

Come to the Table: Catholic Worship for All

Liturgy Celebrating World Day of Social Justice

February 16, 2020

Sponsored by Dignity/New York

Welcome to Come to the Table: Catholic Worship for All. We are drawn now into community where we believe that Jesus is present in the "breaking of the bread" — where no one is outcast and no one is without value and no one is excluded from the feast. God is found in the ordinary and every day. Today, let us seek God in a meal shared together.

February 20 has served to focus the world's attention on issues of justice since 2007 when the United Nations General Assembly set this date as the World Day of Social Justice. Social justice is embraced across religious and secular traditions as an underlying principle that promotes peaceful relationship between people. Social justice is also central to Catholic Social Teaching, placing sin and grace in their social context. Today we call to mind those who are kept from full human flourishing by the injustices of society and how we are all called to work for solutions.

Call to Gather

In this prayer for the World Day of Justice, we are reminded that we need to see the injustices happening in the world and to envision the kind of world where God's justice is realized through our efforts and Divine grace.

The Heart of God

David Haas, Text by Tom Franzak

Opening Prayer

In a spirit of solidarity and communion with all of creation and all our brothers and sisters, we recall the words of Micah and pray that our observance of this day may lead to a deeper living of and fulfillment of God's invitation to us

This is what I want from you

To do justice,

To love compassionately and

To walk humbly with your God

(Micah 6:8)

First Reading

--Pope John Paul II, 1 January 2005

Peace is the outcome of a long and demanding battle which is only won when evil is defeated by good.

Second Reading

--Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Life's most persistent and urgent question is, "What are you doing for others?"

Third Reading

--Pope John Paul II, 1999 World Day for Peace Message

"Every person, created in the image and likeness of God and therefore radically oriented towards the Creator is constantly in relationship with those possessed of the same dignity. To promote the good of the individual is thus to serve the common good, which is that point where rights and duties converge and reinforce one another."

Fourth Reading

--Pope John XXIII, *Peace on Earth (Pacem in Terris, 1963)*

“Every fundamental human right draws its indestructible moral force from the natural law, which in granting it imposes a corresponding obligation. Those, therefore, who claim their own rights, yet altogether forget to neglect to carry out their respective duties, are people who build with one hand and destroy with the other.”

Gospel Reading

Matthew 5:38-48

Jesus said to the disciples, “You’ve heard the commandment, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. When someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn and offer the other. If anyone wants to sue you for your shirt, hand over your coat as well. Should anyone press you into service for one mile, go two miles. Give to those who beg from you. And do not turn your back on those who want to borrow from you. “You have heard it said, ‘Love your neighbor — but hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for your persecutors. This will prove that you are children of God. For God makes the sun to rise on bad and good alike; God’s rain falls on the just and the unjust. “If you love those who love you, what merit is there in that? Do not tax collectors do as much? And if you greet only your sisters and brothers, what is so praiseworthy about that? Do not Gentiles do as much? Therefore be perfect, as Abba God in heaven is perfect.”

Shared Reflection



Call to Commitment

An Affirmation of Peace and Justice

I do believe in God, who is love and who has given the earth to all people, who heals us and frees us from all forms of oppression and for whom each life is precious. I believe in the community of faith, called to be for the agent of peace and justice. I believe in the Divine promise to destroy the power of evil and to establish justice and peace for all humankind.

Reader 1: I do not believe in the right of the strongest, or the force of arms, or the power of oppression.

Reader 2: I do believe in the struggle for human rights, in the solidarity of all people, in the power of non-violence.

Reader 1: I do not believe in racism, in the power that comes from wealth and privilege, or any established order that enslaves.

Reader 2: I do believe that all women and men are equally human; that order based on violence and injustice is not order.

Reader 1: I do not believe that war and hunger are inevitable and that peace is unattainable.

Reader 2: I do believe in the beauty of simplicity, in love with open hands, in peace on earth.

I do not believe that suffering need be in vain, that death is the end, that the disfigurement of our world is what the Creator intended. But I dare to believe, always and in spite of everything, in the Divine power to transform and restore, fulfilling the promise of a new heaven and a new earth where justice and peace will flourish.

Let us be still and pray

Peace before us David Haas

Petitions

For whom should we pray?

The Greatest Prayer *adapted: Lord's Prayer for Justice from The Holy Longing Ronald Rolheiser OMI*

Loving God. . . who always stands with the weak, the powerless, the poor, the abandoned, the sick, the aged, the very young, the unborn, and those who, by victim of circumstance, bear the heat of the day.

In whom is heaven. . . where everything will be reversed, where the first will be last and the last will be first, but where all will be well and every manner of being will be well.

May Your name be honored everywhere. . . may we always acknowledge your holiness, respecting that your ways are not our ways, your standards are not our standards. May the reverence we give your name pull us out of the selfishness that prevents us from seeing the pain of our neighbor.

