

St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church, Whiterocks

Dear St. Elizabeth's Family,

October 15, 2021

Before coming to Utah, I had a disagreement with my bishop about the Bible. To him, the most defining moment in the life and ministry of Jesus was when he turned over the tables of the money changers in the Temple. (*Mark 11:15*) That outpouring of righteous anger and his passion for justice were expressions of the power of Jesus to change the world.

What speaks most powerfully to me is the prayer of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, on the night before his Crucifixion. He'd just enjoyed a last supper with his disciples, saying as he blessed the bread and wine, "this is my Body... this is my Blood." (*Mark 14: 22, 24*) He knew that one of his closest friends would betray him to the Roman soldiers. In that last hour before his gruesome fate unfolded, he went off by himself in the garden to pray.

The Gospels make it clear that most of this prayer time was silent. Jesus was a master of what we might call meditation or contemplation, prayer beyond words. When people left him alone, he could immerse himself in communion with the Creator for hours. But on this night, as he drew nearer to the Cross, his spirit was troubled. From the depths of his heart, he cried out, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me..." I find this to be the most deeply human moment of Jesus' life. Even he could be stretched to the breaking point.

We shouldn't be surprised that his prayer was answered. Into the silence the Spirit descended, overshadowing Jesus with the Creator's presence and power. Replenished and renewed, he spoke the words which would propel him forward, "yet, not what I want, but what you want."

When Jesus asked his disciples, "Are you able to drink the cup that I drink?" (*Mark 10:38*), the obvious answer was no. James and John had been overcome by delusions of grandeur, imagining themselves sitting at the right hand of Jesus in the kingdom. His reply, "You do not know what you are asking," was a wild understatement. Though he'd been telling them, "many who are first will be last," and "whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant," they hadn't understood.

But wait. Don't we all sometimes drink from a bitter cup in this earthly life? Though our suffering may be nothing like what Jesus faced, it's real enough for us. Aren't we sometimes stretched to the breaking point, ready to run away and hide? Jesus' moment of despair in the garden is certainly familiar to me.

Won't our desperate prayers be answered, just as his was? By our own wisdom and worthiness, we cannot drink the cup that Jesus drank. Thanks to his faithfulness, however, we don't have to face those times alone. He has shown us how the Spirit works within us at our time of need. When life's challenges become overwhelming, remember what Jesus said to his disciples. "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God. For God all things are possible."

Michael+

Gathering in Our Hearts

Prayer for Indigenous Peoples' Day (*adapted by the Rev. Canon Robert Two Bulls, Minneapolis, MN*)

Creator, you bent the earth like a bow until it was one, round, shining planet. At your word the land was drawn into mountains and tundra, forests and prairies; the waters were gathered together into rivers, lakes and seas. Many times, when people crossed these seas from other lands they broke the circle of your creation by their greed and violence and they shattered the lives of others. Creator, renew the circle of the earth and turn the hearts of all people to one another; that they and all the earth may live and be drawn toward you, through the love of Jesus Christ, who lives with you and the Holy Spirit in the circle of the Trinity, forever One. Amen

Scripture Passage Mark 10:35-45 (*in the insert*)

from Psalm 104

Bless the LORD, O my soul; * O LORD my God, how excellent is your greatness!
you are clothed with majesty and splendor.

You wrap yourself with light as with a cloak *
and spread out the heavens like a curtain.

You lay the beams of your chambers in the waters above; *
you make the clouds your chariot; you ride on the wings of the wind.

You make the winds your messengers *
and flames of fire your servants.

You have set the earth upon its foundations, *
so that it never shall move at any time.

O LORD, how manifold are your works! * in wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures. Hallelujah!

Reflection

Plant your heart deep within creation. Plant it in Mother Earth. Put down the roots of your faith. Let them reach as far as they can go. This is your land. This is your home. Your life, and the life of those you love, comes from this place. It nourishes your family. It sustains your community. An important first step on the indigenous spiritual trail is paying reverence to where you are. The part of creation you call home is the center of your universe in ways both humbling and healing. Look to the life around you and plant your heart deep into the love it embodies.

Episcopal Bishop Steven Charleston, Choctaw nation

Remember those among us who are in need of prayer. We give thanks for the rain we've received, for the end of wildfire season and for firefighters. In our church family, we remember Betty, Greg, Paul, Matthew, Kathy, Amanda, Julia, Tiarance, Chris, Tony, Leanna, Judy, Connie, Lyn, Sterling, Kaysen, Christopher, Eve, Logan, LeeRoy, Arick, Leo, Hudson, SueAnn, Redrock, Dave & Nora, Tyler, Rodricka, Ina Jane, Peggy and Reuban, and for those who have died. We pray for first responders and medical workers, those from our reservation serving in the Armed Forces and for all veterans. We say the **Lord's Prayer** out loud.

Prayer for Knowledge of God's Creation

Almighty and everlasting God, you made the universe with all its marvelous order, its atoms, worlds, and galaxies, and the infinite complexity of living creatures: Grant that, as we probe the mysteries of your creation, we may come to know you more truly, and more surely fulfill our role in your eternal purpose; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing

The Peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

If you can, join us for in-person worship at St. Elizabeth's on Sundays at 10:00 am.

You can also look for prayers and a spiritual message on Michael Carney's Facebook page.