

## Lamentations

*A homily preached by Jennifer A. Hudson at the Celtic Eucharist, St. Paul's on the Green Episcopal Church, November 17, 2016*

In the name of the God who creates and nurtures us, heals and ransoms us, and inspires and moves us into action for peace and mutual upbuilding. Amen.

Some powerful words for us tonight in the wake of the past week. Regardless of how one voted, or refrained, it is safe to say we are seeing evidence of a nation that remains deeply, if not dangerously, divided. Incidents of harassment and hate continue to rise (even right here in Connecticut) against vulnerable persons, persons whose civil and human rights are under threat. Protests, both peaceful and not, continue to emerge. People are angry. And for many, including myself, this election has re-opened some very deep wounds and fears. I find myself lamenting, as Jesus did over the city in tonight's Gospel, "if only [we'd] recognized the things that make for peace" (Luke 19:41).

Friends, our hearts may be troubled, but remember that even Jesus lived in a time of great political division and unrest. And yet his legacy—God's radical inclusion and unconditional love—has prevailed some 2,016 years later. Jesus was persecuted on a cross because of what he believed and understood to be right and yet he "ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation" making them "to be a kingdom and priests serving our God" (Revelation 5:9). He rose.

God will do God's work through us and, ultimately, bring us together. But we must be willing agents of God's justice and love. We must be open to the Spirit, who will guide us in this process if we recognize and allow her to visit and descend upon us. We must, in

the words of Ghandi, “be the change we wish to see in the world,” working for reconciliation, healing, and peace in this broken nation.

Part of that is remembering to see the Christ in all people, treating others as we wish ourselves to be treated—even those whose views differ from ours. It’s difficult, but Jesus did it, and he is proof that love will always overcome hate. We can and must set the example. We must stand united against injustice, violence, tyranny, anything that denies the full humanity of even a single child of God. We can and must “pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding” (Romans 14:19).

J. Philip Newell writes in *Christ of the Celts* of a Jesus who saw life as a dance. Dances have movements. Ebbs and flows. For every movement forward, there is backlash. But then movement forward comes again. We must keep on dancing. We must keep dreaming. And we *must* keep on supporting and doing what we believe and understand to be right, never once ceasing to do God’s work in the world.

The Crosby, Stills and Nash song “Long Time Gone,” written in response to the 1968 assassination of Robert Kennedy, laments “*It’s been a long time comin’,/It’s been a long time gone,*” before it goes on to remind listeners, “*But you know, the darkest hour,/ Is always just before the dawn.*” What will you do to bring about the new dawn, the peace and end to discrimination and violence so desperately needed? Ask yourselves what Jesus would do. Now, go do what the Spirit reminds.