

**Day 12 (Monday, October 26)**

**by Rev. Ken White**

**Scripture Focus:** *After John was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:14-15, CEB)*

**Reflection:** In times that are often defined by division, it's great to have some things that we can almost all agree on: ice cream is yummy, puppies are cute, and 2020 stinks. We're trying to love you 2020, we really are, but you're making it terribly difficult.

But as bad as 2020 is, 20 was no piece of cake either. In 20, when Jesus was a young man, perhaps he was travelling with his father Joseph to Sepphora, making beautiful houses that people like him would never get to live in; houses for people who were able to afford those houses precisely because they dominated the social and economic lives of Jesus and his neighbors by force – all under the guise of that malleable watchword, "peace" (*pax Romana*, to be exact).

And a few years later, Mark tells us that Jesus goes out into the desert to be baptized by this locust-eating hippie named John who has this radical idea that justice will happen outside the temple and outside the courthouses, if people will simply choose to act justly. And it's here, of course, that Jesus experiences God telling him that he is God's son. Jesus takes a while to process this, but what snaps him into action is a political situation: John, the one who baptized him, is arrested.

And Jesus' response? He starts sharing good news. Change can happen, he says, because God's dream is *right here*. Can you see it? Can you taste it on the air? It's coming, and it doesn't depend on Caesar, and it doesn't depend on a tetrarch or a governor. It doesn't even depend on fair taxation or representation or someone else telling you that you can do something. It's bigger than all of that! You have the power to change you, and that is enough. That's good news! That's *great news*!

I am deeply grateful to live in a democracy – in *this* democracy - with all the responsibility and hope that brings. It gives me a way to work toward policies that I feel move us as a people closer to God's dream. Sometimes I think I'm right about some things; I know I've been wrong about a lot. Fortunately, God's dream is a lot bigger than my opinions or our policies or even this country that I love so deeply. May I have the courage to trust my life to the Good News of Jesus Christ, and for that trust to move me to act with dignity and freedom, without despair or hate. May that trust lead me to Love.

**Prayer:** O God, help us make wise choices. Thank you for the gift of this country. Help us change our ways to be more aligned to the arc of time and space that bends toward justice. Help us love our neighbors. And God, help us remember that your love is bigger than our national

borders and that your ways are truer than any man-made system. We rest in the blessing of your Good News; help us share that with others. Amen.

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