

Adrian Dominican Sisters Evensong for Peace - December 4, 2018 ***Dominican Month for Peace: Democratic Republic of the Congo***

With a surface area four times the size of France and 80 times the size of Belgium, the DRC is, unfortunately, characterized by a poor administration of justice, massive and systematic violations of human rights, and a crumbling economy resulting in poverty, misery, a high unemployment rate, illegal exploitation of its resources, and, especially, armed conflicts of all kinds.

Of the 26 provinces in the country, six are particularly affected and bruised by the activity of these armed groups. Some of these groups are part of foreign conflicts that have raged in the DRC for several decades, others are local groups.

We unite with them today in our prayer for peace.

Chant: Seek Truth, Make Peace, Reverence Life (5 times)

In this time of Advent – waiting for the fulfillment of the promise of a Savior to the chosen people, we are reminded that our God is always with us. The catch is that we, ourselves, must be prepared to receive that Savior. As we contemplate the situation in the DRC today, we know that God is with the people there in the persons of our Dominican Brothers and Sisters who minister among them. We, too, can be with them in prayer and in witness to their need and for hope in the justice, which they seek.

The first reading from last Sunday reminds us:

The days are coming, says the LORD,
when I will fulfill the promise
I made to the house of Israel and Judah.
In those days, in that time,
I will raise up for David a just shoot;
he shall do what is right and just in the land.
In those days Judah shall be safe
and Jerusalem shall dwell secure;
this is what they shall call her:
“The LORD our justice.”
– *Jeremiah 33:14-16*

Silent Reflection (5 Minutes)

Chant: Seek Truth, Make Peace, Reverence Life (5 times)

Sunday, at the celebration of Eucharist in St. Catherine's, we were introduced to the life-threatening existence of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We also have received a copy of the brochure put together by the Dominican Family and which many of us have read.

As we attempt to enter into the experience of suffering and hope of the people of the DRC, I call our attention to the ways Pope Francis directed us to contemplate Columbia's suffering last year. The five modes of reflection he suggested hold true in any and all situations and can guide us this year as we stand with the people of the DRC.

1. Acknowledge the wounds. People must be told the truth of what happens. Society cannot move ahead unless it accepts that the violence has scarred the whole society – even in our hemisphere by our life choices.

We have all been affected; we must all find a way out.

2. Realize that Christ is both in the suffering, and is also a victim of it. God is not outside. Do we recognize God with them? With us?

3. See justice as not a matter of restitution – if that were ever possible – but of conversion. The first step toward conversion is to accept that it is possible. Have we contributed? How?

4. Believe in the possibility of conversion, even when it's not evident.

5. Remember: There is no justice and mercy without truth. But truth must lead to forgiveness, not retaliation; it is a matter for the heart and will, which is why it is a religious matter. It is time to heal wounds, to build bridges, to overcome differences. Peace is ultimately a decision that re-focuses energies into creating what Pope Francis called “a genuine culture of fraternal encounter.” Peace is a choice.

Silent Reflection (6-8 minutes)

Chant: Seek Truth, Make Peace, Reverence Life (5 times)

Responsorial Psalm 25:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14

Your ways, O LORD, make known to me;
teach me your paths,
Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my savior,
and for you I wait all the day.
To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

Good and upright is the LORD;
thus he shows sinners the way.
He guides the humble to justice,
and teaches the humble his way.
To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

All the paths of the LORD are kindness and constancy
toward those who keep his covenant and his decrees.
The friendship of the LORD is with those who fear him,
and his covenant, for their instruction.
To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

Magnificat

Offer a Sign of Peace