

2nd SUN. in ORD. TIME (B-3) (Dr. Martin Luther King) **Live our dream!**

The word dream is a word we often hear, but rarely understand. Scientists claim we all dream every night. That is not the dream I mean. I mean: the dream, the vision God put in us, to make a difference we've lived at all. Years before his "I have a dream" speech, Dr. King said:

"We have a power...not found in bullets or guns, but it's still power. It's as old as the light of Christ and as modern as Mahatma Ghandi. He lived, thought, and acted inspired by the vision that humanity would progress toward peace and harmony.

I've seen so much hate I don't wish to hate. We must confront oppressors and tell them with courage: 'We'll stand up to your capacity to inflict pain with our capacity to withstand pain. Do what you will to us & we'll still love you. We'll stand up to your physical force with our force to love. In good conscience we can no longer obey your unjust laws & live under an oppressive system, because not cooperating with evil is as much our obligation as cooperating with good.

That's why we say to you: 'Put us in jail & we'll go on loving you. Bomb our home, threaten our children &, even though difficult, we'll go on loving you.' I assure you we'll tire you out, we'll exhaust you with our capacity to suffer, and, I assure you, one day we will win our freedom."

20 years ago I took a walk with my spiritual director. She asked, "at the end of your life, what would you like written on your tombstone." I said: "He made a difference." I believe, as Dr. Leo Buscaglia, that our purpose for living is to matter, to make a difference that we have lived at all. My prayer is that I make a difference today and every day.

Samuel, the prophet, Andrew, the Apostle, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the preacher and statesman all made a difference. Each did it in his own way, but they made a difference. You and I are called by the same Jesus to make a difference in our own ways.

Samuel was called by God to take Eli's place, to come and see how he worked. Moved by the words of John the Baptist, who pointed out the Lord, Andrew followed Jesus, who invited him to "come and see" where

he lived and worked. He obeyed, then made it his work to bring others to Christ. Dr. King came and saw the plight of his people and answered the call, launching the Civil Rights Movement. How are we called? We were called at our Baptism. Later our teachers, parents, and mentors also made a difference, pointing us toward Christ.

Samuel learned from Eli to discern the voice of God and to be a prophet. Andrew learned from John the Baptist about Jesus and from Jesus, how to be a fisher of people. Dr. King learned to be a prophet through the suffering of his people. He learned “It takes a village to raise a child,” and the village has to include people of every color or creed, if a child is to grow into the stature of being a Christ-bearer. All 3 set out to live the dream God had put in their hearts to make a difference in the Kingdom of God. We are called to do the same.

Are we passionate about doing what Christ is calling us to do? On this eve of Dr. King’s holiday, let us listen to his words:

“Every person must have a concern for self and feel a responsibility to discover one’s mission in life. God has given each of us the capacity to achieve some end...Potential powers of creativity are within us, and we have the duty to work assiduously to discover these powers.

After one has discovered what one is made for, one must surrender all of one’s power and being to the achievement of this. One should seek to do it so well that nobody could do it better. One should do it as though God Almighty called one at this particular moment of history for this reason. No one ever makes a great contribution to humanity without this majestic sense of purpose and this dogged determination.”

(Adapted: "3 Dimensions of a Complete Life," Best Black Sermons, Wm. Philpot, 1972, pg. 10)

Can we bring others to Christ like Andrew? Can we help recuperate the dignity of the outcast like Dr. King? Can we call others like Jesus?

Dr. King is telling us to discover our dream, and that we can’t do it alone. Dr. King is telling us there’s but one dream, one call, one people of God, and we are part of all of it. Let us stand and deliver the dream.