

Office for Unity Thursday 11 March 2021

Through Lent we suggest listening to the witness of the American Baptist Pastor, Martin Luther King.

Meditation

The Man who was a Fool

"You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you." Luke 12:20

This man was a fool because he failed to realise his dependence on others. He was afflicted with the cancerous disease of egotism. He was a fool because he failed to realize that wealth is always a result of the commonwealth. He talked as if he could plow the fields alone. He talked as if he could build the barns alone. He failed to realize the interdependent structure of reality.

He didn't realise that he was the beneficiary of a vast treasure of ideas and of work to which the living and the dead have contributed. When an individual or a nation fails to take account of this interdependence, a great madness is revealed. (...)

All this reveals something fundamental about the interdependence of humanity and nations. Whether we are aware of it or not, each one of us is eternally in debt. We are perpetual debtors of known and unknown men and women. And so often we fail to see this. Something should remind us before we can finish eating breakfast in the morning we are dependent on more than half of the world. We get up in the morning and go to the bathroom and reach over for a sponge, and that's handed to us by a Pacific Islander. Then we reach over for a bar of soap, and that's given to us at the hands of a Frenchman. And then we reach up for our towel, and that's given to us by a Turk. And then we go to the kitchen for breakfast, getting ready to go to work. Maybe this morning we want to follow the good old American tradition, and we drink coffee. That's poured in our cups by a South American. Or maybe we are desirous of having tea. Then we discover that that's poured in our cup by a Chinese. Or maybe we want cocoa this morning, and then we discover that that's poured in our cup by a West African. And so before we finish eating breakfast in the morning we are dependent on more than half of the world.

All I am saying is simply this: that all life is interrelated. We are tied in a single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality.

In a very real sense, all of life is an interrelation with others. All humanity is in an inevitable network of reciprocity, but this man didn't realize that. And any man who fails to see the interdependent structure of reality is really a fool.

And whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be.

Jesus called this rich man foolish because he failed to realize his dependence on God. Go back again and read his words. He talked as if he regulated the seasons. He talked as if he produced the rain. He talked as if he controlled the setting and the rising of the sun. This man was a fool because he felt that he was the creator instead of a creature.

From *Martin Luther King, Strength to Love* Ed. Casterman 1963 p. 65

Intercessions

Prepared by our brothers and sisters at Lambeth Palace London.

To adapt according to the place of worship

1/ Lord, we give you thanks for the youth of the Community of Saint Anselm, who are being formed together at Lambeth Palace for 7 months. Thank you for the countries and the churches which they represent and for their common desire to follow Christ and serve the world. May the relationships built today between these young people be a source of unity for tomorrow.

2/ Lord we entrust to you the work of *Churches Together*, the ecumenical body of the United Kingdom, which supports and encourages collaboration between different denominations present in the country. May your Spirit guide them to a constantly renewed creativity in their work for unity.

3/ Lord, we bless you for our brothers and sisters of the Anglican Communion and their presence throughout the world. We entrust to you the Lambeth Conference 2022, with all the challenges of evangelisation and unity it holds. May your Spirit of discernment enlighten and guide the bishops, as well as the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, in their preparatory work for this conference.