

Celebrating Indigenous Peoples' Sunday at CHT.

Today at the Episcopal Church of the Holy Trinity, we celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Sunday: an occasion to honor Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines and all over the world. It is the celebration of the many gifts that the Indigenous Peoples offer to Creation from their cultures, traditions, theology, wisdom, creativity, and ingenuity. Recognizing and celebrating our being Indigenous Peoples should not only be for a day or month but everyday.

For our CHT community, it is also a celebration of our diversity as a multicultural congregation. Let's make this day an opportunity to root ourselves in a deeper, more reflective ways to express our relationship with one another and with God.

Our liturgy this Sunday invites us to meditate on the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector.

Who is righteous?

Like me, you are probably wondering who is a "righteous" person? The Holy Scriptures use this term very often. The "righteous" are those whose thoughts, words, actions are entirely in accordance with the will of God. They are, in a word, people who are "adjusted" to God. One could say that this term "just / righteous" is often misunderstood. Rather, it is understood in its primary meaning, which is to respect the virtue of justice and thus to give back to each what is due to him. Justice regulates social relations and relations to material goods. In the Covenant with God, justice goes further. The "righteous" person is one who observes the law of God, who receives and keeps the commandments of God.

As you can see, the term "righteous" is very rich. It expresses a lofty ideal of life, an ideal of closeness even with God. In our words today, we could often replace it with the term "holy" because holiness is the ideal towards which every disciple of Jesus walks: "Following the example of the holy God who called you, read- in the first Letter attributed to Saint Peter, become holy, you too, in all your conduct, since it is written: You will be holy, for I am holy". (1 Peter 1:15-16).

With this perspective in mind, the story of Jesus speaks more to us even today. It depicts two people who give opposing images of what it means to be "righteous".

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The first, the self-filled Pharisee, prides himself on being "righteous" as he thinks. He sees himself above the others, in a class apart. He is one of those whom Jesus presents as "convinced of being just and despising others". He drapes himself in his faithfulness to keep the Law. The glorification of oneself, in an attitude of sufficiency and pride, is what prevents us from emptying ourselves and letting God take the wholeness of our being. For this Pharisee, being "righteous" is no longer a way of listening to the Word of God, but a privilege in which he prides himself and which makes him despise others. Is this really what God wants from "righteous" people, who "adjust to his will"?

The answer is given to us in the continuation of the parable, where Jesus describes another attitude which is that of a tax collector, who was despised by his contemporaries. In his story, Jesus presents him as an humble person, not at all full of himself, aware of his limits which he expresses in his prayer by beating his chest and saying: "My God, be favorable to the sinner that I am! The wise Sirach, of the Old Testament in the first reading, noted it and expressed it: thus, The prayer of the poor crosses the clouds; since it has not achieved its goal, he remains inconsolable. He perseveres until the Most High casts eyes on him, nor pronounces sentence in favor of the just and renders justice."

This tax collector, concluded Jesus, when he went back to his house, "it was he who had become a righteous man, rather than the other. —Fr. Bert

SAINTS:

Alfred the Great, 26 October. Born in the year 849, Alfred was the king of the West Saxons who effectively brought to an end the constant threat of Danish dominion in the British Isles. He came to the throne at the age of twenty-two and, after establishing peace, set about bringing stability to both church and state. He gave half of his income to founding religious houses which themselves acted as Christian centres for education, care of the sick and poor and respite for travellers. He was a daily attender at mass and himself translated many works into the vernacular. He evolved a legal code based on common sense and Christian mercy. His whole life was marked by the compassion of Christ. He died on this day in the year 899.

James Hannington, Bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa. 29 October. James Hannington was born in 1847 of a Congregationalist family but he became an Anglican before going up to Oxford. He was ordained and, after serving a curacy for five years, went with the Church Missionary Society to Uganda. He was consecrated bishop for that part of Africa in 1884 and a year later began a safari inland from Mombasa, together with other European and indigenous Christians. The King of the Buganda, Mwanga, who despised Christians because they refused to condone his moral turpitude, seized the whole party, tortured them for several days and then had them butchered to death on this day in 1885.

COMING UP:

Nov. 1. **All Saints' Day**, Eucharist 10:00 a.m.

Nov. 2. **All Souls' Day**, Eucharist 10:00 a.m.

Nov. 13. **Remembrance Sunday**, 9:30 a.m.

Nov. 17. Wedding, 2:00 p.m.

Nov. 19. Wedding, 2:00 p.m.

Nov. 20. **Joint Thanksgiving Service/Dinner**

Dec. 2. Wedding, 2:00 p.m.

Dec. 17. Wedding, 2:30 p.m.

Dec. 18. Wedding, 2:00 p.m.

Advent Lessons and Carols - *TBA*