

“THE FULLNESS OF JOY”
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OPEN DOOR MCC

Gleanings from the Liturgy

December 3, 2017

Opening Words: (Walt Whitman)

Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.

**Henceforth I ask not good-fortune, I myself am good-fortune,
Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing,
Done with indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criticisms,
Strong and content I travel the open road.**

The earth, that is sufficient,
I do not want the constellations any nearer,
I know they are very well where they are,
I know they suffice for those who belong to them.

**(Still here I carry my old delicious burdens,
I carry them, men and women, I carry them with me wherever I go,
I swear it is impossible for me to get rid of them,
I am fill'd with them, and I will fill them in return.)**

Welcome

Bless each one who is here safely, and blessings on all who are away this week. Thank you for coming to Open Door MCC on World AIDS Day Sunday and the first Sunday of Advent! World AIDS Day is held on 1 December each year and is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, show their support for people living with HIV and to commemorate people who have died. World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day and the first one was held in 1988.

Globally an estimated 34 million people have HIV. More than 35 million people have died from the virus, making it one of the most destructive pandemics in history. Today, many scientific advances have been made in HIV treatment, there are laws to protect people living with HIV and we understand so much more about the condition. But despite this, people do not know the facts about how to protect themselves and others from HIV, and stigma and discrimination remain a reality for many people living with HIV. World AIDS Day is important as it reminds the public and Government that HIV has not gone away – there is still a vital need to raise money, increase awareness, fight prejudice and improve education.

World AIDS Day is an opportunity to learn the facts about HIV and put your knowledge into action. If you understand how HIV is transmitted, how it can be prevented, and the reality of living with HIV today – you can use this knowledge to take care of your own health and the health of others, and ensure you treat everyone living with HIV fairly, and with respect and understanding.

I invite you to name those and continue to remember those you have lost to AIDS or those you care for who are living now with HIV or AIDS. (Michel Foucault, Michael Pendragon, Freddy Mercury, Arthur Ashe, Tony Richardson, Pedro Zamora, Glenn Burke, Keith Haring, Vito Russo, Alvin Ailey, Rudolph Nureyev, John Boswell, Marlon Riggs, Arturo Islas, Paddy Chew, Tasha...)

MCC and Open Door have a special outreach to vulnerable communities and those in solidarity: Love is our greatest moral value and resisting exclusion is a primary focus of our ministry. We are and want to be community where everyone is the family of God, and where all parts of our being are welcomed at God's table. This morning I'm grateful for each one of you.

Opening Prayer (*from Emma Bergen*)

In the cracked and barren wastes
that always must be passed through
to reach the Promised Land,
we invoke you, we call to you:
Light of Darkness, Solace of Light,
Moon which guides us, Sun which blesses us,
Giver of Life, we beseech you.
In this land dry without relief
we give thanks to you
for the waters beneath these sands.
We give thanks that you are those waters.
in this land without trees
we give thanks in gratitude
for the unexpected fruit plucked from nothing.
In this land without sustenance
We give thanks that you are the fruit
which nourishes and sustains us.
In this land without shade
we give thanks that you are the shade
which shelters and cools us.
Through your grace we discover
that this waste land bears its own seeds of liberation
before even the Promised Land is reached;
before even the taste of the old land left far behind
with its towers and temples, its fields and vineyards,
its giving wells of water, has faded from our memory.
We invoke you, Blessed One of the water-jar,
of the amphora, of the wine-press,
of the wheat, of the grain,
of the songs and laughter of our children's games
as they played in the fields,
of the smiles of our elders
who once watched them playing
and whose smiles remain in our hearts

even though they themselves are faded into air.
In the desert of emancipation we call on you, Blessed Shekinah.
Give your breath to the breathless ones
who feel that they cannot journey farther.
Grant your sanctuary to those
who are forced to leave their homes,
who are fleeing with their children
to seek refuge in tents and shelters.
Give your blessings to those
who bury their own talents away for the sake of others.
Light the way for those who search for themselves,
and imagine that they search in vain...
We commend all these to your grace, Blessed Shekinah,
As they travel on the journey,
May they find solace in the shadow of your shining wings.

Passing the Peace

Weave, weave, weave us together.
Weave us together in unity and love.
Weave, weave, weave us together.
Weave us together, together in love.

First Reading: Isaiah 64:1-9 (NRSV, NCCC trans., inclusified)

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence — as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil — to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for you. You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. Yet, O God, you are our Parent; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O God, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.
Here ends the lesson. **Thanks be to God.**

Responsive Reading: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 (NRSV, NCCC trans., inclusified)

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock! You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your might, and come to save us!

Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

O God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?
You have fed them with the bread of tears, and given them tears to drink in full measure.
You make us the scorn of our neighbors; our enemies laugh among themselves.

Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved...

But let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, the one whom you made strong for yourself. Then we will never turn back from you; give us life, and we will call on your name.

Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

Second Reading: James 1:2-12 (NRSV, NCCC trans., inclusified)

My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing.

If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you. But ask in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind; for the doubter, being double-minded and unstable in every way, must not expect to receive anything from the Creator.

Let the believer who is lowly boast in being raised up, and the rich in being brought low, because the rich will disappear like a flower in the field. For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the field; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. It is the same way with the rich; in the midst of a busy life, they will wither away.

Blessed is anyone who endures temptation. Such a one has stood the test and will receive the crown of life that the Creator has promised to those who love him.

Here ends the lesson. **Thanks be to God.**

The Great Thanksgiving

Taking nothing for the journey except a staff, God, no bread, no bag, no money in our belts, wearing sandals and just one tunic only, we set out on this pilgrimage toward the Promised Land, toward Jerusalem, toward the star you set before us.

Make us to know your ways, God, as we make our way. Teach us your paths, as we set out on our path. Amen.

God is with you!

And also with you!

Let us open our hearts!

We open them to God.

Let us give God thanks and praise!

It is a good and joyful thing to do!

(from Jan Richardson)

If you could see the journey whole you might never undertake it; might never dare the first step that propels you from the place you have known toward the place you know not.

Call it one of the mercies of the road: that we see it only by stages as it opens before us, as it comes into our keeping step by single step.

There is nothing for it but to go and by our going take the vows the pilgrim takes:

to be faithful to the next step; to rely on more than the map; to heed the signposts of intuition and dream; to follow the *stars* that only you will recognize;

to keep an open *mind* for the wonders that attend the path; to press on beyond distractions beyond fatigue beyond what would tempt you from the way.

There are vows that only you will know; the secret promises for your particular path and the new ones you will need to make when the road is revealed by turns you could not have *anticipated*. Keep them, break them, make them again: each promise becomes part of the path; each choice creates the road that will take you to the place where at last you will ...
arrive, where you will find your deepest truths, where you will leave your gifts, where you will rest and eat, where you will begin again your journey.
Bless this meal, and make it become truly in us, with us, and through us your life-giving, life-changing, life-sustaining presence and your abiding love. Amen.

Closing Blessing (Walt Whitman)

Camerado, I give you my hand!
I give you my love more precious than money,
I give you myself before preaching or law;
Will you give me yourself? will you come travel with me?
Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?
Go in peace

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