

The Transcendence of Hope

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CALL TO PRAYER

LEADER: In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus speaks of the call to serve others in these words: “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.” Today we ask God’s blessing on our work, that we may faithfully serve the persons who come to us for care. We pray for hope and faith to strengthen us to meet the challenges of our time. Above all, we pray in the hope that we may serve as Jesus served, with love and compassion for those on the margins of society.

READING

From Vaclav Havel’s *Disturbing the Peace: A Conversation with Karel Huizdala*, (translation by Paul Wilson)

In 1986, Czech dramatist, writer and human rights activist Vaclav Havel spoke of the power of hope. In 1989 he became the first president of Czechoslovakia after the fall of the Communist regime. Here are his words: “Either we have hope within us or we don’t. It is a dimension of the soul, and it is not particularly dependent upon some observation of the world. It is an orientation of the spirit, and of the heart. It transcends the world that is immediately experienced and is anchored somewhere beyond horizons. Hope is a deep and powerful sense and it is not the same as joy that things are going well or the willingness to invest in opportunities which are obviously headed for success. But rather, it is an ability to work for something because you believe in it. Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that it makes sense regardless of results. It is hope, above all, which gives us the strength to live and to continually try new things.”

Pause for reflection.

Psalms 72

Excerpted from Nan C. Merrill’s *Psalms for Praying: An Invitation to Wholeness*

Read in unison.

Bring justice to the peoples, O Beloved,
and your mercy to all generations!
May the people be known for mercy,
rendering justice to the poor!
Let their spirits soar as the eagle;
let joy abide in every heart!
May You heed the cry of the poor —
the young and the old,
Setting free all those in need,
melting the hearts of oppressors!
For You heed the needy when they call,
the poor and those who have no friend.
You have compassion on the weak,
the downtrodden,
and give them strength and hope.
From injustice and oppression,
You redeem their life;
and precious are they in your Heart.
Long may You live in our hearts,
may praises be sung to You!
May our prayers rise up before You
and blessings of love be freely rendered!
May we be ever grateful for the grain of the fields,
for the fruits of the vine to be shared with all;
and may the people blossom forth in the cities,
like flowers in the meadow!
Blessed be You, who come in the Name of Love;
May your glory fill the earth! Amen and Amen!

MUSIC

Suggested: “City of God,” by Dan Schutte

LEADER: O God, in whose image we all are made,
give us hope that through the work of our hands,
and with Jesus as our model, we may glorify you
now and always. Amen.

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