

#8: God of Feasting and of Hunger

Listen to track 8 of *Songs of Justice and Peace*.

Scripture:

They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or sun beat down on them.
Isaiah 49:9

Devotions:

A Catholic lay woman, an accountant by trade, was one of the people who inspired a young Lutheran deaconess to go to El Salvador in 1989. Jean Donovan gave her life, literally, to the struggle for justice in that war-torn and hungry nation. When she was assassinated by security forces on December 2, 1980, her story inspired many North Americans to risk the abundance and security of a middle class lifestyle in order to accompany the poor in their search for liberation. Just weeks before his death that same year, Bishop Romero, of El Salvador said,

“Let my blood be the seed of liberty, a sign that our hope will soon be reality.
If they kill me, I will rise in the Salvadoran people.”

In 1992 peace came in El Salvador. It was a negotiated settlement paid for by the blood of many, many martyrs. It was a beautiful thing to witness the first elections in peacetime and to see poor, barely-literate peasant farmers proudly, tearfully exercising their voting rights. But things did not get better quickly for the poor majority -- they still had little more than tortillas and salt to eat and little access to medical care, even years after the peace accords were signed. Far too many of them continue to wait for the day proclaimed by the prophet Isaiah, “*They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or sun beat down on them.*” (Isaiah 49:9). They, like all of us, wait in hope for God’s peace to come.

In downtown San José, Costa Rica, there is an amazing set of statues, placed strategically in front of the Central Bank of Costa Rica, the equivalent of the Federal Reserve. They are poor peasant farmers who are not celebrating. Hunger and the seething indignation are engraved on their creased, desperate faces. The piece is called, “La Espera.” In Spanish there is only one verb for “waiting” and “hoping”, *esperar*, so the title can be alternately translated as, “The Waiting,” or, “The Hoping.” It’s an interesting juxtaposition: the smart, well-fed suit-and-tied professionals who labor at the Central Bank must pass by these statues every day on their way to their offices.

The time of hopeful waiting will not be endless if government and ordinary citizens act together. All wait for Justice. Justice is access to housing, food, education, healthcare, credit, and technical assistance to work the land. Justice will insure all people the just fruits of their labors.



Photo by Deaconess Megan Ross

Prayer:

Loving God, look with favor on the little ones, the silent ones who wait when the blessings seems too late. Inspire us with a sense of urgency to work for a more just social and economic structure, so that all may share equally in your goodness. Amen.

Reflection:

What do you think it means, “When the blessing seems too late?” Can the bounty of our blessings blind us to the needs of others? How might your service project be part of God’s blessing?

Deaconess Heidi Michelsen, San José, Costa Rica

The Lutheran Deaconess Association prepares people for ministries of service to those in need in the church and the world; supports deaconesses in their varied ministries; encourages the whole people of God in their own Christian service; and assists the church in its diaconal mission.

Website: www.TheLDA.org



LDA
Lutheran Deaconess Association