

Daily Prayer

Feria

Wednesday, October 27, 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.

My heart tells of your word, "See my face"

Your face, Lord will I seek

Psalm 27.10

The First Reading

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Romans 8.26-30

The Psalm

How long will you forget me, O Lord; for ever? ♦

How long will you hide your face from me?

How long shall I have anguish in my soul
and grief in my heart, day after day? ♦

How long shall my enemy triumph over me?

Look upon me and answer, O Lord my God; ♦
lighten my eyes, lest I sleep in death;

Lest my enemy say, 'I have prevailed against him,' ♦
and my foes rejoice that I have fallen.

But I put my trust in your steadfast love; ♦
my heart will rejoice in your salvation.

I will sing to the Lord, ♦
for he has dealt so bountifully with me.

Psalm 13

The Gospel Reading

Jesus went through one town and village after another, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. Someone asked him, 'Lord, will only a few be saved?' He said to them, 'Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able. When once the owner of the house has got up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, "Lord, open to us", then in reply he will say to you, "I do not know where you come from." Then you will begin to say, "We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets." But he will say, "I do not know where you come from; go away from me, all you evildoers!" There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the

kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrown out. Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and will eat in the kingdom of God. Indeed, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.'

Luke 13.22-30

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

Paul MacLean

Many of us have had difficulty 'keeping our spirits up' during this pandemic. For those of us who are Christians and belong to congregations, we've had one of our chief spiritual supports dramatically changed. Perhaps we didn't even think about it at an earlier, pre-pandemic time, but now that we haven't been able to gather ('to congregate') in church as we used to for over a year and a half, we're aware that being together, listening to the scriptures being read aloud, reflecting on God's Word through a homily, praying together, most of all singing and receiving communion, and then greeting and chatting after the service, have all been ways that we've 'kept our spirits up' and found energy and renewal for the day and even longer.

We haven't had that, at least not in the way we were used to. We've had to cope with being isolated as a new normal, and to find alternative ways to make connection with one another and retain some sense of purpose and direction.

The passage from Paul's Epistle to the Romans - it's a section of the chapter in which he explores 'Life through the Spirit' - speaks today to our challenge of 'keeping our spirits up.'

You may want to read the whole of chapter 8, but here's a very quick summary of what Paul has to say about Life in the Spirit.

First, God was completely (in every sense of that word) present in the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus. This event unleashed a new Spirit of resurrection into the world. It began a new era. A new relationship with God was possible. A new community (a new Israel) was born. People called into this community have a new personal identity. They are like adopted children and they become heirs to God's promises and participants in God's plans for humanity, and indeed the whole created order.

This new resurrection Spirit comes to us, dwells in us, engages and enlivens our own weak spirits, and helps us cry out to God to bring about our full salvation and that of the world.

There's lots more to say than this quick summary. However, for today, it's useful to see Paul's words as the foundation for 'keeping our spirits up.' All these spiritual supports we've been used to in our congregational life are in fact gifts from God, expressions of and emerging from the foundation of the Spirit of resurrection. It's challenging to have them removed, or at least significantly changed. However, we have not been left comfortless. There are ways in which the Spirit of resurrection is present and available to us.

The Epistle to the Romans has about 11 chapters of theology, and then in chapter 12 Paul begins, 'Therefore ...' and lays out his advice and exhortation to the Christian community. In other words, 'As a result of this foundation, here's what we should do, at this time and place, to live in the Spirit.'

Now, I did try writing my version of 'Therefore ...' but a day later my words seemed very unsatisfactory. I am no St Paul. For one thing I just couldn't cover all the ways in which people have been significantly affected by the pandemic. And secondly, as fellow Christians, you who are reading this, will have advice just as valuable (perhaps more so) as I can give for life in the Spirit in a time of pandemic.

But together we do have to put our theology into practice. So, here's a few thoughts as my modest contribution.

I remember reading some good advice from the a British medical association - probably psychiatrists - for 'keeping our spirits up' during these trying times: give, exercise, learn. I think this still holds true, but a year later I'm conscious of how difficult it is to follow this advice on one's own. To live in the Spirit we really do need each other, a community of faith, through which we can give thanks, give of our time and treasure to help others, and learn. (Exercise is probably another matter, but even here we all know the benefits of community encouragement.) Perhaps we can at least do our giving and learning conscious of belonging to a community of faith.

We can all share our experiences and practices of what keeps our spirits up while we do not have the familiar supports of congregational life (although Redeemer and other sources have been very inventive in providing lively alternatives). This will help to sustain our community of faith at a time when gathering is difficult.

Following Paul, all of us, no matter our circumstances, can give thanks for the foundational Spirit of resurrection who comes to us in so many unexpected ways and animates our lives.

'We do not even know how we ought to pray, but through our inarticulate groans, the Spirit is pleading for us, and God who searches our inmost being knows what the Spirit means ... and in everything, as we know, the Spirit cooperates for good with those who love God and are called according to God's purpose.'

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

The Canticle ~ Benedicite: A Song of Creation

Bless the Lord all you works of the Lord: ♦
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.

Bless the Lord you heavens: ♦
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.

Bless the Lord you angels of the Lord: ♦
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.

Bless the Lord all people on earth: ♦
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.

O people of God bless the Lord: ♦
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.

Bless the Lord you priests of the Lord: ♦
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.

Bless the Lord you servants of the Lord: ♦
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.

Bless the Lord all you of upright spirit: ♦
bless the Lord you that are holy and humble in heart.

The Song of the Three 35-37, 60-65

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

We pray for the coming of God's kingdom.
You sent your Son to bring good news to the poor,
sight to the blind,
freedom to captives
and salvation to your people:
anoint us with your Spirit;

rouse us to work in his name.

Creator, by your Spirit

bring in your kingdom.

Send us to bring help to the poor

and freedom to the oppressed.

Creator, by your Spirit

bring in your kingdom.

Send us to tell the world

the good news of your healing love.

Creator, by your Spirit

bring in your kingdom.

Send us to those who mourn,

to bring joy and gladness instead of grief.

Creator, by your Spirit

bring in your kingdom.

Send us to proclaim that the time is here

for you to save your people.

Creator, by your Spirit

bring in your kingdom.

Loving God,

hear our prayer,

and make us one in mind and heart

to serve you in Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our prayers conclude

Eternal God,

by your power we are created

and by your love we are redeemed;

guide and strengthen us by your Spirit,

that we may give ourselves to your service

and live this day in love to one another and to you. 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

Let us pursue all that makes for peace
and builds up our common life.
Amen.

Credits:

Scripture quotations: The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches in the USA. Used by permission. All Rights Reserved.

The Psalm: Common Worship: Psalter © The Archbishops' Council 2005 and published by Church House Publishing.

The Canticle: Common Worship: Canticles © The Archbishops' Council 2005 and published by Church House Publishing.

The Intercessions: Common Worship: Times and Seasons © The Archbishops' Council 2005 and published by Church House Publishing

The Collect: *A New Zealand Prayer Book* © 1989 by The Church of the Province of New Zealand

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

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