

Second Sunday after the Epiphany
January 14th, 2018 @ 1.00 pm
By Sandra Martínez

GOOD AFTERNOON, MY NAME IS SANDRA, AND IT IS A HONOR TO BE WITH ALL YOU, HAPPY NEW YEAR !!

2018 HAS JUST STARTED, WHO DID THEIR "RESOLUTIONS" FOR THIS YEAR ?

WHO SAID: THIS YEAR I'LL LOSE AT LEAST 10 POUNDS, I'M GOING TO THE GYM, I'LL EAT BETTER ! MY HEALTH WILL IMPROVE! I'M GOING TO MAKE MORE MONEY! ¿

WHO SAID ... I WILL GO TO CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY !! WHO SAID, I WILL READ THE BIBLE EVERY DAY? I WILL HELP MORE THE CHURCH-THE PRIEST / PASTOR, I WILL HELP MY NEIGHBOR !! I WILL GIVE SOMETHING TO EAT TO THE POOR, AND DISENFRANCHISED ON THE STREETS?

WHO SAID: "LET'S END INJUSTICE"?

WHO SAID: "LET'S END HATE, INEQUALITY, OPPRESSION, AND DISCRIMINATION"?

TOMORROW, JANUARY 15th (1-15-1929 DOB) WE WILL CELEBRATING SOMEONE WHO SAID AND DEMONSTRATED THAT ABOUT INJUSTICE.

HE WOULD BE 88 YEARS OLD TOMORROW ... DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR ... AN AFRICAN AMERICAN MAN WHO LIVED THAT LIFE, WHO LIVED AT A TIME WHEN SLAVERY, INEQUALITY, SEGREGATION OF BLACKS WAS THE LAW ...A TIME WHEN A WOMAN WAS ARRESTED BY SITTING AT THE FRONT FRONT IN THE BUS, AND REFUSED TO GIVE HER SEAT TO A WHITE PERSON -- ROSA PARK, A TIME WHEN MANY WHITE PEOPLE FELT SUPERIOR, AND THEY DID NOT VALUE THE LIVES OF THEIR BLACK BROTHERS AND SISTERS .

TODAY, WE ALL CONTINUE LIVING IN THOSE CONDITIONS... IN SOME WAY, TODAY IT SEEMS THAT WE ARE GOING BACKWARDS TO THOSE TIMES ... WE,THE LGBTQ PEOPLE, ARE STILL BEING ATTACKED, MUTILATED AND KILLED FOR BEING WHO WE ARE ... FOR BEING JUST LIKE GOD CREATED US...

TODAY, THE PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS CONTINUES IN SOME PLACES IN THE WORLD ... AND LATELY, IN THIS COUNTRY, IT SEEMS AS IF RACISM AGAINST US, THE PEOPLE WHO DON'T HAVE WHITE SKIN, IS GROWING.

I THINK THAT IF MLK WERE STILL ALIVE, HE WOULD SAY ... ENOUGH, ENOUGH, ENOUGH !!!

MLK WAS A PASTOR AND HE LOVED GOD. HE LEARNED FROM GHANDI THAT EVERYTHING COULD BE CHANGED IN PEACE AND LOVE- "RESISTANCE OF PEACE" ...

HE WAS AGAINST VIOLENCE ...

HE WALKED HAND IN HAND WITH HIS PEOPLE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE, AND TO BE THE LEADER LIKE MOSES WAS ... DO YOU KNOW ANY PASTOR, FATHER, REVEREND, DEACON THAT IS DOING SOMETHING SIMILAR ???

ABSOLUTELY YES ;! ... RIGHT HERE !! IN THIS CHURCH !!! IN THIS EPISCOPAL DIOCESE, THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHO ARE FOLLOWING THE CALL OF GOD, WHO ARE LIKE MLK ...

AND SOME OF THEM ARE ALSO WHITE PEOPLE, WHO, AS IN THE AGE OF MLK WERE FIGHTING TOGETHER WITH HIM ...

