

Grace Killian: Good morning and welcome to morning prayers.

Congregation: Good morning.

Grace Killian: Would you all please stand as you are able and join me in the responsive reading? Psalm number 119 in your black Appleton Psalter Book. Happy are those whose way is blameless who walk in the law of the Lord.

Congregation: Happy are those who keep his decrees, who seek him with their whole heart.

Grace Killian: Who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways.

Congregation: You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently.

Grace Killian: O that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes.

Congregation: Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.

Grace Killian: Let my cry come before you, O' Lord. Give me understanding according to your word.

Congregation: Let my supplication come before you. Deliver me according to your promise

Grace Killian: My lips will pour forth praise because you teach me your statutes.

Congregation: My tongue will sing of your promise, for all your commandments are right.

Grace Killian: Let your hand be ready to help me, for I have chosen your precepts.

Congregation: I long for your salvation, O Lord, and your law is my delight.

Grace Killian: Let me live that I make praise you and let your ordinances help me.

Congregation: I have gone astray like a lost sheep. Seek out your servant, for I do not forget your commandments.

Choir: Singing

KMarie Tejeda: (Singing) Let us pray. Lord, here we are seeking your presence and ready to hear what you have to say on this day. Here we are, hearts and minds wide open to change. Help us to create a better world where love, tolerance, curiosity and peace reigns forever and ever amen.

Congregation: Amen.

KMarie Tejeda: My scripture for today comes from Psalm 118 verses six and seven. The Lord is with me. I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? The Lord is with me. He's my help. I am not afraid because I know that God is with me. However, I am fearful of human judgements and decisions they can make about me because of how I look, my skin color or because of how I talk, my Spanish accent.

KMarie Tejeda: Moving to Boston has been a wake-up call. As some of you know, I was born and raised in the Dominican Republic and then I moved to New York when I was a young adult. While living in the Dominican Republic, I never had to see myself as a minority or even as a colored person. Everyone there was like me, mixed. My understanding of race was very different and limited. Understanding how much race plays an important role in American society has been a profound and painful cultural shock for me.

KMarie Tejeda: I never expected that in a first world country, I was going to encounter racism and discrimination the way I've seen it here. There have been moments where I have felt smallerized and disrespectful because sometimes I've been seen as less than a person. Let me explain. Since I moved to the States, first I had to put myself in the category, category that until today's date, it is hard for me to identify with, a brown person. Second, I have had to call myself a minority. I learned that because I am considered as such, sometimes I would be followed in certain places as a result of the prejudice that some people might have about us.

KMarie Tejeda: Third, I had to learn that sometimes there are places that I will just be ignored and my voice won't be heard because somehow I got super powers and became invisible woman. Four, I have learned to deal with the pain when approaching some people, and even though they are smiling to me, their facial expression conveys despise and surprise because a person of color is asking them a question.

KMarie Tejeda: I wonder if they might be thinking, "Don't you know your limits?" Finally, I have had to learn to be silent when I don't feel comfortable because of fear. Fear of being seen as the minority girl that always causes a problem. To be seen as the girl that doesn't get it, as the girl that the majority will not understand because she does not think like them. Now, not only I have to be aware of my surroundings because I am a woman, now I also have to be mindful of where I go, my role in society, how I see myself and how others perceive me. Perception that sometimes will not be based on the person who I am but based on the color of my skin.

KMarie Tejeda: So as I said before, I am not afraid because I know that God is with me. Nonetheless, I am afraid of what humans can do to me based on somethings I could be. Humans have free agency to make decisions and most of the times their decisions are not made on what God's intentions are. People make decisions based on their life experiences, biases, prejudice, racism of what they think people should or shouldn't do, or even more on what they believe they

should or should not be. I know that like me, there are many. Therefore today I invite us to think about our role within society. I invite us to think about can we work together to make a better world, to start building a world where future generations can live together, surrounded by peace and understanding of different cultural and ethnical ways of expression. A world where what matters in society is the person and not the color of their skin or ethnical background.

Grace Killian: Thank you. Would you all please join me in the Lord's prayer, which is on the reverse side of this paper here. Our father who art in heaven...

Congregation: Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Grace Killian: Now, will you all please stand and join us in singing the first verse of the hymn New Every Morning is the Love, number 47 in the Crimson Hymnal.

Congregation/Choir Singing

Grace Killian: Please join us every Wednesday downstairs for men cafe. This is something we do every Wednesday, so you're all welcome to join us. And now going peace to love and serve the lord.

Congregation: Amen.