

Christ Church, Telluride
Spiritual Care Package
Sunday May 31, 2020

*In these times of stress and uncertainty, let us come together in spirit,
choosing to care for each other and ourselves
through prayer, contemplation, and thoughtful, carefully chosen action—
one day at a time.*

Theme for Today: Hunger for Justice

Inspirational Quotes:

“Oh God, to those who have hunger, give bread, and to us who have bread, give the hunger for justice.” — Latin American Prayer

“Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe.” — Frederick Douglass

“Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.” — Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Justice is a certain rectitude of mind whereby a man does what he ought to do in the circumstances confronting him.” — Thomas Aquinas

“Whenever a separation is made between liberty and justice, neither, in my opinion, is safe.” — Edmund Burke

“It is certain, in any case, that ignorance, allied with power, is the most ferocious enemy justice can have.” — James Baldwin

Sacred Text:

Micah 6:8

He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

Poem:

Let America Be America Again
— Langston Hughes

Editor's Note: The following poem was originally written from a male-gendered perspective. In its own spirit, I have taken the liberty of modifying it slightly, moving it towards gender inclusivity.

Let America be America again.
Let it be the dream it used to be.
Let it be the pioneer on the plain
Seeking a home where they themselves are free.

(America never was America to me.)

Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed—
Let it be that great strong land of love
Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme
That anyone be crushed by one above.

(It never was America to me.)

O, let my land be a land where Liberty
Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,
But opportunity is real, and life is free,
Equality is in the air we breathe.

(There's never been equality for me,
Nor freedom in this "homeland of the free.")

*Say, who are you that mumbles in the dark?
And who are you that draws your veil across the stars?*

I am the poor white, fooled and pushed apart,
I am the Negro bearing slavery's scars.
I am the red man driven from the land,
I am the immigrant clutching the hope I seek—
And finding only the same old stupid plan
Of dog eat dog, of mighty crush the weak.

I am the young one, full of strength and hope,
Tangled in that ancient endless chain
Of profit, power, gain, of grab the land!
Of grab the gold! Of grab the ways of satisfying need!
Of work the hours! Of take the pay!
Of owning everything for one's own greed!

I am the farmer, bondsman to the soil.
I am the worker sold to the machine.
I am the Negro, servant to you all.
I am the people, humble, hungry, mean—
Hungry yet today despite the dream.
Beaten yet today—O, Pioneers!
I am the one who never got ahead,
The poorest worker bartered through the years.

Yet I'm the soul who dreamt our basic dream
In the Old World while still a serf of kings,
Who dreamt a dream so strong, so brave, so true,
That even yet its mighty daring sings
In every brick and stone, in every furrow turned
That's made America the land it has become.
O, I'm the brave who sailed those early seas
In search of what I meant to be my home—
For I'm the one who left dark Ireland's shore,
And Poland's plain, and England's grassy lea,
And torn from Black Africa's strand I came
To build a "homeland of the free."

The free?

Who said the free? Not me?
Surely not me? The millions on relief today?
The millions shot down when we strike?
The millions who have nothing for our pay?
For all the dreams we've dreamed
And all the songs we've sung
And all the hopes we've held
And all the flags we've hung,
The millions who have nothing for our pay—
Except the dream that's almost dead today.

O, let America be America again—
The land that never has been yet—
And yet must be—the land where every one is free.
The land that's mine—the poor man's, Indian's, Negro's, ME—
Who made America,
Whose sweat and blood, whose faith and pain,
Whose hand at the foundry, whose plow in the rain,
Must bring back our mighty dream again.

Sure, call me any ugly name you choose—
The steel of freedom does not stain.
From those who live like leeches on the people's lives,
We must take back our land again,
America!

O, yes,
I say it plain,
America never was America to me,
And yet I swear this oath—
America will be!

Out of the rack and ruin of our gangster death,
The rape and rot of graft, and stealth, and lies,
We, the people, must redeem
The land, the mines, the plants, the rivers.
The mountains and the endless plain—
All, all the stretch of these great green states—
And make America again!

Short Essay:

Blessed are Those Who Hunger for Justice — Richard Rohr

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice: they shall have their fill.
— **Matthew 5:6**

This Beatitude is surely both spiritual *and* social. Most Bibles to this day soften this Beatitude: “hunger and thirst for what is right” or “for righteousness” are the more common faulty translations. But the word in Greek clearly means “justice.” Notice that the concept of justice is used halfway through the Beatitudes and again at the very end. The couplet emphasizes an important point: To live a just life in this world is to identify with the longings and hungers of the poor, the meek, and those who weep. This identification and solidarity is in itself a profound form of social justice.

My friend John Dear, who has spent his life in the struggle against the injustice of violence, writes about this Beatitude:

Righteousness is not just the private practice of doing good; it sums up the global responsibility of the human community to make sure every human being has what they need, that everyone pursues a fair sense of justice for every other human being, and that everyone lives in right relationship with one another, creation, and God.

. . . Jesus instructs us to be passionate for social, economic, and racial justice. That's the real meaning of the Hebrew word for justice and the Jewish insistence on it. Resist systemic, structured, institutionalized injustice with every bone in your body, with all your might, with your very soul, he teaches. Seek justice as if it were your food and drink, your bread and water, as if it were a matter of life and death, which it is. . . . Within our relationship to the God of justice and peace, those who give their lives to that struggle, Jesus promises, will be satisfied. . . .

How do we hunger and thirst for justice? By making global justice a priority in our lives. This Beatitude requires us to join a grassroots movement that fights one or two issues of injustice and to get deeply involved in the struggle. Since all issues of injustice are connected, fighting one injustice puts us squarely in the struggle against every injustice. As Martin Luther King Jr. said over and over again, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Befriend the victims of systemic injustice, side with them, listen to their stories, let their pain break your heart, join the movements to end injustice, tithe your money to the cause, and commit yourself to the struggle. . . .

While [it] may take a long time, our nonviolent persistence and truth-telling will eventually win out and bear the good fruit of justice. Truth is on our side; God is on the side of justice. "The arc of the moral universe is long," Martin Luther King Jr. said famously, "but it bends toward justice." [1]

References:

[1] John Dear, *The Beatitudes of Peace: Meditations on the Beatitudes, Peacemaking and the Spiritual Life* (Twenty-Third Publications: 2016), 61-62, 66, 69.

Adapted from Richard Rohr with John Bookser Feister, [*Jesus' Plan for a New World: The Sermon on the Mount*](#) (Franciscan Media: 1996), 134.

Link:

<https://cac.org/blessed-hunger-justice-2018-02-02/>

Wishing you and your family grace and peace. Be well.

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<https://www.christchurchtelluride.com/>