**Contemplative Service for Wednesday,**

**January 11, 2023**

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**First reading**: Exodus 18:12-23

And Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses’ father-in-law before God.

The next day Moses sat to mediate and judge for the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning till evening.When Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he was doing, he said, “What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand around you from morning till evening?” And Moses said to his father-in-law, “Because the people come to me to inquire of God; when they have a dispute, they come to me and I hear them and settle between one person and another on the basis of God’s calling, and help them learn the laws of God.”Moses’ father-in-law said to him, “What you are doing is not good. You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone. Now listen; I will give you advice, and God be with you! You shall represent the people before God and bring their cases to God,and you shall witness to them God’s mind and heart, and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do.Moreover, look for other able people in the community who hold reverence for God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and give them leadership in this work.And let these trusted ones work with the people at all times. Every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. If you do this, God will direct you and be manifest in you. You will thus be able to endure, and the people also will go to their place in peace.”

**Music**: “Lord, Don’t Move the Mountain,” sung by Mahalia Jackson

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jusAnLIFE3k

**Second reading**: a prayer of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Holy One, we thank you for your church, founded upon your Word, that challenges us to do more than sing and pray, but go out and work as though the very answer to our prayers depended on us and not upon you. Help us to realize that humanity was created to shine like the stars and live on through all eternity. Keep us, we pray, in perfect peace. Help us to walk together, pray together, sing together, and live together until that day when all God's children -- Black, White, Red, Brown and Yellow -- will rejoice in one common band of humanity in the reign of our Lord and of our God, we pray. Amen.

God, we thank you for the inspiration of Jesus. Grant that we will love you with all our hearts, souls, and minds, and love our neighbors as we love ourselves, even our enemy neighbors. And we ask you, God, in these days of emotional tension, when the problems of the world are gigantic in extent and chaotic in detail, to be with us in our going out and our coming in, in our rising up and in our lying down, in our moments of joy and in our moments of sorrow, until the day when there shall be no sunset and no dawn. Amen.

**Music**: “Redemption Song” by Bob Marley

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yv5xonFSC4c

**Time of Silent Contemplation**

*O God, open my eyes that I may see the needs of others
Open my ears that I may hear their cries;
Open my heart so that they need not be without succor;
Let me not be afraid to defend the weak because of the anger of the strong,
Nor afraid to defend the poor because of the anger of the rich.
Show me where love and hope and faith are needed,
And use me to bring them to those places.
And so open my eyes and my ears
That I may this coming day be able to do some work of peace for thee.*

- Alan Paton

**Communal Blessing**

Holy Energy, we practice to be witnesses to your presence. Not in a passive, nor in a preachy sense! Instead, we pray that we will manifest you in kindness, in patience, in the long (but so often beautiful and joyful) work of collaboration. As you call us to our gifts, let us become allies with each other, recognizing and building on the skills and contributions of everyone we meet. In community, we establish your presence in all its various showings. Your presence—so rich and textured, so alive with creativity and care—enters into us and we touch your radiance. Amen.

**Music**: “From Little Things Big Things Grow” by Paul Kelly

<https://www.google.com/search?q=youtube%2C+from+big+things+little+things+grow%2C+solo&client=firefox-b-1-d&sxsrf=AJOqlzUHAqvbu0xYN7TxQ_XUdITnal_yng%3A1673320945334&ei=8dm8Y9boE5L-9AP00a-AAQ&ved=0ahUKEwiWpaqkhrz8AhUSP30KHfToCxAQ4dUDCA8&uact=5&oq=youtube%2C+from+big+things+little+things+grow%2C+solo&gs_lcp=Cgxnd3Mtd2l6LXNlcnAQAzIFCCEQoAEyBQghEKABMgUIIRCgAToKCAAQRxDWBBCwAzoGCAAQFhAeOgUIABCGAzoECCMQJzoFCCEQqwI6CAghEBYQHhAdSgQIQRgASgQIRhgAUIUNWLYTYPseaAFwAXgAgAF9iAH4BJIBAzIuNJgBAKABAcgBA8ABAQ&sclient=gws-wiz-serp#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:de28665d,vid:O8owYBAkrq8>

*Go in peace, and go out to create peace.*

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A message from Pete Hartdegen

Dear friends at OCC.

 So many of you have sent me cards and emails.  I cannot respond to all of them, so I wanted to bring you up to date on the condition of both my throat and back.

 Throat

Starting in about June or July I all of a sudden became hoarse, at times it was only a whisper.  I saw my ENT and she discovered a nodule on my vocal cords.  She removed it and had it biopsied.  I then had a post-op with my ENT.  Good news and Bad news.  The biopsy came back not totally negative (her words).  It appears to be early cancer but totally treatable (her words).  She referred me to a Radiation Oncologist.  Before doing radiation he suggested a CT Scan, which came back pretty clean.  He referred me back to my ENT and we will monitor the vocal cords.  I don’t know what monitor means but I will see her in March and I’ll find out.

 The good news is I can talk again.  The really good news is that I feel very good, just like I did before the surgery.

 Back

I tweaked my back in November.  I lifted something from an awkward position, felt it and lifted anyway.  Instead of putting it down and regrouping I paid for it.  I’ve tried different pain killers, but right now I’m off all meds. I’m able to sleep, which is a blessing.  For a while, when I was still on meds, getting out of bed in the morning was very painful, usually an 8 to 10 on a scale of 10.  The pain now getting out of beds without meds varies from 3 to 6.  During the day it varies from 0 to 3 or 4 depending on what I am doing.

 I did get an x-ray and MRI.  The MRI showed various old age conditions, including a herniated disk and compression fracture, which was a surprise, because I’ve been lifting heavy things my entire life.  I guess lifting from an awkward position just triggered a response from the deterioration of the back. I’m doing physical therapy in house at St Paul’s Towers 2x per week, and exercises in my apartment.  I am using a 4 wheel walker to walk more comfortably.  Hopefully that will help.  Our personal physician died in 2022 and I’m now seeing the in-house doctor at SPT, which is very convenient.

 Thanks to all for your concern.  I am still driving, so hope to see you in church one of these Sundays after my back gets better.

 Pete Hartdegen