

March 18 to 24

The Bishop

“...the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
(Matthew 20:28)

Radical self-denial

Judica – the name given to this Sunday is linked to Psalm 43 which begins with the words, “Establish justice for me, God!”. In a similar way, young people from many schools in the USA are presently making their voices heard. They refuse to remain silent after the terrible events at a school in Florida, where a young man carrying a half-automatic weapon killed 17 people. With loud voices, they are demanding from politicians and others responsible that their rights of care and protection are recognized. They are demanding fundamental changes to the very lax gunlaws. “Mr. President, give us our rights!” The President listens and then suggests that teachers be equipped with firearms, to protect their pupils in an emergency. I am appalled!

People who suffer injustice, who are marginalized, pushed to the edge of society, or are used as pawns for the selfish interests of others, continue to place their hope in God; and in those who gather in his name. Sometimes with a loud cry, often softly and weak, “God, give me justice!”. And God does just that! However, not by taking up arms, but rather through radically disarming. Not as a patronizing ruler, but through self-sacrifice. Our reading this week from Matthew’s gospel (20 v.28) reminds us of this. It puts us under an obligation. If we really want to follow Christ, then with courage and trust we need to choose the way of self-denial and service.

Bishop Harald Rückert

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Translation: Chris Woodhead

I GIVE THANKS

- for the manifold and reliable duties, in both word and deed, carried out by the folk in our churches
- for courageous people who, in God’s name, stand up for the rights of others
- for experiences where after a long dispute reconciliation was possible; and where after endless misunderstandings an understanding was finally reached

I PRAY

- that we may encounter those who suffer injustice and marginalization with the spirit of Jesus
- for the „Commission on a Way Forward“ and for the Bishop’s Council; that ways may be found on how we as a church, going beyond the differing attitudes toward homosexuality, are able to reach a credible testimony together to the love of God in our world
- that we can accept each other as sisters and brothers in spite of our differences
- that there be no place for self-opinionatedness
- for all in despair, that there will be those at their side who will have faith for them and with them

The Bishop

Harald Rückert became Bishop of the United Methodist Church in Germany (EmK) in 2017, and has charge over its annual conferences. He takes the chair in the conferences and their commissions, represents the EmK on ecumenical committees and, after consultation, decides on the placements of pastors. The office of the Bishop should promote Christian unity, achieve effectiveness in mission and fulfil the direction and goal of the church “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world”.

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