

Daily Prayer

Leo The Great

Wednesday, November 10, 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 Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome, Teacher of the Faith, 461.

We begin by saying

Make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

Philippians 2.2

The First Reading

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself

and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Philippians 2.1-13

The Psalm

I will remember the works of the Lord ♦
and call to mind your wonders of old time.

I will meditate on all your works ♦
and ponder your mighty deeds.

Your way, O God, is holy; ♦
who is so great a god as our God?

You are the God who worked wonders ♦
and declared your power among the peoples.

With a mighty arm you redeemed your people, ♦
the children of Jacob and Joseph.

The waters saw you, O God;
the waters saw you and were afraid; ♦
the depths also were troubled.

The clouds poured out water; the skies thundered; ♦
your arrows flashed on every side;

Psalm 77.11-15

The Gospel Reading

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.'

Matthew 16.13-19

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 Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome, 440 – 461. He was known for his pastoral ministry, his preaching, his leadership in times of turmoil, and his conciliatory approach to church controversies. The lessons today reflect his character, and in the gospel, the claim

to his office as Pope.

In Philippians, Paul calls for unity in the congregation, but a unity built on humility, on selflessness, on emptying oneself in the service of others. He concludes the passage with these words, "...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for God's good pleasure." Note the phrase, "...for it is God who is at work in you..".

With this passage in mind, I turn to the gospel passage from Matthew. It's a familiar story of Jesus chatting with the disciples, "What are the people saying about me?", he asks, and then he takes the next step and asks, "But who do you say that I am?" It's Peter who jumps into the discussion first: "you are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Jesus blesses Peter, and declares that he will be the rock upon which he, Jesus, will build his church, and promises him the keys of the kingdom of heaven. This has been a significant passage and declaration that has been used for centuries as indicating the primacy of Peter, and since Peter went to Rome, as the first bishop, the primacy of the Bishop of Rome through the ages.

Keeping in mind Paul's words about working out your own salvation, and assurance that it is God working in us, I wonder if Jesus' words to Peter might be a response he would make to anyone who came to him and sincerely declared his faith and affirmed that Jesus was the Messiah. I imagine one of the other disciples coming privately to Jesus the next day, perhaps Matthew, saying that he too, acknowledges Jesus as Messiah, and Jesus responding in a similar way, blessing him, and declaring that on him will the church be built, and that he will be empowered to exercise his ministry that will assume the character we read later in Paul, but a ministry that will prevail against the gates of Hades.

Paul reminds his followers in Philippi that God is at work in them, enabling them. Jesus is declaring that Peter, and all faithful believers are blessed and enabled too. The church is built on the rock of the people, yes, organized for now in a familiar hierarchical form, described by some these days a colonial form, seen by many as a form of oppression. Jesus, alongside Paul's interpretation, may be pointing to a less hierarchical community, where Peter, Matthew, Leo and each one of us are enabled, and we, collectively are the rock on which the church is built.

Perhaps there are many, many keys to the kingdom, distributed to all believers. Some keys may slip out to non-believers too, who contribute to the well-being of God's creation.

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

The Canticle ~ A Song of Trust

*Trust in the Lord for ever,
for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.*

We have a strong city; he sets up salvation as walls and
bulwarks. ♦

Open the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps
faith may enter in.

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on
you, ♦
because he trusts in you.

Trust in the Lord for ever, ♦
for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.

The way of the righteous is level; ♦
you who are upright make smooth the path of the
righteous.

In the path of your judgements, O Lord, we wait for you; ♦
your name and renown is the desire of our soul.

My soul yearns for you in the night, ♦
my spirit within me earnestly seeks you.

For when your judgements are in the earth, ♦
the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

O Lord, you will ordain peace for us, ♦
for indeed all that we have done you have done for us.

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.

*Trust in the Lord for ever,
for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.*

Isaiah 26.1-4, 7-9, 12

*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 flourishing of God's gifts to God's Church, saying:
Holy One,
in your mercy hear us.

God our Creator, you give us gifts that we may work together
in the service of your Son:
bless the leaders of your Church,
that they may be firm in faith,
and humble before you.
Holy One,
in your mercy hear us.

Bless those who teach,
that they may increase our understanding,
and be open to your word for them.
Holy One,
in your mercy hear us.

Bless those who minister healing,
that they may bring wholeness to others,
yet know your healing in themselves.
Holy One
in your mercy hear us.

Bless those through whom you speak,
that they may proclaim your word in power,
yet open their ears to your gentle whisper.
Holy One
in your mercy hear us.

Bless those who work in your world today,
that in the complexity of their daily lives
they may live for you, fulfil your purposes,
and seek your kingdom first.
Holy One
in your mercy hear us.

Bless those who are uncertain of their gifts
and those who are powerless in this world's eyes,
that they may be made strong in your gift of the Holy Spirit.
Holy One
hear our prayer,
and make us one in heart and mind
to serve you with joy for ever. Amen.

Our prayers conclude

O Lord our God,
grant that your Church,
following the teaching of your servant Leo the Great,
may hold fast the mystery of our redemption
and adore the one Christ,
who shared all the fulness of your glorious Deity,
yet humbled himself in mercy
to share all the pains of our humanity.
We ask this through the same Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives 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

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

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