

Daily Prayer

Feria

Wednesday, July 1, 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 hold in our prayers the ordinary moments in life—the trials and the joys—as well as our nation.

We begin by saying

If any serve me, the Father will honour them.

John 12.26

The First Reading

Seek good and not evil,
that you may live;

and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will be with you,
just as you have said.

Hate evil and love good,
and establish justice in the gate;

it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts,
will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

I hate, I despise your festivals,
and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

Even though you offer me your burnt-offerings and grain-
offerings,

I will not accept them;

and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals
I will not look upon.

Take away from me the noise of your songs;
I will not listen to the melody of your harps.
But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Amos 5.14-15, 21-24

The Psalm

Hear, O my people, and I will speak:
"O Israel, I will bear witness against you; *
for I am God, your God.
I do not accuse you because of your sacrifices; *
your offerings are always before me.
I will take no bull-calf from your stalls, *
nor he-goats out of your pens;
For the beasts of the forest are mine, *
the herds in their thousands upon the hills.
I know every bird in the sky, *
and the creatures of the fields are in my sight.
If I were hungry, I would not tell you, *
for the whole world is mine and all that is in it.
Do you think I eat the flesh of bulls, *
or drink the blood of goats?
Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving *
and make good your vows to the Most High.
Call upon me in the day of trouble; *
I will deliver you, and you shall honour me."

Psalm 50.7-15

The Gospel Reading

We continue with the gospel reading and the reflection that follows. In silence, we ask what the readings have 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?

‘When he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demoniacs coming out of the tombs met him. They were so fierce that no one could pass that way. Suddenly they shouted, ‘What have you to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?’ Now a large herd of swine was feeding at some distance from them. The demons begged him, ‘If you cast us out, send us into the herd of swine.’ And he said to them, ‘Go!’ So they came out and entered the swine; and suddenly, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and perished in the water. The swineherds ran off, and on going into the town, they told the whole story about what had happened to the demoniacs. Then the whole town came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their neighbourhood.

Matthew 8.28-34

The Reflection

Jim Boyles

Canada Day 2020. Here we are in the midst of a serious pandemic, challenged by calls for racial equality, and in particular challenged to face the injustices of the Indigenous peoples of this land.

What better passage to read today than the verses from Amos. We're in various degrees of isolation. Our solemn assemblies and our festivals have been closed down. The Lord says, through Amos, "Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps". We've managed to salvage something of our great music tradition thanks to our musical team at Redeemer, but I must say it's a real challenge to meet on ZOOM and experience the depth of worship from Sunday to Sunday.

The point the Lord is making through Amos is that the Israelites had their priorities wrong. In the last verse we get to the core message: "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream". Sometimes justice gets forgotten when life is too comfortable, when we look inward and immerse ourselves in our solemn assemblies and festivals.

So COVID-19 comes along, disrupting our lives, but also providing an opportunity for calls for justice to be heard. Church of the Redeemer has a rich tradition of justice-seeking - the Common Table, the Creation Matters and Indigenous Justice groups, Integrity and the advocacy for LGBT rights, all justice-seeking activities, grounded in the faith, challenging the forces of injustice in the world. Following Amos.

Jesus is confronted by two deranged humans who appear to live in the cemetery among the tombs. They meet Jesus, and the demonic spirits recognize him as the Son of God, a man of power, and they beg him, if he must cast them out, to cast them into the herd of swine that was nearby. Jesus simply says, "Go". The demons enter the swine and the result - the herd rushes over a cliff into the sea and die.

One element in the story is what happens next. The swine keepers rushed back to the town and told the story of what had happened. Then the townspeople came out and met Jesus and begged him to go away. Perhaps it was fear. Likely it was economically motivated. This travelling miracle man had meant the loss of the whole herd of swine. (in the gospel of Mark we're told there were 2,000). The fearful, perhaps angry community had lived with the deranged people for a long time, consigning them to the tombs, but what about justice for the loss of the swine, that provided food and income for the people?

COVID-19 has brought home the very high cost of caring for the sick. Jesus cares for the two possessed by demons, and that priority of care cost the community the loss of its swine. The delicate balance between the elements of the economy and health care are in tension every day in the news. We face this tension personally too, when jobs are lost and incomes diminished or destroyed. This is a point where our priorities are sorted out. "Let justice roll down..." in the midst of our care and concern and love for one another.

This particular Canada Day can be for us a day of hope, and need not be a day of fear or despair. We can have both justice and love. We have this opportunity to be followers of Jesus, pursuers of justice, and carers for one another.

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

The Canticle ~ A Song of Peace

Come, let us go up to the mountain of God, ♦
to the house of the God of Jacob;

That God may teach us his ways, ♦
and that we may walk in his paths.

For the law shall go out from Zion, ♦
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

God shall judge between the nations, ♦
and shall mediate for many peoples.

They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, ♦
and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, ♦
neither shall they learn war any more.

O people of Jacob, come: ♦
let us walk in the light of the Lord.

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

Let us pray to the Lord, saying, **Lord, have mercy.**

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.

We conclude our prayers

Almighty God,
you have taught us through your Son
that love fulfils the law.
May we love you with all our heart,
all our soul, all our mind and all our strength,

and may we love our neighbour as ourselves;
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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