

Daily Prayer

Feria

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

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 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.

We begin by saying

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope from the dead.

1 Peter 1.3

The First Reading

Then the high priest took action; he and all who were with him (that is, the sect of the Sadducees), being filled with jealousy, arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, brought them out, and said, 'Go, stand in the temple and tell the people the whole message about this life.' When they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and went on with their teaching.

When the high priest and those with him arrived, they called together the council and the whole body of the elders of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the temple police went there, they did not find them in the prison; so they returned and reported, 'We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them, we found no one inside.' Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were perplexed about them,

wondering what might be going on. Then someone arrived and announced, 'Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!' Then the captain went with the temple police and brought them, but without violence, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people.

Acts 5.17-26

The Psalm

I will bless the Lord at all times; *
his praise shall ever be in my mouth.

I will glory in the Lord; *
let the humble hear and rejoice.

Proclaim with me the greatness of the Lord; *
let us exalt his name together.

I sought the Lord, and he answered me *
and delivered me out of all my terror.

Look upon him and be radiant, *
and let not your faces be ashamed.

I called in my affliction and the Lord heard me *
and saved me from all my troubles.

The angel of the Lord encompasses those who fear him, *
and he will deliver them.

Taste and see that the Lord is good; *
happy are they who trust in him!

Psalm 34.1-8

The Gospel Reading

'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.'

John 3.16-21

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 *Reflection on John 3. 16 - 17* *Paul MacLean*

These verses were amongst the favourites of our former primate, Archbishop Ted Scott, and they formed the bedrock of his remarkable ministry. He was fond of saying at clergy conferences that most of us could probably quote verse 16, 'For God so loved the world ...', but how many knew the verse that follows, 'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him'? (He was seldom taken up on this challenge.) His point was that these two verses have to be taken together. God, through love, sent Jesus into the world. And the purpose of sending Jesus is to save the world.

Often we stop with Jesus, without realizing that every act of God's love, every sending, has a divine purpose in which we participate and which we carry forward.

I have been tuning into the Dean of Canterbury's morning prayers, and in the first week of Easter we considered the Easter stories. He has emphasized that each encounter with the risen Jesus ends with a mission. Jesus re-establishes his relationship with Mary Magdalene, but then, instead of allowing her to cling to the past, gives her the commission to go and tell the disciples. The next story in John sees Jesus declaring peace to the locked down disciples, but then, he gives them the gift of the Holy Spirit and the particular mission of forgiveness.

What is our mission? What do we mean by 'saving the world' in the 21st century? We could create a list without much difficulty that might include a deepened personal faith, reverence in our corporate life, renewed relationships with friends and family, reconciliation with aboriginal peoples, a just society that addresses racial and socio-economic inequities, a world that rises to the challenge of climate crisis ...

I take two things away from these two verses this morning. First, they are a sort of large tent that encompasses everything on our list, but does so in the context of God's abiding concern for the future of humanity and the creation. We can get overwhelmed by the sheer enormity of the issues facing us and therefore seek to avoid them by retreating into a purely personal faith. However, John 1. 14 reminds us that 'the Word became flesh and pitched his tent among us ...' God came to live among us in the same world that we do. And God cares for this world. We are not alone. God's tent is welcoming and commodious. It is pitched in the many tent cities that are homes to the homeless and displaced.

Second are those words, 'love' and 'gave'. I listened a few nights ago to the story of Hana Fatima, a 9 year old girl in Mississauga who was so touched by seeing someone struggling with their groceries who reminded her of her grandparents, that she enlisted the help of her father to carry the bags to the car. They then thought about others who needed similar help and began to offer to pick up groceries for neighbours. Her example caught on. After one year she has been the inspiration for an organization that has grown to 6000 volunteers in three cities. As Hana told the interviewer:

'Whenever you get a chance to be helpful and kind, just go and do it without thinking about it. Everybody should do that.' What a great connection between love and giving. Needless to say it's not just a grocery delivery service, but a community of giving has been created by this 9 year old. So, the second thing I take away from these most important two verses is that somehow 'saving the world' has its roots and origins in loving, giving and relationship. God is, after all, sending a person, Jesus.

I'm reminded that Pope Francis has said that to truly address our ecological crisis we need to fall in love with creation again.

I'm reminded of Archbishop William Temple, whose faith like that of Ted Scott was founded and nurtured in the 4th Gospel, and who was instrumental in creating the modern social safety net and universal healthcare in Britain. Temple insisted that loving and giving - ours and God's - is indeed personal, and moves beyond the individual to expression in society as justice - God's care for all humanity.

Loving and giving. These two are inseparable, and lead us to salvation.

(Note: the translation 'pitched his tent among us' is taken from William Temple's Readings in St John's Gospel.)

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

The Canticle ~ Song of a New Creation

'I am the Lord, your Holy One, ♦
the Creator of Israel, your King.'

Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, ♦
a path in the mighty waters,

'Remember not the former things, ♦
nor consider the things of old.

'Behold, I am doing a new thing; ♦
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

'I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert, ♦
to give drink to my chosen people,

'The people whom I formed for myself, ♦
that they might declare my praise.'

Isaiah 43.15, 16, 18, 19, 20c, 21

*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

In joy and hope let us pray to the source of all life, saying,
"Hear us, Lord of glory!"

That our risen Saviour may fill us with the joy of his holy and
life-giving resurrection, let us pray to the Lord.

Hear us, Lord of glory!

That isolated and persecuted churches may find fresh strength
in the Easter gospel, let us pray to the Lord.

Hear us, Lord of glory!

That he may grant us humility to be subject to one another in Christian love, let us pray to the Lord.

Hear us, Lord of glory!

That he may provide for those who lack food, work, or shelter, let us pray to the Lord.

Hear us, Lord of glory!

That by his power wars and famine may cease through all the earth, let us pray to the Lord.

Hear us, Lord of glory!

That he may reveal the light of his presence to the sick, the weak, and the dying, that they may be comforted and strengthened, let us pray to the Lord.

Hear us, Lord of glory!

That he may send the fire of the Holy Spirit upon his people, that we may bear faithful witness to his resurrection, let us pray to the Lord.

Hear us, Lord of glory!

Our prayers conclude

Almighty and eternal God,
the strength of those who believe
and the hope of those who doubt,
may we, who have not seen, have faith
and receive the fullness of Christ's blessing,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

[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 the risen Christ grant us the joys of eternal life.
Amen.

Let us bless the Lord. Alleluia, alleluia.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

Credits:

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The reflection: The Rev'd Paul MacLean

Church of the Redeemer

162 Bloor Street West Toronto, ON M5S 1M4

416.922.4948

office@theredeemer.ca

www.TheRedeemer.ca

Twitter: @theRedeemerTO

Facebook: theRedeemerTO

Instagram: theRedeemerTO