



MEDITATION FOR A COUNTRY IN CRISIS

On the Occasion of the First Sunday after the Epiphany: The Baptism of Our Lord
St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Raleigh, NC
January 10, 2021

Reflective Reading

Against Domestic Insurrection by Alden Solovy

Oh, my people,
What have we become as a nation?
And what will we become,
In the wake of violence and insurrection,
In the face of armed assault against our democracy?
Rioting. Criminality. Attempted coup.
Domestic terror fomented
By the lies, fear, and anger of a President.
Death and destruction in the Capitol.
This doesn't happen in the United States.
But it did.
And it can again.
Woe to the land that teeters on the brink of fascism.
Woe to the people who stay silent.
Woe to the politician who cannot stand against this outrage.
Woe to us all as the tide of history turns against our Republic.

Shame on those who have hardened their hearts,
Shut their eyes,
Closed their minds,
And empowered those who
Attempt to banish justice
And free elections from our midst,
Those who bring swords and guns
Against our sovereign land.

Source and Shelter,
Grant safety and security
To the people and democracy of the United States of America.

Protect us from violence, rebellion, intimidation,
And attempts to seize our government.
Save us from domestic terror.
Save us from leaders who cannot say no to attacks
On our legacy and our future.

God of nations and history,
Let truth and justice resound
To the four corners of the earth.
Let the light of freedom
Shine brightly in the halls of power,
As a beacon of hope
For every land and every people.

Voluntary "Brightest and best of the stars of the morning", setting by Wayne L. Wold

Prayer

Father in heaven, who at the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan proclaimed him your beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit: Grant that all who are baptized into his Name may keep the covenant they have made, and boldly confess him as Lord and Savior; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. **Amen.**

The Gospel of Mark 1:4-11

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

The Meditation

Prayer for Peace

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominion and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Voluntary "O love, how deep, how broad, how high", setting by Stephen Gabrielsen

The Rev. Tyrone Fowlkes, Officiant; Marcia Klinder-Badgley, Director of Music, David Both, IT Communication