

# Daily Prayer

*Ninian, Bishop of Galloway*

*Wednesday, September 16, 2020*

*We enter into a time of quiet. We offer to God our selves and in the silence know that God embraces us as God's very own. We offer to God our hopes and our concerns through our prayers and in the silence listen for God. Today we hold in our prayers the ordinary moments in life—the trials and the joys—and remember Ninian, Bishop of Galloway, 430*

*We begin by saying*

I will give you as a light to the nations,  
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.

*Isaiah 49.6*

## The First Reading

But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!' But not all have obeyed the good news; for Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed our message?' So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

*Romans 10.14–17*

## The Psalm

Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous; \*  
it is good for the just to sing praises.

Praise the Lord with the harp; \*  
play to him upon the psaltery and lyre.

Sing for him a new song; \*  
    sound a fanfare with all your skill upon the trumpet.

For the word of the Lord is right, \*  
    and all his works are sure.

He loves righteousness and justice; \*  
    the loving-kindness of the Lord fills the whole earth.

By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, \*  
    by the breath of his mouth all the heavenly hosts.

He gathers up the waters of the ocean as in a water-skin \*  
    and stores up the depths of the sea.

Let all the earth fear the Lord; \*  
    let all who dwell in the world stand in awe of him.

For he spoke, and it came to pass; \*  
    he commanded, and it stood fast.

The Lord brings the will of the nations to naught; \*  
    he thwarts the designs of the peoples.

But the Lord's will stands fast for ever, \*  
    and the designs of his heart from age to age.

Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord! \*  
    happy the people he has chosen to be his own!

Let your loving-kindness, O Lord, be upon us, \*  
    as we have put our trust in you.

*Psalm 33.1-12, 22*

## **The Gospel Reading**

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority

in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

*Matthew 28.16–20*

*We continue with the reflection that follows. In silence, we ask what the reading has to say to us today. Is there something in the reflection that draws us more deeply into the reading? What does God have to say to us? What do we have to ask God?*

## **The Reflection**

*Steven Mackison*

Plato's Allegory of the Cave (Paraphrased):

Imagine some people living in an underground cave where from childhood they have been chained by the leg and by the neck so that they cannot move and can only see what is in front of them.

Above, and behind them a fire is blazing in the distance, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised pathway where people walk back and forth.

The chained prisoners can look only forward against the wall at the end of the cave and can see neither each other, nor the moving persons, nor the fire behind them.

All that the prisoners can ever see is the shadows on the wall in front of them, which are projected as the people walk in front of the fire.

When they see a shadow and hear a person's voice echoing from the cave wall, they assume the sound is coming from the shadows, since they are not aware of the existence of anything else.

These prisoners, then, recognize as reality only the shadows formed on the wall.

But what if one of the prisoners is released from his chains? Now imagine his liberator saying to him that what he saw before was only an illusion; and that if he wants to see what truly is, he has to give up the world of darkness and shadow and step forth from the cave into the light of what is real. What do you think would be his reply?

Well we know what St. Ninian's reply was because he came to know all about "the cave."

Ninian was born in Brittany and from his home, on a clear day, he would look across the sea to the Mull of Galloway, the most southern part of Scotland. He felt a longing to visit that untamed and unknown land, but he didn't know what he was being called to, until he went on a pilgrimage to Rome. He studied there, took holy orders, and inspired by today's Gospel he felt a calling to go and make disciples of all nations.

The story goes that, as Ninian travelled the rugged lands where England and Scotland meet, he came upon Hadrian's wall: the ancient obstacle that separated the civilized world from the savage, the known from the unknown. He plucked up his courage and scaled the wall, entering into an unknown land. But, as Ninian discovered, sometimes overcoming the barriers that separate us from our calling is not enough; sometimes, in our journeys, we are called into the tomb to descend into the darkness so that we may come back to the light with our vision restored.

Ninian finally reached the west coast of Scotland, and standing by the sea, he discovered this cave.



Legend has it that he spent 40 days in that cave, fasting and praying with no sound but the waves crashing on the shore and the still small voice of God speaking in his heart. And it was through this experience of isolation, in the darkness of the cave that he remembered one of the many scriptures he had committed to memory.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Inspired by those words, he then emerged from the cave and established a community at Whithorn. He built a white church to symbolize his ascent from darkness back into the light. He converted all of southern Scotland, being sent by Jesus commission and sustained by the witness of the St. Paul, yet another apostle

who once was blind, but was then able to see, who passed from darkness to light. What Ninian discovered as his calling is what we all discover in our own lives of faith.

We encounter hurdles in our earthly journey that God calls us to confront and overcome. We wander in the wilderness seeking answers to what God is calling to be and we come to times in our lives when we must enter the tomb and descend into darkness. But as Ninian discovered: the journey from the cave to fullness of life is one that begins in blindness and stumbling uncertainty. It requires you to give of yourself to trust in the one who is leading you as you accustom yourself more and more to the light of his presence. It doesn't feel safe, and it's not comfortable. You will stumble and fall and be uncertain of the journey, much of the time. But despite the pain and the discomfort, the journey has this to offer: unlike the cave, the life you are being offered is real. It is free from shadows cast and from the phantasms of your own devising - and it's the only journey that brings you to fullness of life.

*When the time is right, we conclude our time of silence with the canticle*

## **The Canticle ~ Seek the Lord**

Seek the Lord while he wills to be found; \*  
call upon him when he draws near.

Let the wicked forsake their ways \*  
and the evil ones their thoughts;

And let them turn to the Lord, and he will have compassion, \*  
and to our God, for he will richly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, \*  
nor your ways my ways, says the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, \*

so are my ways higher than your ways,  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.  
For as rain and snow fall from the heavens \*  
and return not again, but water the earth,  
Bringing forth life and giving growth, \*  
seed for sowing and bread for eating,  
So is my word that goes forth from my mouth; \*  
it will not return to me empty;  
But it will accomplish that which I have purposed, \*  
and prosper in that for which I sent it.

*Isaiah 55.6-11*

*We continue in prayer for those people and situations that we hold up before God (The Intercessions)  
and continue with the concluding collect, the Lord's prayer and the closing sentences.*

## **The Intercessions**

(Let us pray in faith to God our Father, to his Son Jesus Christ,  
and to the Holy Spirit, saying, "Lord, hear and have mercy.")

For the Church of the living God throughout the world, let us  
ask the riches of his grace.

**Lord, hear and have mercy.**

For all who proclaim the word of truth, let us ask the infinite  
wisdom of Christ.

**Lord, hear and have mercy.**

For all who have consecrated their lives to the kingdom of God,  
and for all struggling to follow the way of Christ, let us ask the  
gifts of the Spirit.

**Lord, hear and have mercy.**

For Elizabeth our Queen, for the Prime Minister of this country, and for all who govern the nations, that they may strive for justice and peace, let us ask the strength of God.

**Lord, hear and have mercy.**

For scholars and research-workers, that their studies may benefit humanity, let us ask the light of the Lord.

**Lord, hear and have mercy.**

For all who have passed from this life in faith and obedience, let us ask the peace of Christ.

**Lord, hear and have mercy.**

*We conclude our prayers*

High Sovereign of all creation,  
grant us grace to follow your holy servant Ninian  
in surmounting every wall of prejudice,  
that the glad tidings of Christ  
may be heard and accepted  
in every language, culture, and community  
throughout the whole wide earth.

We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

*[let us pray as our Saviour taught us,]*

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins,



as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen

*We conclude*

May God bless the work of our hands.  
Amen.

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The image used in the reflection is courtesy of Historic Environment Scotland

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