

Readings for Thursday, June 12, 2025

Enmegahbowh – *Priest and Missionary, 1902*

Psalm 129

A Song of Ascents.

- 1 'Often have they attacked me from my youth'
—let Israel now say—
- 2 'often have they attacked me from my youth,
yet they have not prevailed against me.
- 3 Those who plough ploughed on my back;
they made their furrows long.'
- 4 The Lord is righteous;
he has cut the cords of the wicked.
- 5 May all who hate Zion
be put to shame and turned back.
- 6 Let them be like the grass on the housetops
that withers before it grows up,
- 7 with which reapers do not fill their hands
or binders of sheaves their arms,
- 8 while those who pass by do not say,
'The blessing of the Lord be upon you!
We bless you in the name of the Lord!'

Isaiah 52:1-6

Awake, awake,
put on your strength, O Zion!
Put on your beautiful garments,
O Jerusalem, the holy city;
for the uncircumcised and the unclean
shall enter you no more.
Shake yourself from the dust, rise up,
O captive Jerusalem;
loose the bonds from your neck,
O captive daughter Zion!

For thus says the Lord: You were sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money. For thus says the Lord God: Long ago, my people went down into Egypt to reside there as aliens; the Assyrian, too, has oppressed them without cause. Now therefore, what am I doing here, says the Lord, seeing that my people are taken away without cause? Their rulers howl, says the Lord, and continually, all day long, my name is despised. Therefore my people shall know my name; therefore on that day they shall know that it is I who speak; here am I.

Luke 6:17-23

Jesus Teaches and Heals

He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.

Blessings and Woes

Then he looked up at his disciples and said:

‘Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.
‘Blessed are you who are hungry now,
for you will be filled.
‘Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.

‘Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice on that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.

Collect:

Almighty God, who led your pilgrim people of old by fire and cloud: Grant that the ministers of your church, following the example of your servant Enmegahbowh, may lead your people with fiery zeal and gentle humility; through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. ***Amen.***

Enmegahbowh

Priest and Missionary, 1902

John Johnson Enmegahbowh, an Odawa (Ottawa) Indian from Canada, born in 1807, was raised both in the Midewiwin traditional healing way of his grandfather and the Christian religion of his mother. He came into the United States as a Methodist missionary in 1832. At one point Enmegahbowh attempted to abandon missionary work and return to Canada, but the boat was turned back by storms on Lake Superior, providing him a vision: “Here Mr. Jonah came before me and said, ‘Ah, my friend Enmegahbowh, I know you. You are a fugitive. You have sinned and disobeyed God. Instead of going to the city of Nineveh, where God sent you to spread his word to the people, you started to go, and then turned aside. You are now on your way to the city of Tarsish . . .’”

Enmegahbowh invited James Lloyd Breck to Gull Lake, where together they founded St. Columba’s Mission in 1852. The mission was later moved to White Earth, where Enmegahbowh served until his death in 1902. Unwelcome for a time among some Ojibway groups because he warned the community at Fort Ripley about the 1862 uprising, Enmegahbowh was consistent as a man of peace, inspiring the Waubesaquot (Chief White Cloud) mission, which obtained a lasting peace between the Ojibway and the Dakota peoples.

Enmegahbowh (“The one who stands before his people”) is the first recognized Native American priest in the Episcopal Church. He was ordained as a deacon in 1859 and as a priest in the cathedral at Faribault in 1867.

Enmegahbowh helped train many others to serve as deacons throughout northern Minnesota. The powerful tradition of Ojibway hymn singing is a living testimony to their ministry. His understanding of Native tradition enabled him to enculturate Christianity in the language and traditions of the Ojibway. He tirelessly traveled throughout Minnesota and beyond, actively participating in the development of mission strategy and policy for the Episcopal Church.

Enmegahbowh died at the White Earth Indian Reservation in northern Minnesota on June 12, 1902.