



St. Mary's Episcopal Church
Bridgeville, Delaware
"The Little Church with a Big Heart"

A Prayer for the Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

July 5, 2020

COLLECT

O GOD, you have taught us to keep all your commandments by loving you and our neighbor: Grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit, that we may be devoted to you with our whole heart, and united to one another with pure affection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

FIRST READING – Zechariah 9:9-12

Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.

PSALM 145:8-15

(REFRAIN – Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised.)

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| 8 The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, *
slow to anger and of great kindness. | 12 That the peoples may know of your power *
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. |
| 9 The LORD is loving to everyone *
and his compassion is over all his works. | 13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; *
your dominion endures throughout all ages. |
| 10 All your works praise you, O LORD, *
and your faithful servants bless you. | 14 The LORD is faithful in all his words *
and merciful in all his deeds. |
| 11 They make known the glory of your kingdom *
and speak of your power; | 15 The LORD upholds all those who fall; *
he lifts up those who are bowed down. |

SECOND READING – Romans 7:15-25a

I DO NOT UNDERSTAND MY OWN ACTIONS. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want,

but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

THE GOSPEL – Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

JESUS SAID, “To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another, ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.’ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

At that time Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

SERMON – Fr. Carl Mosley

Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yesterday we celebrated the 4th of July. We celebrate it as our “Independence Day.” We all know the significance of our country’s fight to establish a new nation, apart from England. It is said to have begun 244 years ago when 56 brave men signed the document known as “The Declaration of Independence.” But sometimes we forget that they paid a price for that simple act. It is interesting sometimes to sit back and look at what price they did pay?

5 were captured and tortured before they died

12 had their homes ransacked and burned

2 lost sons in war

1 had 2 sons captured by the British

9 fought and died from wounds or hardships

1- Carter Braxton of Virginia was a wealthy planter and trader. He saw his ships swept from seas by British Navy. He sold his home to pay his debts and died in rags.

1-Thomas McKeon was forced to move his family to avoid capture or retribution. He served in Congress without pay and he died a poor man

1-Thomas Nelson. We his house was seized by British at Battle of Yorktown and was used as a British command post. He urged the continental army to open fire on it and the house was destroyed. He died bankrupt.

Liberty has always exacted a price. That's what the 4th of July is all about- remembering. Remembering what our forefathers did for us in that conflict. The spirit of independence that we celebrate is not to exclude God. At the 1st Continental Congress, the delegates were frustrated due to burdens of the hour and the tremendous crisis that was before them. They were fragmented and just about ready to throw out the concept of a constitution completely. It is said that just then an old man by the name of Benjamin Franklin rose to his feet and said "Gentlemen, if it is true that not one single petal from any flower falls to the ground without escaping God's attention, will the distress of this nation go unheeded? Let us therefore determine to seek his face" They all got down on their knees and when they arose from prayer "e pluribus unum was born. One out of many." Can you imagine if all of Congress would get down on their knees to pray together today?

So, today let's call for a "declaration of dependence" a deep and unwavering dependence on God.

America was built upon Christian principles.

Greece built civilization on culture and it failed.

Rome built their civilization on culture of power and it crumbled.

But our forefathers founded our nation on godly principles and America will live as long as the Lord is her God. No matter what is going on in our nation let us never forget that we are one, under God.

We have read our history books and we are reminded of General Washington and his army in the cold and foreboding winter encampment. Disheartened, tired, cold, and some thinking that going home was not a bad idea. They were fighting a fearless enemy. But out in snow George Washington knelt down and began to pray. That is the spirit that built America

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord"

We and our nation have been richly blessed by God. We have:

Natural resources second to none

Natural beauty

Good government- not perfect. Still the best

Freedom of speech and the press

Freedom on religion

Place where everyone has a chance

What can I possibly do to help in my corner of the community, state and the nation? Well perhaps the best thing you can do is to give her a good Christian life. Be light and salt. Bloom where God has planted you. God will see your life and use it to bless the nation. You can be a good citizen, vote, be patriotic, salute the flag, sing the national anthem, respect people you meet, don't park in handicapped parking spots.

You can pray – Pray for God at work. Prayer works.

We must be a people of prayer if we are going to see good come everywhere.

But in our nation and the world there is so much fighting, diversity, hatred. Lions and tigers and bears, oh my! Poverty and hunger and war, oh my! Iraq and Afghanistan and Syria, oh my! Coronavirus pandemic, economic distress, racial division and foreclosure and joblessness, oh my!

It really is a jungle out there; thick with the underbrush of evil, brokenness, despair and sin. The fear and the burdens that we carry each day make it more difficult to see our way through the mire and weeds where we can get caught up with the jungle that surrounds us all. Are we like the explorer without a guide with our pith helmets, machete and hacking aimlessly in the hope of finding clearer ground?

The good news is that we do have a guide, in Jesus Christ. He has been in the wilderness in the gospels of being there for forty days, being tempted as we are today. He's been there, done that. We can lean on him. Through him we are given the tools we need to navigate our way through all that life can throw at us.

In this day and age, we all have some burden to bear, some sort of trouble and problems, some fears and our Gospel today brings us assurance that we are not alone with these burdens. There are many who face the burden of bodies that don't do what we want them to do, others living life alone after the death of a loved one, the burden of broken relationships with spouses, children or other family member, or the burden of making a decision of what to do with our lives.

Jesus is saying in our language, come to me all who are struggling with life in any way and those who have burdens you can't carry alone and I will help you with your struggles. Jesus knew that people have a difficult path to follow. Life is not easy because we live in a sinful world. Sin makes life difficult to understand and navigate.

We need to have faith that Jesus will help us to bear our burdens, to be there for us. First thing we need to do is to go in prayer. If we do not go to God and lay our burdens on him we will still hold onto our problems. We need to talk to our best friend, God, and tell him the burden we are carrying. Once we let go, we must trust in God to take over our problems until they are resolved in His way. We also need to recognize that God will lift our load, perhaps not in our time but in His. It's so much easier to bear when you know that someone is with you, helping to carry that load.

May our burdens be lifted and hope restored as we turn to God, our guide, and our friend to share with us all of life's burdens.

As our Statute of Liberty in New York harbor welcomes all who come

*With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"*

God is there to welcome all who turn to him. No matter your station in life or the where you are in your journey, God is there with outstretched arms waiting to welcome you.

Fr. Carl+