

Daily Prayer

John Horden

Wednesday, January 12, 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 John Horden, Missionary Bishop of Moosonee, 1893.

We begin by saying

O Lord, open our lips
and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.
Your light springs up for the righteous
and all the peoples have seen your glory.

The First Reading

Listen to me, O coastlands,
pay attention, you peoples from far away!
The LORD called me before I was born,
while I was in my mother's womb he named me.
He made my mouth like a sharp sword,
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me a polished arrow,
in his quiver he hid me away.
And he said to me, 'You are my servant,
Israel, in whom I will be glorified.'
But I said, 'I have laboured in vain,
I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;
yet surely my cause is with the LORD,
and my reward with my God.'

And now the LORD says,
 who formed me in the womb to be his servant,
to bring Jacob back to him,
 and that Israel might be gathered to him,
for I am honoured in the sight of the LORD,
 and my God has become my strength—
he says,
'It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
 to raise up the tribes of Jacob
 and to restore the survivors of Israel;
I will give you as a light to the nations,
 that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.'

Thus says the LORD,
 the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,
to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations,
 the slave of rulers,
'Kings shall see and stand up,
 princes, and they shall prostrate themselves,
because of the LORD, who is faithful,
 the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.'

Thus says the LORD:
In a time of favour I have answered you,
 on a day of salvation I have helped you;
I have kept you and given you
 as a covenant to the people,
to establish the land,
 to apportion the desolate heritages;
saying to the prisoners, 'Come out',
 to those who are in darkness, 'Show yourselves.'
They shall feed along the ways,
 on all the bare heights shall be their pasture;

The Psalm

Sing to the Lord a new song, ♦
for he has done marvellous things.

His own right hand and his holy arm ♦
have won for him the victory.

The Lord has made known his salvation; ♦
his deliverance has he openly shown in the sight of the
nations.

He has remembered his mercy and faithfulness
towards the house of Israel, ♦
and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of
our God.

Sound praises to the Lord, all the earth; ♦
break into singing and make music.

Make music to the Lord with the lyre, ♦
with the lyre and the voice of melody.

With trumpets and the sound of the horn ♦
sound praises before the Lord, the King.

Let the sea thunder and all that fills it, ♦
the world and all that dwell upon it.

Let the rivers clap their hands ♦
and let the hills ring out together before the Lord,
for he comes to judge the earth.

In righteousness shall he judge the world ♦
and the peoples with equity.

The Gospel Reading

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

Matthew 28.16-20

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

Mission

Jim Boyles

I heard someone on a podcast recently characterizing the church's purpose, or mission as telling people what to believe and how to live.

We have a gospel reading today that has been key to much of the church's life through the centuries. I find it at the same time both upsetting and comforting. It's from the very end of Matthew's gospel, as Jesus appears to the disciples one last time after the resurrection, in Galilee. In this farewell address he commands them, yes, commands them, to "... go and make disciples of all nations.." They're to baptize them and teach them to obey all of his commands. Then the comforting part, "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age".

It's that last part that I find most appealing, something to hold close in times of turmoil or challenge. When the national church came close to bankruptcy in the early 2000s when the residential schools

situation was front and centre, and I was in the midst of it, I would walk home for work each night holding onto this strand of scripture. It's a promise on Jesus' part that rings true, and is a word of hope and assurance in bleak times.

Now to the hard part. Today we honour Bishop John Horden, the first bishop of Moosonee, the diocese in Northern Ontario around James Bay. He came first as a teacher to Moose Factory in 1851, then was ordained priest a year later. For many years there were day schools in the area, where the youngest children were taught in their own language, Cree, and then when a bit older learned English as well. Eventually a residential school was built, in 1906, and closed in 1976. In its later life was named Horden Hall after the Bishop.

John Horden was a student of language. He had studied classical Greek and Latin, eagerly learned Cree, and over the years picked up Ojibway, Inuktitut and Chipewyan. He took seriously the languages of the people, meeting them on their terms, encouraging their languages, developing written forms, and translating Christian material as he worked at 'making disciples'. He became bishop in 1872 and for twenty years traveled extensively in the vast diocese. He is honoured for his years of service in the north, for his contribution to indigenous language development, and for some for his missionary zeal.

In these days, however, I believe that we're called to rethink the mandate, the so-called Great Commission that we find in today's gospel, the story at the end of Matthew.

Many Biblical scholars feel that those last verses in Matthew were add-ons, not actually Jesus' words, but the work of Matthew or editors of Matthew who were reflecting the interpretation of the early church as it understood it's mission. When Jesus sent the disciples on a training mission in Galilee much earlier, it wasn't to

make disciples, or baptize, it was to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal, to cast out demons, to cleanse lepers and to raise the dead. We might look at the way Jesus 'made' disciples. He gathered a group together, encouraged the community of the few, led by example, delivered few if any lectures, preached a kingdom of love.

