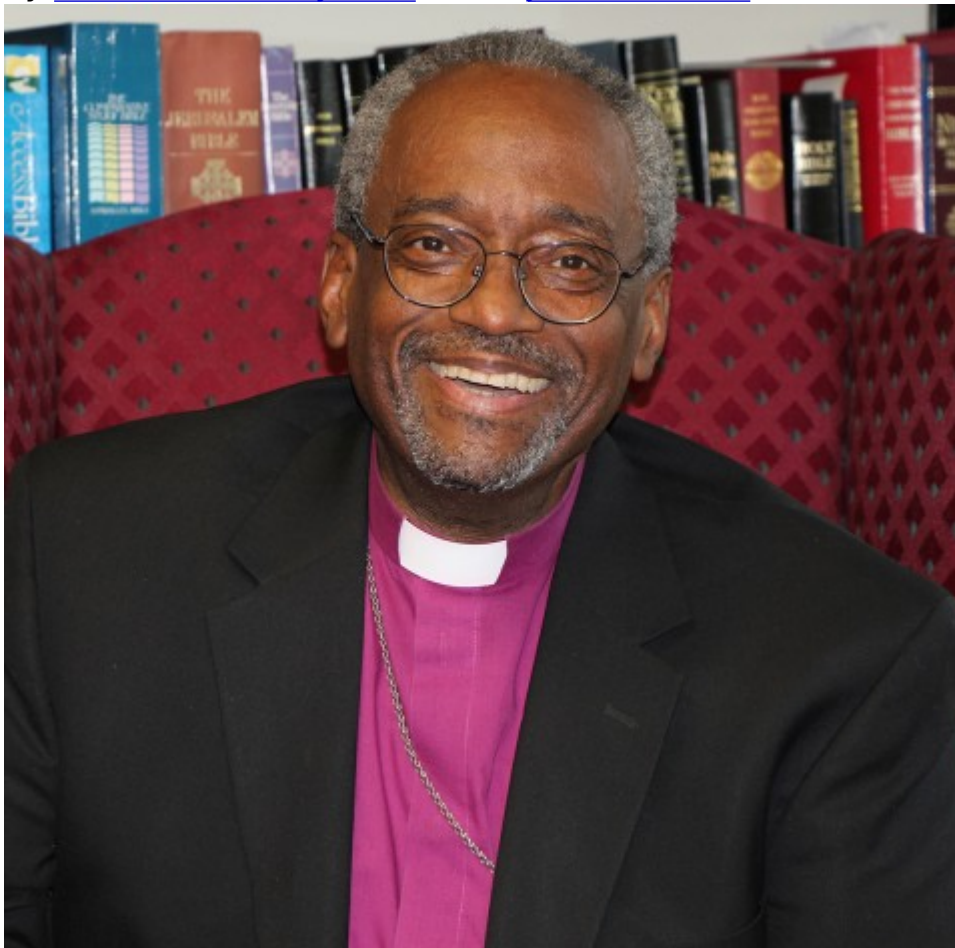


Michael Curry's sermon at royal wedding imagines 'when love is the way'

The Episcopal presiding bishop wove in references to Teilhard de Chardin, Martin Luther King Jr., and the composers of African American spirituals.

by [Christian Century staff](#) in the [June 20, 2018](#) issue



Michael Curry. Photo courtesy of Episcopal News Service.

Michael Curry, presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, preached on the power of love at the royal wedding of Prince Harry to Meghan Markle, who is American, on May 19 in St. George's Chapel at Windsor Castle, England.

The couple had asked Curry to preach at the wedding. Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, head of the Church of England, of which Queen Elizabeth II is “supreme governor,” solemnized their vows.

In [a 13-minute sermon](#) on Song of Songs 8:6–7, Curry wove in references to Teilhard de Chardin, Martin Luther King Jr., and the composers of African American spirituals. Like Curry, Markle is a descendant of African people who were enslaved.

“There were some old slaves in America’s antebellum South who explained the dynamic power of love,” Curry preached. “They sang a spiritual even in the midst of their captivity. It’s one that says . . . ‘There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole.’”

He spoke of how Jesus’ sacrifice was not for anything he received in return.

“That way of unselfish, sacrificial, redemptive love changes lives, and it can change this world,” Curry said.

He invited the congregation to imagine a world, including the spheres of government and commerce, in which love is the way.

“When love is the way, poverty would become history,” he said. “When love is the way, there’s plenty good room. Plenty good room, for all of God’s children. And when love is the way, we actually treat each other, well, like we’re actually family.”

In an illustration drawing from Teilhard, he noted how the 20th-century French Jesuit had scientific as well as theological insights, including the idea that “fire was one of the greatest discoveries in all of human history.”

“He then went on to say that if humanity ever harnesses the energy of fire again, if humanity ever captures the energy of love, it will be the second time in history that we have discovered fire,” Curry said. “Dr. King was right. We must discover love. The redemptive power of love. And when we do that, we will make of this old world a new world.”

Curry’s sermon received praise from many commenters.

“He did not filter,” [Diana Evans](#), a British journalist and novelist, [wrote in the Guardian](#). “He did it black, with music in his arms, and rhythm in his voice, and a looseness and openness in his face that supposed an almost familial acquaintance

with his audience.”

Evans noted the significance of the wedding’s location: “It was a sermon that will go down in history as a moment when the enduring seat of colonialism was brought before the Lord, and questioned in its own house. In the mention of slavery was the inherent accusation of white silver-spoon complicity, and that this union should not go forth without acknowledging it.”

A version of this article appears in the print edition under the title “People: Michael Curry.”