

INAUGURATION WEEK

Every new leader from biblical times until now in every nation comes to inauguration day with lofty hopes. The most well-known Old Testament inauguration hymn comes from Isaiah. Kings were always raised up and praised, sometimes like divinities, at their inaugurations just as we do our Presidents. Each was a new messiah. You will hear similar lofty claims at every inauguration in different words:

“The government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end.” (Isaiah 9:6-7)

No king or president has ever lived up to inauguration hopes. Or preacher, for that matter. As it was, is, and ever more shall be. Only God is God.

The only question is how far off the mark any new leader will turn out to be. We can only hope and pray. At least some people do.

The American Inauguration tradition includes prayers. Franklin Graham is on the list this year. Who knows what to expect? We only know it will be too long.

The Episcopal Book of Common Prayer actually includes a prayer for the President of the United States as one of the Daily Prayers. Presidents are always standing in the need of prayer. Daily, according to the Episcopalians

In recent editions it has become an optional prayer that could be omitted. I quote an abbreviated portion of that prayer:

“O LORD, our heavenly Father, the high and mighty Ruler of the universe, who dost from thy throne behold all the dwellers upon earth; Most heartily we beseech thee, with thy favour to behold and bless thy servant THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES...” (The Book of Common Prayer, 1928 Edition)

My preference would be words from one of the Prophets, especially one like Micah who spoke truth to power—to both religious leaders and kings:

*“He has showed you O man what is good.
What does the Lord require of you but to do justice,
and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.”* (Micah 6:8)

I think “O man” means each of us — including Presidents.

Yes,— DO JUSTICE...LOVE KINDNESS...WALK HUMBLY. We’ll see.
Inauguration Week, 2017 —For the Moment... Art Morgan