

Elizabeth Probst:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Elizabeth Probst:

Welcome to morning prayers. Our speaker this morning is Kelly Mosteller. Please rise as you're able and join me in our responsive reading, which is Psalm 45, on page 23 of your psalter. My heart is stirring with a noble song. Let me recite what I have fashioned for the king. My tongue shall be the pen of a skilled writer.

Congregation:

You are the fairest of men. Grace flows from your lips, because God has blessed you for ever.

Elizabeth Probst:

Strap your sword upon your thigh, O mighty warrior, in your pride and in your majesty.

Congregation:

Ride out and conquer in the cause of truth, and for the sake of justice.

Elizabeth Probst:

Your right hand will show you marvelous things. Your arrows are very sharp, O mighty warrior.

Congregation:

The peoples are falling at your feet, and the king's enemies are losing heart.

Elizabeth Probst:

Your throne, O God, endures forever and ever. A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your realm. You love righteousness and hate inequity.

Congregation:

Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows. Amen.

Choir:

(Singing)

Kelli Mosteller:

[foreign language 00:08:10], good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Kelli Mosteller:

These are the final lines from the book *God is Red*, by indigenous scholar Vine Deloria Jr. "Who will find peace with the lands? The future of humankind lies waiting for those who will come to understand their lives, and take up their responsibilities to all living things. Who will listen to the trees, the animals and birds, the voices of the places of the land? As the long forgotten peoples of the respective continents rise and begin to reclaim their ancient heritage, they will discover the meaning of the lands of their ancestors. That is when the invaders of the North American continent will finally discover that for this land, God is red."

When I received the invitation to speak here this morning, I had only been at Harvard, and indeed only on the west coast, or East coast, excuse me, for three weeks. I had left my home in Oklahoma and my job working in the field of cultural preservation for my Native American tribe to take a position here. When I would tell people that I was going to work at Harvard, many would lower their voices and repeat, "You're going to Harvard?" In hushed tones. For so many people, this place, this institution, this land, represents something very special. It's here that brilliant young minds are exposed to new ideas, paradigm shifting discoveries are made, and where truth, veritas, has been rigorously pursued for more than 400 years. These hallowed halls of learning that surround us make this land special. Some might even say sacred.

In contrast, when I mentioned to one of my colleagues who also works in cultural preservation that I had taken a position here and be moving to the east, he didn't mention Harvard. Instead, he said, "You're going to the lands of the first light." His words reminded me that this place was sacred to countless generations of indigenous peoples, long before a European person ever stepped foot these shores. For indigenous communities like my own, whose ancestral lands are in the interior of Turtle Island, the East, where we are now, holds special meanings. It's the direction of spring, of infants, of new growth and new beginnings. It is the direction of Dawn, and the sun, who we refer to in our culture as [foreign language 00:11:12], or our grandfather.

So we honor and hold dear this place that the creator made, where [foreign language 00:11:19] rays first touched the land, but we also acknowledge that this place is not ours. We're visitors here. This land beneath our feet, and the waters that lap against these shores, and the rivers that serpentine through this landscape, have been the home to indigenous peoples for millennia. Long before Harvard students arrived here to further their education, this was a classroom for Massachusetts youth. Just outside these doors is where they learned about leadership from their warriors, and their [foreign language 00:12:02].

They learned how to be good relatives from watching their kin and how to live in and honor the environment around them from their spiritual leaders and their elders. They were also brilliant young minds looking to make their world a better place. So today, the day after Indigenous People's Day, I challenge each of us to remember the words of Vine Deloria, and take heed of the lessons of the ancestors. Listen to the trees. Stop and listen to the animals and birds, and the voices of this place, in hopes that we can find peace with the lands. [foreign language 00:12:53], thank you.

Elizabeth Probst:

Friends, please join me first in centering our hearts in the words of Joy Harjo. Praise crazy, praise sad, praise the path on which we're led. Praise the roads on earth and water. Praise the eater and the eaten. Praise beginnings. Praise the end. Praise the song and praise the singer. Praise the rain. It brings more rain. Praise the rain. It brings more rain. And now I ask that you rise as able, and join me in the words that Christ gave us. Say, our Father who art in heaven, 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. 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.

Congregation:

Our Father, who art in heaven, 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. 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.

Elizabeth Probst:

Now, let us sing our hymn, Awake, Awake to Love and Work, number 46 in your Crimson Harvard Hymnal.

Congregation/Choir

(Singing)

Elizabeth Probst:

Christ has no words in this world but your words, and no hands in this world but your hands. Let our hands and our words do the work of justice and love on this day, and on all days. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.