

Feminist Liturgy

September 2, 2018

“...you must do what the Word tells you and not just listen to it and deceive yourselves.” *James 1:22*

Opening Words

I want to begin by gratefully acknowledging that we are living, working, and worshipping on Treaty 6 territory, and that we respect the histories, languages, and cultures of First Nations, Metis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant communities.

I'd also like to thank everyone who is joining us live on Facebook! I'm grateful for your presence and I hope you'll enjoy this liturgy which has been prepared to fill a large void in the hearts of many of us who are people of faith or philosophy but find inadequate expression within traditional churches. We are women, people of color, sexual minorities, theists and nontheists, as well as anyone who has found traditional liturgy painful and sometimes even damaging to our sense of self and our deeply held faith. At the same time, I want to welcome those who may not describe themselves as having a faith. As a person who herself inhabits that strange territory between what the world calls “faith” and “no faith”, I want to recognize the people who may be joining us not out of spiritual conviction but out of solidarity. I'm so glad you're here.

It's been a loooong time since we've been together! This summer it seemed as though every Sunday was taken up with something else. I also had quite a bit to do as I decided to leave my doctoral program and pursue another one. That meant quickly finishing up classes I was doing while beginning reading for the new program! It didn't feel a whole lot like summer. Nevertheless, I kept thinking of all of you and telling myself that I needed to schedule another liturgy. Of course, that never happened but I like to think that you all just spent time meditating, praying, etc. and not just hanging out at the beach 😊

And so here we are, picking up where we left off with our feminist liturgy for September 2, 2018! We'll be keeping our regular schedule of having feminist liturgy at 3PM mountain time on the first Sunday of the month, unless it falls on a holiday in which case I'll announce a different day. I am SO glad to be back and I hope you are too. So, let's begin!

I've been feeling pretty awful for the last month so I'd like to start with our prayer of compassion. If you grabbed a copy of the liturgy from my website, you can follow along and participate at home.

Prayer for Compassion

Leader: Mother of All People,

ALL: give us strength in our compassion,

Leader: Mother of Nurturing,

ALL: heal our pain so that we can love with purity

Leader: Mother of unity,

ALL: help us to remember that we are our adversaries and they are us,

Leader: Mother of hope,

ALL: help us remember never to douse the flame of compassion with the icy waters of self-righteousness.

Let us take a moment to center ourselves, our thoughts, and our intentions.

[30 second silence]

Responsorial Psalm

Psalms 15:2-3, 3-4, 4-5

² Whoever lives blamelessly, who acts uprightly, who speaks the truth from the heart,³ who keeps the tongue under control, who does not wrong a comrade, who casts no discredit on a neighbour,⁴ who looks with scorn on the vile, but honours those who fear Yahweh, who stands by an oath at any cost,⁵ who asks no interest on loans, who takes no bribe to harm the innocent. No one who so acts can ever be shaken.

(Observe a moment of silence)

Gospel, *Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23*

¹ The Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered round him,² and they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with unclean hands, that is, without washing them.³ For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, keep the tradition of the elders and never eat without washing their arms as far as the elbow;⁴ and on returning from the market place they never eat without first sprinkling themselves. There are also many other observances which have been

handed down to them to keep, concerning the washing of cups and pots and bronze dishes.⁵ So the Pharisees and scribes asked him, 'Why do your disciples not respect the tradition of the elders but eat their food with unclean hands?'

⁶ He answered, 'How rightly Isaiah prophesied about you hypocrites in the passage of scripture: This people honours me only with lip-service, while their hearts are far from me.⁷ Their reverence of me is worthless; the lessons they teach are nothing but human commandments.⁸ You put aside the commandment of God to observe human traditions.'

¹⁴ He called the people to him again and said, 'Listen to me, all of you, and understand.¹⁵ Nothing that goes into someone from outside can make that person unclean; it is the things that come out of someone that make that person unclean.²¹ For it is from within, from the heart, that evil intentions emerge: fornication, theft, murder,²² adultery, avarice, malice, deceit, indecency, envy, slander, pride, folly.²³ All these evil things come from within and make a person unclean.'

(Observe a moment of silence)

(We'll now have a moment to share what the Word of God is saying to us today. Please feel free to join the discussion from afar!)

Prayers of the People

(Please feel free to use the comment feature on Facebook Live to let me know what/who you'd like us to pray for.)

Leader: For Anna Mae, that she experiences the reconciliation she longs for

ALL: God, hear our prayer

Leader: For Michelle

ALL: God, hear our prayer

Leader: For those suffering the hurt of rejection, mistrust, and loss of communion

ALL: God, hear our prayer

Leader: For immigrant families in the States experiencing fear and separation

ALL: God, hear our prayer

Leader: For those here in BC and California who are affected by the fires

ALL: God, hear our prayer

Leader: For Emily

ALL: God, hear our prayer

Leader: For all the intentions and secrets in our hearts

(a moment of silent prayer/meditation)

Leader: Let us pray to God

ALL: God, hear our prayer

Ending Prayer

Leader: Holy God, we often forget that you are not outside of us or outside of our actions. We often forget that you are not a remote God, a being who sits in judgement, keeps a tally, and demands that we fulfill certain legalistic obligations. We forget that you disdain our Hail Marys and Our Gods said without a loving heart. And when we forget that, what we really forget is justice and love. When we forget that you ARE love, we make you a smaller God, a petulant God, and often a God that mirrors our own insecurities.

Most loving God, please help us to remember that you disdain empty gesture, that neither you or anyone else is honored when we adhere to dogma while ignoring the poverty that surrounds us. That our every gesture is empty if it is not performed in love.

Dear God of All People, we are imperfect and, being human, sometimes forget the love and patience that are due to each other. Today we ask that you help to renew in our hearts the flame that burns for love and justice.

ALL: Amen