

Daily Prayer

Feria

Wednesday, June 30, 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 hast to help us.

Make me to know your ways, O Lord,
and teach me your paths.

Psalm 25.3

The First Reading

Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

The child grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac. So she said to Abraham, 'Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac.' The matter was very distressing to Abraham on account of his son. But God said to Abraham, 'Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named after you. As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring.' So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread

and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot; for she said, 'Do not let me look on the death of the child.' And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, 'What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him.' Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. She went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink.

God was with the boy, and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness, and became an expert with the bow.

Genesis 21.5, 8-20

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

When he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demoniacs coming out of the tombs met him. They were so fierce that no one could pass that way. Suddenly they shouted, 'What have you to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?' Now a large herd of swine was feeding at some distance from them. The demons begged him, 'If you cast us out, send us into the herd of swine.' And he said to them, 'Go!' So they came out and entered the swine; and suddenly, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and perished in the water. The swineherds ran off, and on going into the town, they told the whole story about what had happened to the demoniacs. Then the whole town came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their neighbourhood.

Matthew 8.28-34

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

Katy Waugh

“Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him”

Genesis 21: 4

The other day a friend of mine told me in a panicked tone of voice, that she had run out of anything worthwhile to read! As a life long bibliophile, I could understand her plight. Factor in that we are living in the sixteenth month of a pandemic which has forced all of us to find ways of living our lives, many of us on our own, her plight seemed quite grave. My response to her was not my usual one which is to offer books from my own fairly large collection. Instead I suggested she read the first two books of the Bible-- Genesis and Exodus. They do contain some amazing stories! I am not sure whether my friend has taken me up on my suggestion and now that bookstores have reopened, she may not. But seriously, who could resist this story of Abraham which contains this line, “Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.”

That line certainly catches our attention and reminds us that with God nothing is impossible!

The characters in these old stories seem to have such direct, open and honest relationships with God. Sarah, Abraham's wife, on hearing that she is going to conceive and have a baby at age one hundred, laughs right out loud!!! I often wish sometimes that we would return to what we might call a simpler time when we actually dared to believe, to live larger than we could possibly imagine and to be in awe of what might actually transpire, if we lived each day in God's presence.

I have been rereading a book of prayers by Walter Brueggemann who, over the forty-two years that he was an Old Testament professor, began each lecture with a hand crafted prayer which

brings scripture alive and reminds his students that it is the living word of God and not just some dusty old memories found in manuscripts.

Let me give you a sampling from his prayer called Yours, not Ours, from his book called Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth.

“You in our past: gracious,
 steadfast,
 reliable,
 long- suffering.

You are a mouthful on the lips of our grandparents.

The hard part is you in our present,
For the easy violations we readily acknowledge
then come the darker, hidden ones:

aware that appearance does not match reality;
aware that walk is well behind talk;
aware that we are enmeshed in cruelty systems
well hidden, but defining;
and we have no great yearning
to be delivered from them.

Forgive us for the ways in which we are bewitched,
too settled , at ease in false places.

You in our present: gracious,
 steadfast,
 reliable,
 long-suffering.

We in the shadows asking you to do what you have done;
to be whom you have been,
That we may do what we have never dared dream,
be whom we have never imagined...

free, unencumbered, unanxious, joyous, obedient...
Yours and not ours.

Maybe if we prayed that prayer each morning, we might find that like Abraham and Sarah we would not be surprised to hear that God was asking us to do something that seemed impossible. Hmmm....Wouldn't it be a great antidote to the continuous stream of bad news, hatred and despair that seem to bombard us daily. I'm not wishing children upon you on your hundredth birthday but....imagine what else might be possible with God.

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

The Canticle ~ A Song of the Lord's Anointed

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me ♦
because he has anointed me.

He has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, ♦
to bind up the broken-hearted,

To proclaim liberty to the captives, ♦
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;

To proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, ♦
to comfort all who mourn,

To give them a garland instead of ashes, ♦
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit,

That they may be called oaks of righteousness, ♦
the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.

For as the earth puts forth her blossom, ♦
and as seeds in the garden spring up,

So shall the Lord God make righteousness and praise ♦
blossom before all the nations.

You shall be called priests of the Lord; ♦
they shall speak of you as ministers of our God.

Isaiah 61.1-3, 11, 6a

*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

Creator God,
you have promised to hear when we pray
in the name of your Son.
Therefore in confidence and trust
we pray for the Church:

Holy One, enliven the Church for its mission
that we may be salt of the earth and light to the world.
Breath fresh life into your people
Give us power to reveal Christ in word and action.

We pray for the world:

Creator of all,
Lead us and every people into ways of justice and peace.
That we may respect one another in freedom and truth.
Awaken in us a sense of wonder for the earth and all that is in it.
Teach us to care creatively for its resources.

We pray for the community:

God of truth, inspire with your wisdom
those whose decisions affect the lives of others
that all may act with integrity and courage.
Give grace to all whose lives are linked with ours.
May we serve Christ in one another, and love as he loves us.

We pray for those in need:

God of hope, comfort and restore
all who suffer in body, mind or spirit.

May they know the power of your healing love.

Make us willing agents of your compassion.

Strengthen us as we share in making people whole.

We honour those who have died and remember those who
mourn:

We remember with thanksgiving those who have died in the faith
of Christ, and those whose faith is known to you alone.

Father, into your hands we commend them.

Give comfort to those who mourn.

Bring them peace in their time of loss.

We praise you for all your saints
who have entered your eternal glory.

May their example inspire and encourage us.

We prayer for ourselves and our ministries:

Your word is a lamp for our feet.

In darkness and in light,

in trouble and in joy,

help us, heavenly Father,

to trust your love,

to serve your purpose,

and to praise your name,

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our prayers conclude with the Collect

Almighty God,

you have taught us through your Son

that love fulfils the law.

May we love you with all our heart,
all our soul, all our mind, and all our strength,
and may we love our neighbour as ourselves;
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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