime soon became infamous throughout the world for its atrocities. But there was one structure which Amin could not control by means of terror — the Church of Uganda. The Anglican archbishop was Janani Luwum — a gentle, cheerful man, whose instincts were all toward loyalty and political noninvolvement. But Amin's injustices finally moved Luwum to protest. On February sixteenth, 1977, he was ordered to meet Amin in a personal interview. That same night, after presenting a formal protest on behalf of the Church and in the name of Christ, Luwum was murdered. So we remember Janani Luwum with the Martyrs of Uganda who perished in 1886, for he shared in their witness to the love and inviolable justice of God in Christ Jesus.

*When the time is right, we conclude our time of silence with the canticle*

## **The Canticle ~ Song of Thanksgiving**

Surely, it is God who saves me; \*

I will trust in him and not be afraid.

For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defence, \*

and he will be my Saviour.

Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing \*

from the springs of salvation.

And on that day you shall say, \*

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his name;

make his deeds known among the peoples; \*

see that they remember that his name is exalted.

Sing the praises of the Lord, for he has done great things, \*  
and this is known in all the world.

Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy, \*  
for the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of Israel.

*Isaiah 12.2-6*

*We continue in prayer for those people and situations that we hold up before God (The Intercessions) and continue with the concluding collect, the Lord's prayer and the closing sentences.*

## **The Intercessions**

For the whole People of God, that each one may be a true and faithful servant of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For those drawing near to the light of faith, that the Lord will bring them to true knowledge of himself, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For our families and friends, that the Lord will give them joy and satisfaction in all that they do, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For those who are lonely, sick, hungry, persecuted, or ignored, that the Lord will comfort and sustain them, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For our country, that the Lord will help us to contribute to its true growth and well-being, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the whole human family, that we may live together in justice and peace, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy. Amen**

*We conclude our prayers*

O God,  
by the blood of Christian martyrs  
you planted in the heart of Uganda  
the seed of a strong and living Church,  
and you confirmed its growth under the hand of tyranny  
by the witness of your servant Janani Luwum.  
May we who cherish their remembrance before you  
be valiant in our witness against the terrors of unjust rulers  
and remain steadfast in the love by which you bind us to yourself;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

*[let us pray as our Saviour taught us,]*

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen

*We conclude*

Peace be to us all and love with faith,  
from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Amen. Alleluia.

Credits:

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The Background Information for today's commemoration and The Collect is from *For All the Saints* © 2007, General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada

The Concluding Sentence: A New Zealand Prayer Book © 1989

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