

Grace-filled Voices

January 13, 2015

“Justice of the Lord

by Fr. Joe Rees

This coming Monday at 11:00 a.m. at Carlsbad Community Church we will have a gathering of many Christians to celebrate Martin Luther King Day that our government recognizes and gives people in certain spheres the day off from work. I will be there as your rector and leading a segment of responsorial prayer related to God's justice. So, the question I ponder is: "What is God's justice? What also does it mean to be 'just'? In our new liturgy each Sunday for the Eucharist we say the phrase—"Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is **just** and right so to do." What that subtle change does for me is to bring us into the reality of addressing God as His Person demands. His Person and Nature is to be 'Just'. He is the standard of what it means to be Just. It stems from His perfect goodness and righteousness. It means God is always right! It doesn't necessarily mean that He is always in our determination 'fair', although I can say that in His determination He is always fair to us. For example, it is fair for Him to say that we are sinners when we take violence into our own hands. We may say it was our 'right' and we have to protest, but, He will say no, you have sinned. You are contrary to my Nature and defiant of My Will. So, to be Just means to know the Nature and Character of God and His Will.

Justice is the application therefore of God's will for His people as He rightly directs it. He makes some of

this known to us in the Ten Commandments (which by the way the cities of this nation want to remove from their walls!). In this 'democracy' of a nation, we see all too often the people determining what is just based on their reactive defensiveness or anger. There may be righteous anger but does it properly reflect the just Nature of God? Or are we as frail humans simply venting something we can't control? Motives matter. Jesus overturned the money changers tables. He was right to do so. The position we Christians ought to always have is to first reflect on whether a potential action or reaction will properly be aligned with God's Just Nature and His Will.

In Amos 5:24 we hear the prophet engaging with God's voice to proclaim to all of us, "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." The verse before that says, "Take away from me the noise of your songs", which means that God doesn't even want to hear our worship if we are not right with Him in our actions. Seeking and finding just responses is crucial to our relationship with God and with one another. In Amos 6: 12, God's voice is heard saying, "Yet you have turned justice into poison, and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood." Thus, if we do not reflect God's Nature on an issue we simply poison justice.

The initial responses from the protestors in Ferguson, MO were in quiet and respectful indignation over what had happened. However, just hours later there was violence in the streets as the anger spilled over, ignited and fueled by 'professional agitators' who had arrived from out of town. Businesses and buildings were set on fire and looted. There were many wrongs given for a wrong. There are other ways to seek justice and they should have been done instead of resorting to violence. Martin Luther King went about a peaceful protest and courageously set a witness of God's way. The Lord Jesus was his Lord, not the power of the land he lived in. The hope he had was for equality and respectfulness of the dignity of all human beings made by God. He set about a peaceful way of protest of the injustices of race relations. He also respected the Nature of his God and Lord, the Nature of true justice.

Jesus said in John 16: 8-10—"And He (the Holy Spirit), when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because

the ruler of this world has been judged." The world is under conviction of sin because it is not aligned with God's will and His justice. We must do God's will to make it just. The only Way to do so is to believe in Christ Jesus. The ruler of this world, Satan, is always trying to distort what it means to be just and to drag people into the abyss of contradicting God's will and His Nature. But he has been judged and is condemned by Jesus' resurrection. The unity of the God-head gives us all we need to know in order to carry on justly in our world. We just need to abide in Christ and do what He says...not what the world wants us to say or do. Turn to Jesus and His Spirit and He will guide you into all the truth. Let us therefore be just, and respect the dignity of every human being, as our baptismal covenant implores us to do so.

Please come to the celebration at CCC for remembering Martin Luther King and applying His better way of doing justly in our world.

Blessings,
Fr. Joe

You are invited to attend the consecration of
Fr. Keith Andrews, our Second Bishop

Sunday, January 25, 2015 at 5:00 p.m.

St. Andrew's Church, Newport Beach

Visit www.westernanglicans.org for more information and to RSVP

This Week at Grace

January 13, 2015—January 19, 2015

Tues. January 13

11:30 a.m. Bible Study
7:00 p.m. Teaching—John 14-16

Wed. January 14

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist Service
3:30 p.m. No Staff Meeting
6:00 p.m. Vestry Meeting
6:30 p.m. Soaking Prayer

Thurs. January 15

7:00 a.m. Bible Study
10:30 a.m. Sr. Women's Bible Study
3:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Fri. January 16

Fr. Joe's Day off
6:30 p.m. Evening Prayer & Healing
7:00 p.m. Consecration Choir Rehearsal

Sat. January 17

8:00 a.m. Men' Bible Study

Sun. January 18

2nd Sunday After the Epiphany

No spoken Eucharist Service today
9:15 a.m. Nursery opens
9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist Service
9:30 a.m. Children's Church
11:15 a.m. **Annual Meeting
followed by a catered lunch**

Mon. January 19

Tues. January 20

11:30 a.m. Bible Study
7:00 p.m. Teaching— Q & A for Fr. Joe

Wed. January 21

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist Service
2:00 p.m. Teaching—Q & A for Fr. Joe

**Grace Anglican Church
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Bible Readings for January 18, 2015

1 Samuel 3:1-20
Psalm 63:1-8
1 Corinthians 6:11b-20
John 1:43-51

We are using the English Standard Version of the Bible and the Lectionary from the Book of Common Prayer (Year B)

Sunday Servers

January 18, 2015		9:30 a.m. Service
First Reader	1 Samuel 3:1-20	Jean Hawk
Psalm Reader	Psalm 63:1-8	Jim Livingston
Second Reader	1 Corinthians 6:11b-20	Ann Fox
Intercessor		Kari Campbell
Lay Euch. Ministers		Paula Sholly, Trish Stewart
Acolytes		Kari Campbell
Welcomers		Margaret Olson, John Gerhart
Ushers		J.R.Fox, Ray Seibold
Vestry Person of Day		Judy Gillease
Healing Ministers		Donna Sandner, Trish Stewart
Counters		Cline Handy Helen Reid