

Commemoration of Lili'uokalani of Hawai'i

Readings: Isaiah 26:1-8; Psalm 57:7-11; Colossians 3:12-15; Matthew 5:38-45

Preface of a Saint

Collect: Almighty God, who called your daughter Lili'uokalani to an earthly throne that she might advance your heavenly kingdom, and endowed her with gift of song and love for her people: Grant that we may imitate her perseverance in adversity, her commitment to peace, and her capacity for forgiveness. All this we ask in the name of your Son Jesus Christ, who lives, and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Queen Lili'uokalani is an example of a strong indigenous woman who lived a life committed to justice, nonviolence, and reconciliation. Her words, actions, and legacy, bear witness to her deep faith in Christ Jesus, and her steadfastness in life as an example of a baptized and confirmed member of our Church and of the Cathedral of St. Andrew in Honolulu, Hawai'i.

A persistent advocate for justice and nonviolence, who recognized the "Beloved Community" in her own day, the Queen refused sanction the use of force or to encourage her people to respond violently when faced by heavily armed forces from the United States Navy acting in support of a band of insurrectionists (largely from the United States and Europe) as her government was illegally overthrown (January 17, 1893). In doing so, she prevented the undue bloodshed of her people against overwhelming force. She appealed to President Grover Cleveland by surrendering her throne to the American government and asked her subjects to respect her decision. She was forcefully removed from her throne and subsequently imprisoned for her witness in opposition to American imperialism. Her model of grace left a powerful symbol of God's love that continues to be at the center of the Native Hawaiian community and to the entire Church.

The Queen was also a respected musician and composer. One of her most well-known compositions is the Queen's Prayer or Ke Aloha o Ka Haku sung most Sundays at parishes in Hawai'i. It is based upon the readings of the only two books allowed to her during her imprisonment, the Holy Bible and the Book of Common Prayer. As a neighbor to St. Andrew's Cathedral, she received refuge during the counterrevolution with the Anglican Sisters at St. Andrew's Priory School for Girls. They and the Bishop, the Right Reverend Alfred Willis, would minister and visit her during her imprisonment and these deeds of charity would influence Her Majesty to become a member of our Church. The lyrics reflect her faith in the face of adversity:

A 'o kou 'o ia i'ō, he hemolelo ho'I Your truth, so perfect.

Ko'u noho mihi ana, a pa'ahao ia I live in sorrow, imprisoned.

O 'oe ku'u lama, kou nani, ko'u ko'o You are my light, your glory my support

Mai nana 'ino'ino, na hewa o kanaka Behold not with malevolence, the sins of man,

Aka e huikala, a ma'ema'e no But forgive, and forgive.

No laila e ka Haku, ma lalao kou 'eheu And so, O Lord, beneath your wings,

Ko makou maluhia, a mau loa aku no Be our peace, forever more.