

Last Sunday after Epiphany Sunday, February 11, 2018

The Collect: O God, who before the passion of your only-begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant to us that we, beholding by faith the light of his countenance, may be strengthened to bear our cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament: 2 Kings 2:1-12 read from the International Children's Bible

It was near the time for the Lord to take Elijah. He was going to take him by a whirlwind up into heaven. Elijah and Elisha were at Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, "Please stay here. The Lord has told me to go to Bethel."

But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives, and as you live, I won't leave you." So they went down to Bethel. A group of the prophets at Bethel came to Elisha. They said to him, "Do you know the Lord will take your master away from you today?"

Elisha said, "Yes, I know. But don't talk about it."

Elijah said to him, "Stay here, because the Lord has sent me to Jericho."

But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives, and as you live, I won't leave you."

So they went to Jericho. A group of the prophets at Jericho came to Elisha. They said, "Do you know that the Lord will take your master away from you today?"

Elisha answered, "Yes, I know. But don't talk about it."

Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here. The Lord has sent me to the Jordan River."

Elisha answered, "As the Lord lives, and as you live, I won't leave you." So the two of them went on. Fifty men from a group of the prophets came. They stood far from where Elijah and Elisha were by the Jordan. Elijah took off his coat. Then he rolled it up and hit the water. The water divided to the right and to the left. Then Elijah and Elisha crossed over on dry ground.

After they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, "What can I do for you before I am taken from you?"

Elisha said, "Leave me a double share of your spirit."

Elijah said, "You have asked a hard thing. But if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours. If you don't, it won't happen."

Elijah and Elisha were still walking and talking. Then a chariot and horses of fire appeared. The chariot and horses of fire separated Elijah from Elisha. Then Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha saw it and shouted, "My father! My father! The chariots of Israel and their horsemen!" Elisha did not see him anymore. Elisha grabbed his own clothes and tore them to show how sad he was.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 50:1-6 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

1 The Lord, the God of gods, has spoken; * he has called the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

2 Out of Zion, perfect in its beauty, * God reveals himself in glory.

3 Our God will come and will not keep silence; * before him there is a consuming flame, and round about him a raging storm.

4 He calls the heavens and the earth from above * to witness the judgment of his people.

5 "Gather before me my loyal followers, * those who have made a covenant with me and sealed it with sacrifice."

6 Let the heavens declare the rightness of his cause; * for God himself is judge.

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 4:3-6 read from the King James Version Bible

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel: Mark 9:2-9 read from the Lexham English Bible

And after six days, Jesus took along Peter and James and John, and led them to a high mountain by themselves alone. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothing became radiant—extremely white, like no cloth refiner on earth can make so white. And Elijah appeared to them together with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good that we are here! And let us make three shelters, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (For he did not know what he should answer, because they were terrified.) And a cloud came, overshadowing them, and a voice came from the cloud, “This is my beloved Son. Listen to him!” And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus alone.

And as they were coming down from the mountain, he ordered them that they should tell no one the things that they had seen, except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: On February 12th we remember Charles Freer Andrews, “Priest and Friend of the poor” in India

Charles Freer Andrews was an English priest, educator and Indian freedom fighter who is best known as an associate of Mahatma Gandhi. Andrews greatly admired the philosophy of the young Mohandas Gandhi and was instrumental in convincing him to return to India from

South Africa, where Gandhi was a leading light in the Indian civil rights struggle there. He was affectionately known as Christ's Faithful Apostle, and also, for his contributions to the Indian Independence Movement the Mahatma and his students at St. Stephen's College, Delhi named him, Deenabandhu, or 'Friend of the Poor'.

Andrews had been involved in the Christian Social Union since college, and was interested in exploring the relationship between a commitment to the gospel and a commitment to justice, through which he was attracted to struggles for justice throughout the British Empire, especially in India.

In 1904 he joined the Cambridge Brotherhood in Delhi and arrived there to teach philosophy at St. Stephen's College, where he famously grew close to many of his Indian colleagues and students. Increasingly dismayed by the racist behavior and treatment of Indians by British officials and civilians, he supported Indian political aspirations, and soon became involved in the activities of the Indian National Congress.

Well known for his persuasive ways, intellect and keen sense of moral firmness, he was asked by senior Indian political leader Gopal Krishna Gokhale to visit South Africa and help the Indian community there resolve their political disputes with the Government. He met there a young lawyer, Mohandas Gandhi who was attempting to organize the Natal Indian Congress and the Indian community to protest the racial discrimination and police legislation that infringed upon their civil liberties.

Andrews was deeply impressed with Gandhi's knowledge of Christian values, and his espousal of the concept of ahimsa, non-violence - something that Gandhi mixed with inspiration from elements of Christian anarchism. He helped Gandhi organize an Ashram in Natal and publish his famous magazine, The Indian Opinion.

Following the advice of several Indian Congress leaders and, significantly, that of Principal S K Rudra of St. Stephen's College, Andrews was instrumental in persuading Gandhi to return to India with him in 1915.

When news reached India of the mistreatment of Indian indentured laborers in Fiji, the Indian Government, in September 1915, sent Andrews and W.W. Pearson to make inquiries. The two visited numerous plantations and interviewed indentured laborers, overseers and Government officials and on their return to India also interviewed returned laborers. In their report, Andrews and Pearson highlighted the ills of the indenture system which led to a stop of further transportation of Indian labor to the British colonies.

Andrews made a second visit to Fiji in 1917 and although reported on some improvements, was still appalled at the moral degradation of the indentured laborers. He called for an immediate end to indenture and the system of Indian indentured labor was formally abolished in 1920.

About this time, Gandhi reasoned to Andrews that it was probably best for sympathetic Britons like himself to leave the freedom struggle to Indians. So, from 1935 onwards, Andrews began to spend more time back in Britain, teaching young people all over the country about Christ's call to radical discipleship. Gandhi's affectionate nickname for Andrews was Christ's Faithful Apostle, based on the initials of his name, "C.F.A". He was widely known as Gandhi's closest friend and perhaps the only major figure to address Gandhi by his first name, Mohan.

Charlie Andrews died on April 5th, 1940 during a visit to Calcutta, and is buried in the 'Christian Burial ground' of Lower Circular Road cemetery, Calcutta.

Let us pray: Gracious God, you called Charles Freer Andrews to show forth your salvation to the poor: By your Holy Spirit inspire in us a tender concern, a passionate justice, and an active love for all people, that there may be one Body and one Spirit in Jesus Christ, our Savior; who with you and the same Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**