

## Advent Devotional December 3, 2022

### Scripture

Psalm 80

- 1 Hear us, Shepherd of Israel,  
you who lead Joseph like a flock.  
You who sit enthroned between the cherubim,  
shine forth 2 before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh.  
Awaken your might;  
come and save us.
- 3 Restore us, O God;  
make your face shine on us,  
that we may be saved.
- 4 How long, Lord God Almighty,  
will your anger smolder  
against the prayers of your people?
- 5 You have fed them with the bread of tears;  
you have made them drink tears by the bowlful.
- 6 You have made us an object of derision to our neighbors,  
and our enemies mock us.
- 7 Restore us, God Almighty;  
make your face shine on us,  
that we may be saved.
- 8 You transplanted a vine from Egypt;  
you drove out the nations and planted it.
- 9 You cleared the ground for it,  
and it took root and filled the land.
- 10 The mountains were covered with its shade,  
the mighty cedars with its branches.
- 11 Its branches reached as far as the Sea,  
its shoots as far as the River.
- 12 Why have you broken down its walls  
so that all who pass by pick its grapes?
- 13 Boars from the forest ravage it,  
and insects from the fields feed on it.
- 14 Return to us, God Almighty!  
Look down from heaven and see!  
Watch over this vine,
- 15 the root your right hand has planted,  
the son you have raised up for yourself.
- 16 Your vine is cut down, it is burned with fire;  
at your rebuke your people perish.
- 17 Let your hand rest on the man at your right hand,  
the son of man you have raised up for yourself.
- 18 Then we will not turn away from you;  
revive us, and we will call on your name.
- 19 Restore us, Lord God Almighty;  
make your face shine on us,  
that we may be saved.

## **Devotional**

**The Rev. Dr. AnneMarie Mingo, Associate Professor of Ethics, Culture, and Moral Leadership and Acting Director of the Metro-Urban Institute**

“Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved” (Ps. 80:7).

In our daily realities we face compounding political, racial, health, environmental, and other struggles in societies around the world, and we often hear the times we find ourselves living in described as unprecedented. If we reflect on our roles, the difficulties we face are seemingly a result of humanity’s ability to either act with love and justice at the center of our choices, or not. As people of faith, there are times when we look at what is going on around us and wonder if God has turned away from us, thus permitting the ongoing injustices we see and experience personally. We feel vulnerable and unsure of how to prevent those who may take advantage.

At other times we are appalled by the realization that the injustices are orchestrated and sanctioned by persons who also profess to be followers of Christ. Yet, scripture shows that when we do not challenge injustice it creates silence between our requests of God, becoming a stark reminder that God requires us to do the work of justice consistently. In this psalm we see that although these times feel unprecedented for us, our hope is strengthened knowing that nothing is new for God. During this season of Advent, we seek and await God’s presence in the midst of troubling times; we pray that God will restore us into loving relationship with God and our neighbor and illuminate our way forward to co-create a more just society for all—even in the midst of trials.

## **Prayer**

God, sometimes we feel distant from the love you have shown in previous times as we see policies and practices create pain for those not closely connected to power. We repent for the injustices we see that are a result of our actions, and ask you to give us courage to change and restore our relationships for your glory. Amen.