

Saturday after the Second Sunday in Lent, March 11, 2023

Recommended readings: p. 384, "Oct 15, 1966," p. 385, "The Panther," pp. 203-208, "Politics" (part two)

On page 207, Jamelle Bouie comments on Donald Trump's claim that "millions of people" had voted illegally in the 2020 election "The larger implication is clear enough: a majority made up of liberals and nonwhites isn't a real majority. And the solution is clear too: to write those people out of the polity, to use every available tool to weaken their influence on American politics—whether that means raising barriers to voting and registration or slashing access to the ballot box itself or anything in between. The Trump administration's failed attempt to place a citizenship question on the census was an important part of this effort. By requiring this information, the administration hoped to suppress the number of immigrant respondents, worsening their representation in the House and the Electoral College, re-weighting power to the white rural areas that back Trump and the Republican Party. ...the assaults on the legitimacy of nonwhite political actors, the casting of rival political majorities as unrepresentative, the drive to nullify democratically elected governing coalitions are downstream of ideas and ideologies that came to fruition in the defense of human bondage and racial segregation."

Ah, you who make iniquitous decrees, who write oppressive statutes, to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be your spoil, and that you may make the orphans your prey! What will you do on the day of punishment, in the calamity that will come from far away? To whom will you flee for help, and where will you leave your wealth? (Isaiah 10:1-3)

Isaiah, writing in a time of great strife within the former nation of Israel, between the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, made it clear that the Lord did not approve. A few of my friends and some of my family in the years of the Obama administration disagreed that the birther movement and the stonewalling in Congress etc. were racially motivated. But it has become ever more obvious that the desire to separate our nation has grown, not abated. Race, religion, ethnicity, economics, orientation, all are used to keep us from common pursuit of benefit to the people. Threats to defund Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, or to use the debt ceiling as a sledgehammer, all prevent the advance of helpful programs. They impede policies which would benefit nonwhite people, people of any color in need of assistance, and those whose full-time poor-wage jobs and lack of health care all make it problematic, at best, that they can succeed. These are the iniquitous decrees, the oppressive statutes, the policies which rebuff the needy, and trample upon the symbolic widow and orphan.

Prayer

Loving God, forgive our sinful ways. Turn us away from acting out of selfishness and fear that we might lose our power. Teach us to love all your children, to embrace them even when we disagree. Remind us, God, that we are not the judge. You are. It is the command of your Son that we love you with all our heart and all our soul and with all our mind, and **our neighbor as ourselves**. Amen.