**Contemplative Service for Wednesday,**

**January 4, 2023**



*Image by Pablo Picasso*

**First reading**: 2 John 14:17

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

**Music**: “We Are Here” by Alicia Keys

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HrKmDgk8Edg

**Second reading**: from “The Wise Men,” a conversation between Ernesto Cardenal and members of his congregation in Solentiname, in mid-1970’s Nicaragua

Gloria: [Herod] was probably afraid [when the three magi came and told him they were seeking the new messiah]. He had killed a lot of people not long before, and then some gentlemen arrive asking where’s the new king.

One of the young people: And the Gospel says that the other people of Jerusalem were also troubled. That means his followers, the big shots, like the Somoza crowd. Because of them it was very bad news that the liberator was arriving. But for poor people it was great news. And the powerful people knew that the Messiah had to be against them.

Tomas: The magi come and open their presents—some perfumes and a few things of gold. It doesn’t seem as if Jesus got big presents. Because those foreigners that could have brought him a big sack of gold, a whole bunch of coins, or maybe bills, they didn’t bring these things. What they brought to him were little things…That’s the way we ought to go, poor, humble, the way we are. At least that’s what I think.

Olivia: It’s on account of these gifts from the wise men that the rich have the custom of giving presents on Christmas. But they give them to each other.

Marcelino: The stores are full of Christmas presents in the cities, and they make lots of money. But it’s not the festival of the birth of the child Jesus. It’s more like the festival of the birth of the son of King Herod.

Alejandro: Well, the liberator was born in an atmosphere of persecution, and those who come to see him are also persecuted…

Gloria: Those common people had a hope now. And as soon as they found out he’d been born, they felt happy. The neighbors all knew. That star the magi followed, maybe it was the townspeople talking, and the word got to the wise men.

Chael: Those wise gentlemen found something they weren’t expecting—that the liberator was a poor little child, and besides, a child persecuted by the powerful.

**Music:** “Peace Train” sung by multiple artists with “Playing for Change”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0QpjR6-Uuks

**Time of Silent Contemplation**

*God, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
and where there is sadness, joy.*

*O Divine One, grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
and it is in dying that we are born to endless life. Amen.*

*—Francis of Assisi*

**Communal Blessing**

Wise One of Deepest Time,

We find in your depth a refreshing newness. Help us to live in the balance of old and new—we ask for intentions that are muscular and supple, yet we also pray for our experience to bring wisdom to our work. Our work? It is to know you, to love you, to translate your love in hand and word to all. We hope to bring enough faith and fervor to our work that you are moved regularly to reach out and correct our stumbles into balance. Amen.

**Music:** “Praise the Lord” by Mary Lou Williams

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J80ysXQJ4yA>

*May we do the work of peace together.*