TODAY, THE CAUSE IS THE SAME, THEY ARE DEFENDING THE HELPLESS, THEY ARE FIGHTING FOR THE HUMANS RIGHTS OF OUR IMMIGRANTS, OF OUR DREAMERS ...

AND NOW, LET'S ASK OURSELVES... WHAT AM I DOING TO END INJUSTICE? DID YOU KNOW THAT ON MONDAY, JAN 8th, THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRESIDENT TRUMP ENDED THE TPS FOR MORE THAN 260K SALVADOREÑOS?

ON MONDAY, 260 THOUSAND SALVADOREÑOS LISTENED TO THE JUDGMENT THAT, FOR MANY OF THEM WOULD MEAN THEIR DEATH SENTENCE... NOW THEY LIVE WITH THE FEAR OF BEING DEPORTED IN 18 MONTHS IF THERE IS NO RESOLUTION TO THE TPS.

THESE ARE PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND I, WHO LIVE IN THIS COUNTR. WE HAVE MADE THIS COUNTRY OUR HOUSE-OUR HOME, OUR FAMILY !!.

I AM SALVADOREÑA, AND MAYBE LIKE MANY OF YOU ... I CAME TO THIS COUNTRY, NOT BECAUSE I WANTED ... BUT BECAUSE BACK THEN ... IN THE 1970'S - 80'S, THEY WERE KILLING YOUNG PEOPLE OF MY AGE 'IN THE CIVIL WAR', MANY OF MY FRIENDS DISAPPEARED ... MY GRANDMOTHER SAID TO MY MOTHER ... "EITHER YOU TAKE HER, OR THEY WILL KILL HER" !!

I LIVED THAT PART OF HISTORY, LIKE MILLIONS OF OTHER IMMIGRANTS ... I CLIMBED UP HILLS THAT SEEMED MOUNTAINS ...

MLK SAID IN HIS LAST SPEECH ... "I HAVE ALREADY BEEN UP TO THAT MOUNTAIN"... I SAY ... I CLIMBED UP THAT MOUNTAIN! AND I THREW MYSELF DOWN TO THE FLOOR WHEN I HEARD THE "COYOTES" SCREAMING "GET DOWN, THE MIGRA IS COMING" !!! TO ME, THOSE HILLS WERE MOUNTAINS, AND I PRAYED TO GOD TO SHOW US THE PATH, AND THAT GOD'S WILL BE DONE.

MANY OF MY COMPANIONS WERE PRAYING THE SAME ... PRAYING TO BE ABLE TO REACH THEIR DREAMS IN THE LAND OF HOPE THAT THIS COUNTRY IS.

FOR MANY SALVADOREÑOS, IF THEY ARE SENT BACK TO EL SALVADOR, THEY ARE DEAD PEOPLE, IT IS LIKE SAYING .. "CRUCIFY THEM" ...

BECAUSE VIOLENCE IN EL SALVADOR HAS NOT STOPPED ... TODAY GANGS ARE WORSE ... THEY STEAL, THEY RAPE, THEY TORTURE, THEY KILL ...

BUT NOT ONLY OUR SALVADOREÑOS ARE IN DANGER ... THE DACA YOUTH 700k OF THEM ARE FACING A VERY DARK AND UNCERTAIN FUTURE.

THIS WEEK ON NPR RADIO, I LISTENED THAT THE FORMER SHERIFF OF ARIZONA-JOE ARPAIO, WHO WAS CLASSIFIED AS ONE OF THE WORST RACIST AGAINST HISPANICS, IS GOING TO RUN AS A CANDIDATE FOR THE SENATE, AND HE FEELS SURE THAT IS GOING TO WIN! HE SAID TO NPR THAT THE "DREAMERS" HAVE TO LEAVE THIS COUNTRY, THAT THEY ARE UNDOCUMENTED, AND NEEDED TO BE DEPORTED !!!

AND THERE ARE HAITIANS, NICARAGUANS, HONDURANS AND SUDANESES, AND IMMIGRANTS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, WHO LEFT THEIR COUNTRIES TO PURSUE THE AMERICAN DREAM ...