I have come to realize more and more that the church has misinterpreted this part of Jesus' last words. Making disciples and baptizing has been seen as a commandment to convert, to impose Christian faith on others, to cajole, threaten, judge, condemn. My encounter with Indigenous culture and tradition, and most importantly, with Indigenous people, friends, has opened my eyes to the folly of this longstanding interpretation of our 'mission'. I imagine Jesus gathering with people, listening intently, praying with them, developing a sense of community that's inclusive of all, meeting people where they are, learning of their traditions, their beliefs, hearing their anxieties and needs, and working with them in finding a way forward. Perhaps John Horden had some of this understanding, but the dominant mission emphasis of his time was that conversion meant judging Indigenous culture as evil, demanding people turn away from it to come to Jesus, be converted. It meant that their children had to be torn from their families and educated in an appropriate Christian way, without not only mother and father and siblings, but also without their language or their cultural roots. Unfortunately, it's Christian missionary doctrine and practice that is responsible for today's horror stories in our land. If we latch on to the comforting words in Matthew, Jesus' promise to be with us always to the end of time, then we must turn from this ugly tradition, and meet 'the other' as friend and neighbour, not as target for conversion.

A few weeks ago, I took aim at Edward the Confessor, an old English king who gets a date in our calendar. In an age when statues of slaveholders and residential school champions are being toppled, it's time for us to review our calendar too. We need to discuss with our Indigenous church whether John Horden should continue to be honoured, given his dedicated work with languages and church-building, or whether his traditional missionary zeal would, in terms of current values, disqualify him.

In all our struggles, all our debates, in our failures and our anxieties, we hold dear Jesus' words, "Lo I with you always, even unto the ends of the world."

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

The Canticle ~ A Song of the Spirit

Surely I am coming soon.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

'Behold, I am coming soon', says the Lord,

'and bringing my reward with me, ♦

to give to everyone according to their deeds.

'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, ♦

the beginning and the end.'

Blessed are those who do God's commandments,

that they may have the right to the tree of life, ♦

and may enter into the city through the gates.

'I, Jesus, have sent my angel to you, ♦

with this testimony for all the churches.

'I am the root and the offspring of David, ♦

I am the bright morning star.'

'Come!' say the Spirit and the Bride; ♦

'Come!' let each hearer reply.

Come forward, you who are thirsty, ♦

let those who desire take the water of life as a gift.

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.

*Surely I am coming soon.
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!*

Revelation 22.12-14, 16, 17

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 all the peoples of the world;
that they may know you as the God of peace,
we pray to you,
Lord, hear our prayer.

For nations, for leaders and governments;
that integrity may mark all their dealings,
we pray to you,
Lord, hear our prayer.

For all who labour for righteousness;
that your presence and help may give them courage,
we pray to you,
Lord, hear our prayer.

For communities torn by dissension and strife;
that your forgiveness may bring them healing,
we pray to you,
Lord, hear our prayer.

For the anxious, the lonely, the bereaved;
that consolation and peace may be theirs,
we pray to you,
Lord, hear our prayer.

For the Church, your household and family;
that she may be firm in the confession of her hope,
we pray to you,
Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who are separated from us by death;
that theirs may be the kingdom which is unshakeable,
we pray to you,
Lord, hear our prayer.

O God of peace,
who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,
that great Shepherd of the sheep:
make us perfect in all goodness to do your will
and to be what you would have us be;
through him to whom be glory for ever,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Our prayers conclude

Lord of all,
we thank you that in Jesus Christ you came alongside us
to teach us love and strengthen us in faith.
Be with us all, we pray, as we seek to follow you,
that through our discussions and our encouragement of one
another
we may learn more of your truth
and have the energy and the courage
to serve this world in new and imaginative ways;
that through your gift of creativity,

your holy gospel would be preached afresh in our generation,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

[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

Jesus, Lord of time,
hold us in your eternity.
Jesus, image of God,
travel with us the life of faith.
Jesus, friend of sinners,
heal the brokenness of our world.
Jesus, Lord of tomorrow,
draw us into your future. Amen.

Credits:

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The Intercessions: Scottish Episcopal Church—Form 1 (adapted)

The Collect: The Canterbury Book of New Parish Prayers © 2021 by Max Kramer and published by Canterbury Press

The Concluding Sentence: Common Worship: For the Beginning of the New Year. © The Archbishops' Council 2005 and published by Church House Publishing.

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