

Daily Prayer

Clare of Assisi

Wednesday, August 11, 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—and remember Clare of Assisi, Abbess, 1253.

We begin by saying

Though our Lord Jesus Christ was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.

2 Corinthians 8.9

The First Reading

My beloved speaks and says to me:

'Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away;

for now the winter is past,
the rain is over and gone.

The flowers appear on the earth;
the time of singing has come,
and the voice of the turtle-dove
is heard in our land.

The fig tree puts forth its figs,
and the vines are in blossom;
they give forth fragrance.

Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away.

Song of Solomon 2.10-13

The Psalm

Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered; *
let those who hate him flee before him.

Let them vanish like smoke when the wind drives it away; *
as the wax melts at the fire, so let the wicked perish at
the presence of God.

But let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; *
let them also be merry and joyful.

Sing to God, sing praises to his name;
exalt him who rides upon the heavens; *
Yahweh is his name, rejoice before him!

Father of orphans, defender of widows, *
God in his holy habitation!

God gives the solitary a home and brings forth prisoners
into freedom; *
but the rebels shall live in dry places.

O God, when you went forth before your people, *
when you marched through the wilderness,

The earth shook, and the skies poured down rain,
at the presence of God, the God of Sinai, *
at the presence of God, the God of Israel.

Psalm 63.1-8

The Gospel Reading

'Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

'Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them.

Luke 12.32-37

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

Jim Boyles

Today we honour Saint Clare of Assisi. She was born in 1194, an admirer and follower of Francis, the beloved saint of the same town who was just 13 years older. Clare determined early on to dedicate her life to Christ, and became a nun. In due course she became an abbess of her order, known at first as the "Poor Ladies of San Damiano", and later as the Order of St. Clare, known popularly as the Poor Clares.

Clare followed Francis' teaching about simplicity of life and poverty. Her Order's rule of life included strict poverty, seclusion from the world, a routine of prayer and work, walking barefoot, sleeping on the ground, and eating no meat. The Order would live on alms brought to them, but could not accept large gifts, nor own any land. Clare herself lived in the convent for thirty years without venturing outside.

Clare is honoured for her piety and faithfulness, but her story is unhelpful as it clearly illustrates the secondary role of women in her time. She is put safely away out of sight, while Francis went on to become the star.

In 1958 the Pope declared Clare to be the patron saint of television,

a rather strange designation given that her life was so cut off from the outside world. If there had been television in her day, I wonder if she would have been distracted, or tempted to relax her rule.

Today there are 20,000 Poor Clares, including some in Canada in three convents, two in BC and one in Quebec. They continue the tradition of living a cloistered life, following the rule set long ago, emphasizing prayer, poverty and work.

Clare must have been in her way a charismatic figure, drawing others to her by her character and her strong faith. It's often the case that one doesn't have to be a media star, or an outstanding preacher or public figure to witness to the faith in a way that draws others into the Christian family. Today we honour not just Clare, but all those who in their own quiet ways, by their faith and actions witness to Jesus

In our Anglican tradition I'm most familiar with two religious orders for women, the Sisters of St. John the Divine, in the northern part of our city, and the Sisters of the Church, centered in Hamilton. The sisters are delightful people, full of life and faith, living simply, perhaps not quite up to Clare's standard of poverty, but fulfilling a ministry of prayer and service in their communities.

The first time I went to the Sisters of St. John, then in Willowdale, to preach and preside on one summer Sunday morning, I was told when I arrived that we'd be using incense. I had never used incense before, nor had any training in its use. Then followed a rapid 10-minute lesson by the sister, and we ran with it.

Another time at the same convent it was the tradition that after the congregation received communion the priest and a sister would go to the convent's infirmary to give communion to the sisters who were ill. As I walked through the congregation, my new shoes squeaked, quite noticeably both going and returning. Immediately

after the service one sister approached me, told me she was the Order's cobbler, and advised me on how to get rid of the squeaks. The passage from Luke is appropriate for us as we remember Clare and her dedication to poverty as a way of honouring Christ. Jesus says to the people, "Sell your possessions and give alms." and "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

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

The Canticle ~ A Song of Judith

*You sent forth your Spirit, O God,
and you continue to show mercy to all.*

I will sing a new song to my God, ♦
for you are great and glorious,
truly strong and invincible.

May your whole creation serve you, ♦
for you spoke and all things came to be.

You sent forth your Spirit and they were formed, ♦
for no one can resist your voice.

Mountains and seas are stirred to their depths; ♦
at your presence rocks shall melt like wax.

But to those who fear you, ♦
you continue to show mercy.

No sacrifice, however fragrant, can please you, ♦
but whoever fears the Lord
shall stand in your sight for ever.

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

You sent forth your Spirit, O God,
and you continue to show mercy to all.

Judith 16.13-16

*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 give thanks to God,
the God of all peoples of the earth.
For the colour and forms of your creation
and our place within it,
we bring our thanks, good Lord:
your mercy endures for ever.

For our daily food,
and for those whose work and skill
bring your good gifts to us,
we bring our thanks, good Lord:
your mercy endures for ever.

For the gifts and graces inspired in human minds and hearts;
for insight and imagination,
for the skills of research
which bring healing and fulfilment to the lives of many;
we bring our thanks, good Lord:
your mercy endures for ever.

For the light and shades of the changing seasons,
and their variety and dependability;
for new life and growth out of barrenness and decay;
we bring our thanks, good Lord:
your mercy endures for ever.

For new hope and strength in our communities,
especially in your Church and among all you call to serve you,
we bring our thanks, good Lord;

your mercy endures for ever.

For all in whose lives we see
goodness, kindness, gentleness, patience and humility,
and all the fruit of the Spirit,
we bring our thanks, good Lord:

your mercy endures for ever.

For the life we have been given,
and for all those whom you have given us to share it,
we bring our thanks, good Lord:

your mercy endures for ever.

Our prayers conclude

O God,
whose blessed Son became poor
so that through his poverty we might be made rich,
deliver us, we pray,
from an inordinate love of this world,
that in honour of your holy servant Clare
we may serve you with singleness of heart
and attain to the riches of the world to come;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
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 God grant to the world justice, truth and peace.
Amen.

Credits:

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