

“THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING OUT”
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OPEN DOOR MCC

GLEANINGS FROM THE LITURGY

DECEMBER 17, 2017

Opening Words: *(from Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu)*

Disturb us, O *God*, when we are too well-pleased with ourselves,
when our dreams have come true because we dreamed too little,
because we sailed too close to the shore.

**Disturb us, O *God*, when with the abundance of things we possess,
we have lost our thirst for the water of life,
when, having fallen in love with time,
we have ceased to dream of eternity
and in our efforts to build a new earth,
we have allowed our vision of Heaven to grow dim.**

Stir us, O *God*, to dare more boldly,
to venture into wider sea where storms show Thy mastery,
where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars.

**In the name of *The One* who pushed back the horizons
of our hopes and invited the brave to follow. Amen**

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 the third Sunday of Advent!

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 Anything. (Steve Garnaas-Holmes)

Deepest hope, favorite song, moan of secret grief.	Let the cry out of its cage, your silence roar, what was muffled, speak:
Glottal stop of Ferguson, strangled cry of Syria, rage of Palestine, the border fence.	oceans beneath your voice, tongues beneath your tongue, ages longing to be heard,
Rising tremolo, beyond sad or glad, of slaves already singing.	while grasses fade, and our horrors pass, that voice that was always here,
In your throat, your gut, little pieces, syllables, one or two, of alleluia.	always crying out, voicing through closed throats, opening the way.

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 61:1-4,8-11 (NRSV, NCCC trans., inclusified)

The spirit of GOD is upon me, because God has anointed me and sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of God's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, God's planting, to display God's glory. They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations... For I love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom I have blessed. I will greatly rejoice in God, my whole being shall exult in my God; who has clothed me with the garments of salvation, has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so our GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

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

Responsive Reading: Psalm 126 (NRSV, NCCC trans., inclusified)

A Song of Ascents.

When God restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.

Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy;

then it was said among the nations, 'God has done great things for them.'

Our God has done great things for us, and we rejoiced.

Restore our fortunes, O God, like the watercourses in the Negeb.

May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.

Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing,

shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.

Second Reading: John 1:6-8,19-28 (NRSV, NCCC trans., inclusified)

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light... This is the testimony given by John when the Judeans sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of our God,'" as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy

to untie the thong of his sandal.” This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

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

The Great Thanksgiving (*from Julie Henderson*)

On this day, I will strive to see the peace
that is everywhere and access the abundance of
beauty and joy that lie in every moment...
I will strive to set aside everything I have learned
and presume to know
in order to allow new knowledge and new
experiences to flood my being...
I will create a new paradigm that helps me
to recognize only the good qualities in every
person, place, and thing that composes my environment.
I will raise my energy and my light to the highest frequencies of
love, generosity, charity, compassion, forgiveness, and truth.
I will fill my head with constructive thoughts and images
that will help me to further my individual growth
so that I can illuminate and inspire the lives of others...
I will be courteous to people who cross my path
and I will help those in need wherever and whenever
I find myself in circumstances that allow me to do so.
I will surround myself with beautiful nature
and touch the earth to show her my love and gratitude
for holding mine and everyone else's weight...
I will love because I can, give because I can, be gracious because I can,
be humble because I have every reason to be,
and speak my truth because that is my duty and my joy...
I will listen to someone who rarely has the opportunity to be heard.
I will be aware of my breath and the rhythm of my heartbeat.
I will laugh and forgive myself when I forget
that I made these promises at the beginning of my day,
and at the end of my day I will celebrate and congratulate
myself for what I was able to accomplish.

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 St.-Matthew-in-the-City*)

Here today, through bread and wine, we renew our journey with Jesus and his disciples. We renew our unity with one another, and with all those who have gone before us in this place. We renew our communion with the earth and our interwovenness with the broken ones of the world... Now bread and cup are before us, the memory of our meals, our working, our talking; the story that shapes us: the grieving and the pain, the oppressors around us and the one who lies deep within us, the seeking and the loving. And we give thanks for all that holds us together. May the

bread that we eat bind us across the world with those who cannot. May the cup we drink fortify our resolve to share with those who have not. May the power of love move us to work with those who know it not. May the justice of Jesus become a reality that all people can eat, drink, and be sustained. May that reality come, and may we be a part of its coming. United in the power of love with all who work for justice, we worship you, God, in songs of everlasting praise: Blessing and honor and glory be yours, here and everywhere, now and forever.

Closing Blessing (Archbishop Oscar Romero)

A church that doesn't provoke any crisis, a gospel that doesn't unsettle, a word of God that doesn't get under anyone's skin, a word of God that doesn't touch the real sin of the society in which it is being proclaimed – what gospel is that? Very nice, pious considerations that don't bother anyone, that's the way many would like preaching to be.

Go in peace

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