

## **Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Sep 9th 2018**

“The Lord raises up those who were bowed down. The Lord loves the just; the Lord protects strangers.” Psalm 146: 8-9

In God’s kingdom, the poor are seated first. The afflicted are gently raised up, and those cast into ditches are rescued. Barriers fall and rigid hierarchies come apart. Touched by the spirit, what is broken heals. Even nature shares in this surge of energy. As healing spreads, we burst forth like mountain streams. “Let me tell you who I am. Please share our meal.” The call of justice persists. It runs deeper than we can imagine. In God’s kingdom, the highbrows look up from their critiques, and we who are rich loosen our grip on what consumes us.

In our world, the affluent rarely stand in line. We do our business quickly and do not wait and wait for our turn to arrive. Our children do not scramble to get home safely after school. We do not find shut-off notices in the mail with hefty late fees to resume service. High interest loans do not entrap us when paychecks do not stretch. The fruit and vegetables are fresh and not too over-priced where we shop. If the poor loiter nearby, they get relocated to distant streets. We do not welcome low income housing in our neighborhood. We are good people but that goes too far.

How do we get closer to God’s kingdom? Today my parish takes a step to face our history and seek reconciliation through a liturgy of remembrance. Many parishioners did not realize that our congregation, like others, refused to open its doors to black Catholics to worship or enroll their children in the parish school. The racial divide that runs through history and communities also runs through our church. A designated African American parish was started in Omaha in 1918. Before then, black Catholics asked to worship in our church. The pastor let them use the side chapel several times a month after Sunday Masses. Then, the congregation complained and this stopped.

It is time to stop hiding from painful realities. God, do not abandon us when we face failures. Please dispel our fear. Heal us and set us free.

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