May Your kin-dom come. . . help us to create a world where, beyond our own needs and hurts, we will do justice, love tenderly, and walk humbly with you and each other.

The desire of Your heart for the world be done. . . open our freedom to let you in so that the complete mutuality that characterizes your life might flow through our veins and thus the life that we help generate may radiate your equal love for all and your special love for the poor.

In us, by us and through us. . . may the work of our hands, the temples and structures we build in this world, reflect the temple and the structure of your glory so that the joy, graciousness, tenderness, and justice of heaven will show forth within all of our structures on earth.

Give . . . life and love to us and help us to see always everything as gift. Help us to know that nothing comes to us by right and that we must give because we have been given to. Help us realize that we must give to the poor, not because they need it, but because our own health depends upon our giving to them.

Us . . . the truly plural us. Give not just to our own but to everyone, including those who are very different than the narrow us. Give your gifts to all of us equally.

For each day . . . not tomorrow. Do not let us push things off into some indefinite future so that we can continue to live justified lives in the face of injustice because we can make good excuses for our inactivity.

The bread we need... so that each person in the world may have enough food, enough clean water, enough clean air, adequate health care, and sufficient access to education so as to have the sustenance for a healthy life. Teach us to give from our sustenance and not just from our surplus.

Forgive us . . . forgive us our blindness toward our neighbor, our self-preoccupation, our racism, our sexism, and our incurable propensity to worry only about ourselves and our own. Forgive us our capacity to watch the evening news and do nothing about it.

Enable us to forgive others . . . help us to forgive those who victimize us. Help us to mellow out in spirit, to not grow bitter with age, to forgive the imperfect parents and systems that wounded, cursed, and ignored us.

Keep us from all anxiety ... do not judge us only by whether we have fed the hungry, given clothing to the naked, visited the sick, or tried to mend the systems that victimized the poor. Spare us this test for none of us can stand before your gospel scrutiny. Give us, instead, more days to mend our ways, our selfishness, and our systems.

And fear . . . that is, from the blindness that lets us continue to participate in anonymous systems within which we need not see who gets less as we get more.

For You reign in the power that comes from love which is Your glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Eucharistic Prayer

Adapted from *Imagining a Future* by Michael Morwood

We acknowledge within each of us, and within all people, the emergence of the Divine in human form.

We acknowledge our personal need to be more graciously aware of this Presence, that we and our global community may be empowered to blend in love, care and co-operation.

We gather around the story of Jesus, who challenges us to build bridges, to be neighbor, to respect diversity, to be compassionate and to show the human face of the Divine to our world.

We remember Jesus whose message was simple, pure and clear-sighted.

He affirmed the presence of the Divine in people.

He urged them to become aware of this Presence in their everyday lives.

He wanted to ennoble and empower them so they could live free from fear and give gracious expression to the power and impulses of love.

We remember the night before he died, when he took bread, gave thanks for everything he had, broke the bread and shared it with his friends asking them to remember his total surrender to you and his enduring love for each of them.

This is my body, given for you.

Likewise, knowing his life was to be poured out, he shared the cup of wine with them.

This is my blood shed for you. A covenant of love.

We believe that like all people who lived in love and died in love Jesus died into your eternal loving embrace.



Closing Prayer

—Adapted from Pax Christi, USA, “Renewal of the Vow of Nonviolence”

Gracious and merciful God, We pray for the wisdom, compassion and mercy to live our lives in the love and example of Jesus:

- **to strive for peace within ourselves and to be peacemakers in our daily life;**
- **to accept suffering in the struggle for justice rather than inflicting it;**
- **to refuse to retaliate in the face of provocation and violence;**
- **to persevere in nonviolence of tongue and heart;**
- **to live conscientiously and simply so that we do not deprive others of the means to live.**

We ask this in the name of the Prince of Peace, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

World Peace Prayer

David Haas, Haugen, Joncas

Sign of Peace: *Let us extend a sign of peace. Our justice journeys reveals our need for each other.*

Many people join us from their HouseChurch.

Westchester County, Mount Vernon, Hastings, Brooklyn, Bronx, Queens, Manhattan, New Windsor, Buffalo, East Setauket; NY, Nashville, TN, Chicago, Chillicothe, IL, Silver Spring, MD, E Brookfield, Mansfield, Medford, Provincetown, Revere, MA, Austin, Plano, TX, San Francisco, CA, New Haven, CT, Bennington, VT, Washington, DC, Allentown, Philadelphia, PA, Hawaii, Burlington, KS, Fort Wayne, IN, Detroit, MI, Columbus, OH, Ireland, London, England, Peace Corps Volunteers joining us from Armenia, GNRC members in Manila, Philippines and all those who are praying with us right now! We hold them in our hearts.

For more information: ComeToTheTable@DignityNY.org

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