AND THEY ARE FROM COUNTRIES WHERE WARS PUSH OUT PEOPLE TO SEEK A BETTER WORLD, OR AT LEAST ... PEACE AND SECURITY, AN OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE IN PEACE, **TO LIVE.**

MANY OF US IMMIGRANTS ARE GOOD, DECENT, PROFESSIONAL, AND RESPECTFUL PEOPLE, WE ARE NOT WHAT THIS PRESIDENT HAS JUST SAID ABOUT US FEW DAYS AGO.

WHAT DOES GOD WANTS US TO DO ? ARE WE WILLING TO BE LIKE SAMUEL WHEN GOD CALLED HIM ... "SAMUEL, SAMUEL" ... AND SAMUEL WAKES UP AND GOES WITH ELI AND HE SAYS, "DID YOU CALL ME?" ... AND ELI TELLS HIM ... I DID NOT CALL YOU ... GO BACK TO SLEEP ... AND THIS HAPPENED SEVERAL TIMES UNTIL ELI TOLD SAMUEL ... "GO BACK TO SLEEP AND WHEN YOU HEAR YOUR NAME AGAIN, SAY '**LORD, SPEAK THAT YOUR SERVANT IS LISTENING'...**"

TODAY ... GOD IS CALLING YOU ... EACH ONE OF YOU ... TODAY, GOD WANTS YOU TO FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF MLK ... AND NOT TO BE AFRAID.

I AM NOT SAYING THAT YOU SACRIFICE YOUR LIFE OR GET ARRESTED, ALTHOUGH HERE IN THE SACRED RESISTANCE GROUP, YOU MAY LEARN HOW TO PROTEST IN PEACE, AND DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO BE ARRESTED OR NOT. THEY HAVE LAWYERS PREPARED TO GET ARRESTED PEOPLE OUT, THEY HAVE TO BE DOCUMENTED, NOT TO GET INTO MORE TROUBLE.

I AM TALKING ABOUT THE FACT THAT WE ALL HAVE TO DO SOMETHING !

MLK KNEW IN HIS HEART THAT GOD HAD CALLED HIM TO LEAD HIS PEOPLE ... AND DESPITE MANY THREATS OF DEATH AND ATTEMPTS OF ASSESSINATION, HE DID NOT MIND TO BE INCARCERATED, HUMILIATED.

AND IN THE LAST SPEECH THAT HE GAVE, HE SAID THAT HE WAS NOT AFRAID, BECAUSE HE KNEW THAT GOD WAS WITH HIM, HE SACRIFICED HIS OWN LIFE.

MLK KNEW THAT GOD WAS GOING TO BE WITH HIM UNTIL THE LAST DAY OF HIS LIFE EVEN IF IT WERE A SHORT LIFE. HE WAS KILLED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 1968 (39 YRS OLD), IN MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE. I IMAGINE THAT WHEN MLK SAID, "I ALREADY ARRIVED TO THE MOUNTAIN AND I SAW THE PROMISED LAND" .. IN THE SAME WAY THAT JESUS CHRIST ARRIVED AND PRAYED IN THE MOUNT OF OLIVES AND SAID: "FATHER, YOUR WILL BE DONE," MLK FELT THE SAME, AND HIS DEATH WAS NOT THE END...

EL SALVADOR ALSO HAD A MLK ... IN MONSEÑOR OSCAR ROMERO ... BUT THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE LIKE HIM, MANY PEOPLE WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN RECOGNIZED, OR MADE FAMOUS, MEN AND WOMEN ... BUT GOD KNOWS EVERYTHING, AND KNOWING THAT HAS TO BE ENOUGH ..

GOD WANTS THAT EVERYTHING WE DO, WE DO IT WITH LOVE, GOD WANTS THAT TODAY WE PRAY FOR THE PRESIDENT, AND AFTER WHAT HE JUST SAID OF EL SALVADOR, HAITI, AFRICA, IT MAKES IT DIFFICULT FOR ME TO PRAY FOR HIM.

