

The Special Litany

LET MY PEOPLE VOTE!

(A Litany by Bishop Adam J. Richardson, Jr.)

Leader: It was dangerous duty, but a lisping, stammering prophet of God stood before the powerful head of state with four words eloquently spoken, "Let my people go!" And a new word was added to the daily vocabulary of the people: **EXODUS!** And a river that looked like blood flowed, and frogs, lice, flies, mange-infected animals, hail, boils, locusts, gnats and darkness that covered the land like a pall, became a nuisance to the people of Egypt, then the first born of the oppressors died.

People: Freedom is not free!

Leader: It was dangerous duty, but abolitionists, some of whom were prophets of God, stood before the powerful with four words eloquently spoken, "Let my people go!" And a new word was added to the daily vocabulary of the people: **EMANCIPATION!** Fortunes lost, war fought, and blood went cascading into ravines and rivers, down hillsides where historic battles were engaged, and soldiers and civilians died.

People: Freedom is not free!

Leader: It was dangerous duty, but "fighters *for* freedom," many of whom were prophets of God, stood before the powerful (stubborn legislators, "governors whose lips dripped with the words of interposition and nullification," sociopathic sheriffs, uncompromising chiefs of police, unsympathetic supervisors of elections) speaking four words with eloquence, "Let my people VOTE!" And a new word was added to the daily vocabulary of the people: **EQUALITY!** Buckets of blood would be shed in the streets. Many are the common heroes who died uncommon deaths for the shared power of voting.

People: Freedom is not free!

Leader: It is a dangerous matter when Apathy is introduced into the daily vocabulary of the people. It is a retreat to various forms of bondage. It is an unthankful disregard for the holy sacrifice of those who heroically gave the gift of blood for the rights of us all to make decisions about public policy, public education, potholes, police protection, excessive use of force, and of those who will give voice and vote to the collective interests of tax-payers in the halls of government. Conscientious citizens, some of whom are prophets of God, turn to one another with these four words of eloquence, "Let my people vote!"

People: Freedom is not free!

Leader: Today is not an appeal to the benevolence of a despot, or a plea for mercy from those whose influence is bought with wealth; we now claim "power to the people" with blood-bought knowledge that "Freedom is not free!" "Eternal vigilance is the price we must pay for it." Add this word to our daily vocabulary: **ENGAGEMENT!** Therefore, we hold one another accountable with four words eloquently spoken:

People: Let my people VOTE!