

Daily Prayer

Feria

Wednesday, July 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

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

O my God, in you I trust.

Psalm 25. 1a

The First Reading

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.' When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then he said, 'Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' He said further, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Then the LORD said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters.

Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.' But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?' He said, 'I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.'

Exodus 3.1-12

The Psalm

Bless the Lord, O my soul, *
and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, *
and forget not all his benefits.

He forgives all your sins *
and heals all your infirmities;

He redeems your life from the grave *
and crowns you with mercy and loving-kindness;

He satisfies you with good things, *
and your youth is renewed like an eagle's.

The Lord executes righteousness *
and judgement for all who are oppressed.

He made his ways known to Moses *
and his works to the children of Israel.

Psalm 103.1-7

The Gospel Reading

At that time Jesus said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

Matthew 11.25-27

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

The Children

Jim Boyles

There has been so much in the news about the children who were missing, and those who died in the Indian residential schools. The discovery of unmarked graves at a few of the schools has captured the attention of much of the Canadian public, and has highlighted once again the churches' role as administrators of the schools, under the federal government program.

In this context, we have very difficult lessons today. The Lord says to Moses, "I have observed the misery of my people...I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them...and bring them up to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey..." Moses is assigned the task, and when he hesitates, the Lord says, "I will be with you..."

Then the Psalm, 103 builds on this theme of deliverance. It's the Lord who "redeems your life from the Pit...who works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed."

Finally in the gospel, Jesus thanks God because he had hidden 'these things' from the wise and the intelligent and had revealed them to infants."

I'm thinking of how the children in the residential schools might have taken in these readings. Perhaps those who survived many years later, and even today, hear these words and turn away from God because God must have turned away from them in their misery, as they endured the Pit... the common name of the Anglican school at Six Nations was called the "Mush-Hole".

My long and intense involvement with the residential school story over the last three decades has not shaken my faith in God, but I've had to confront for myself the failure of the descendants of Moses. I'm referring to the church and the church officials. I believe that God was indeed with those children, weeping with them, suffering with them, experiencing their loneliness, their pain, their suffering. As long ago, God was calling out to Moses to do something about God's enslaved people, so God would have been pleading to the descendants of Moses, the leaders of the church, begging them to care for these children, but in their dogmatic goal of civilizing them, assimilating them, "saving" them, they failed the children. They failed God.

It will take generations for healing, and for reconciliation between abused and their abusers and their descendants. It will take generations too, for the Indigenous communities to find healing, and be open to a genuine reconciliation. As we keep hearing, the residential school system was broken, there was deep systemic racism, there was cruelty, all done in the name of a loving and compassionate God. How the Gospel was distorted!

The rest of us, too, are called to seek truth, as painful as it may be, to be healed ourselves, as a society that continues forms of

oppression, that lacks in many ways the compassion as God has for the slaves in Egypt. Seeking truth, finding healing are precursors leading to reconciliation.

Moses, although reluctant, got on with the task, as God's agent, rescued the people from slavery, and set them on a path to a new and abundant life. Moses' successors failed miserably in the last 150 years.

Now, we are left with this heritage, we non-Indigenous and Indigenous alike. Can we choose to hear God's call to us, a call to love one another, to care for one another, to listen to one another, and strive for reconciliation, or are we going to ignore that call, give in to the underlying currents of judgment, racism, ignorance?

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

The Canticle ~ A Song of the Word of the Lord

Seek the Lord while he may be found, ♦
call upon him while he is near;

Let the wicked abandon their ways, ♦
and the unrighteous their thoughts;
Return to the Lord, who will have mercy; ♦
to our God, who will richly pardon.

'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, ♦
neither are 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.

'As the rain and the snow come down from above, ♦
and return not again but water the earth,

'Bringing forth life and giving growth, ♦
seed for sowing and bread to eat,

'So is my word that goes forth from my mouth; ♦
it will not return to me fruitless,

'But it will accomplish that which I purpose, ♦
and succeed in the task I gave 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

For the whole People of God, that each one may be a true and faithful servant of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those drawing near to the light of faith, that the Lord will bring them to true knowledge of himself, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For our families and friends, that the Lord will give them joy and satisfaction in all that they do, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who are lonely, sick, hungry, persecuted, or ignored, that the Lord will comfort and sustain them, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For our country, that the Lord will help us to contribute to its true growth and well-being, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the whole human family, that we may live together in justice and peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Our prayers conclude with the Collect

Almighty God,
you have made us for yourself,
and our hearts are restless
until they find their rest in you.
May we find peace in your service,
and in the world to come, see you face to face;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

A prayer to remember all those whose unmarked graves have been found

Loving God,
we pray in grief for the precious little souls.
We pray for their families - for their heavy loss - that even now,
you would bind up their hearts with your healing love.
We pray for humility;
to acknowledge and ask forgiveness
for the evil in which we have been complicit.
And then Lord, we pray for the gift of righteous anger;
that it may fuel our recommitment to work for justice and love;
and fuel our resolve to call out the supremacy narratives
that damage and diminish the divine in us all.
We pray all this in the strong and just name of Jesus Christ. 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 grant to the world justice, truth and peace.
Amen.

Credits:

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The Prayer of Remembrance: The Rt Rev'd Susan Bell, Bishop of the Diocese of Niagara (adapted)

The Concluding Sentence: *Common Worship: Daily Prayer*. © The Archbishops' Council 2005 and published by Church House Publishing.

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