

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
Day 2
January 19th, 2022

“Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews?” (Matthew 2:2)

Readings:

Jeremiah 23:1-6
Psalm 46
Philippians 2:5-11
Matthew 20:20-28

Reflection:

Jeremiah denounces the bad leadership of the kings of Israel who divided and scattered the people. Theirs was a leadership that destroyed nations and drove their citizens into exile. In contrast, the Lord promises a shepherd-king who will ‘execute justice and righteousness in the land’ and gather together the members of his flock.

Our world craves good leadership and is constantly seeking someone who will fulfill this desire. Where can one find such a leader? Only in Christ have we seen the example of a king or leader after God’s heart. As we are called to follow him, we are also called to emulate his way of servant-kingship in the world and in the Church. In Christ, we encounter one who does not tear down and divide but builds up and makes whole for the glory of God’s name. His rule is not self-serving and he does not use force. Rather in him we encounter a loving, humble servant who does not regard equality with God as something to be exploited. He is one who comes to serve, rather than be served, and his followers are called to do the same.

Today, the Middle East is experiencing the loss of its people to exile as ‘righteousness and justice’ are becoming scarce commodities, not only there, but throughout the world. Yet, we have a hope that will not be shaken even if ‘the nations are in an uproar’ and ‘the kingdoms totter’ around us.

Leaders, both in the world and in the Church, have responsibility to bring together rather than scatter or divide the people of God. So much division in the world and in the Church is caused by the desire for position, power, and self-advantage. The more faithfully Christians emulate the servant leadership of Christ, the more division in both the world and the Church will be overcome. As we work for righteousness, justice, and peace for the well-being of all, we witness humbly to the shepherd-king, and draw others into his presence.

Prayer:

God, our only refuge and strength, we glorify You for You are a just and righteous God. We confess before You that we often covet worldly models of leadership. Help us to seek our Lord Jesus Christ, not in the palaces of the powerful, but in the humble manger, and to emulate him in his meekness.

Encourage us to empty ourselves as we serve each other in obedience to You.

We pray in the name of Christ, who with You and with the Holy Spirit, reigns forever in glory.
Amen.

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