BUT GOD WANTS US TO LOVE OUR ENEMIES, TO BLESS THE THOSE WHO CURSE US, THE WORD OF GOD SAYS: "IF SOMEONE HITS YOU ON THE CHEEK, OFFER THEM THE OTHER ONE." THAT IS SO DIFFICULT FOR ME... BECAUSE I AM SO HUMAN ...

"TREAT THE OTHERS HOW WE WANT TO BE TREATED" ... AND I SAY ... IF YOU ARE THE IMMIGRANTS WHO NEED HELP, WOULD YOU LIKE FOR SOMEONE TO HELP YOU ??

IF YOU NEED HELP TODAY, YOU HAVE TO ASK FOR IT, AND TRUST IN GOD, BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN THAT YOU STAY AT HOME, WATCHING SOAP OPERAS, AND LEAVING OTHERS TO DO EVERYTHING !!

YOU HAVE TO DO WHAT IS GOOD WITHOUT EXPECTING ANYTHING IN RETURN, BECAUSE THE REWARD IS REALLY IN HEAVEN. WE WILL TAKE NOTHING FROM THIS WORLD WHEN WE DIE, NO CAR, HOUSE, JEWELRY, NOTHING, BUT.. WHAT STORY ARE WE LEAVING BEHIND? WHAT LEGACY IS GOING TO REMAIN ?

MLK WOULD SAY AGAIN TODAY: "LET'S NOT SINK INTO THE VALLEY OF DESPAIR." EVEN SO, ALTHOUGH WE ARE FACING DIFFICULTIES TODAY AND TOMORROW, MY FRIENDS, I SAY TO YOU TODAY: I STILL HAVE A DREAM. IT IS A DREAM DEEPLY ROOTED IN THE AMERICAN DREAM. THE AMERICAN DREAM THAT HAS BEEN REALIZED FOR US, WHO CAME FROM POOR COUNTRIES ...

HE SAID, "I HAVE A DREAM: THAT ONE DAY THIS NATION WILL STAND UP AND REALIZE THE TRUE MEANING OF THEIR CREED: THAT ALL MEN HAVE BEEN CREATED EQUAL."

I SHARE THE SAME DREAM: THAT IN EACH STATE AND EACH CITY, WE WILL BE ABLE TO ACCELERATE THE ARRIVAL OF THAT DAY IN WHICH ALL THE CHILDREN OF GOD, WHITE, BLACK, BROWN, YELLOW AND EVEN GREEN! JEWS AND GENTILES, PROTESTANTS, CATHOLICS, AND ALL RELIGIONS ARE UNITED, WITHOUT BORDERS, AND WITHOUT ANY GIANT WALL.

I SHARE THE SAME DREAM: WHERE IMMIGRANTS ARE RESPECTED, WHERE WOMEN ARE NOT VIOLATED, BEATEN. WHERE CHILDREN CAN PLAY WITHOUT FEAR OF BEING SHOT BY GANGS, WHERE DRUGS ARE ONLY PRESCRIBED BY PHYSICIANS, WHERE SALARIES ARE PAID EQUALLY TO ALL THE PEOPLE, WHERE WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS, AND WE DO NOT FEEL ENVY. WHERE, AS MOST OF US LATINOS DO IT ... THAT ALL PAY TAXES ... NO EXCEPTIONS !!

LET'S STOP INJUSTICE !!!! LET'S STOP INJUSTICE!!!!

LET'S STAND, CLOSE OUR EYES AND PRAY: "HEAVENLY GOD, WHO IS IN THE HEAVENS ... LISTEN TO OUR PLEADS AND FORGIVE OUR SINS, WHAT WE HAVE DONE AND HAD LEFT TO DO ... GRANT US COURAGE, GRANT US STRENGTH, GRANT US WISDOM, HELP US TO BE LIKE MLK, LIKE MONSEÑOR ROMERO ... AND GRANT US THE COURAGE TO LISTEN TO YOUR CALL.

GUIDE US TO DO YOUR WILL, AND TO DO IT WITH LOVE, AND TO FEEL YOUR LOVE IN US AND TO RESPOND TO YOUR CALL. THIS I ASK IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD .AND THE PEOPLE SAY: AMEN, AMEN AND AMEN ;