

Daily Prayer

Thomas Bray

Wednesday, February 15, 2022

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 Thomas Bray, priest and missionary, founder of SPG and SPCK.

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

Seek the LORD while he may be found,

call upon him while he is near;

let the wicked forsake their way,

and the unrighteous their thoughts;

let them return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on them,

and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,

nor 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.

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,

and do not return there until they have watered the earth,

making it bring forth and sprout,

giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Isaiah 55.6-11

The Psalm

For your servants love her very stones ♦
and feel compassion for her dust.

Then shall the nations fear your name, O Lord, ♦
and all the kings of the earth your glory,

When the Lord has built up Zion ♦
and shown himself in glory;

When he has turned to the prayer of the destitute ♦
and has not despised their plea. [R]

This shall be written for those that come after, ♦
and a people yet unborn shall praise the Lord.

For he has looked down from his holy height; ♦
from the heavens he beheld the earth,

That he might hear the sighings of the prisoner ♦
and set free those condemned to die;

That the name of the Lord may be proclaimed in Zion ♦
and his praises in Jerusalem,

Psalm 102.15-22

The Gospel Reading

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.'

Matthew 9.35-38

In silence, we ask what the readings have to say to us today. Is there something that draws us more deeply into the reading? What does God have to say to us? What do we have to ask God?

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

The Canticle ~ A Song of the Covenant

**I have given you as a light to the nations,
and I have called you in righteousness.**

Thus says God, who created the heavens, ♦
who fashioned the earth and all that dwells in it;

Who gives breath to the people upon it ♦
and spirit to those who walk in it,

'I am the Lord and I have called you in righteousness, ♦
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;

'I have given you as a covenant to the people, ♦
a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind,

'To bring out the captives from the dungeon, ♦
from the prison, those who sit in darkness.

'I am the Lord, that is my name; ♦
my glory I give to no other.'

Isaiah 42.5-8a

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.

**I have given you as a light to the nations,
and I have called you in righteousness.**

*We continue in prayer for those people and situations that we hold up before God 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 Child to bring good news to the poor,
sight to the blind,
freedom to the captives
and salvation to your people:
anoint us with your Spirit;
rouse us to work in his name.
By your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us to bring help to the poor
and freedom to the oppressed.
By your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us to tell the world
the good news of your healing love.
By your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us to those who mourn,
to bring joy and gladness instead of grief.
By your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us to proclaim that the time is here
for you to save your people.

By your Spirit

bring in your kingdom.

Use us, unworthy as we are,
to bring in your kingdom of mercy, justice, love and peace.
Empower us by your Spirit and unite us in your Son,
that all our joy and delight may be to serve you,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

Our prayers conclude

Eternal God,
you gave to your servant Thomas Bray
both zeal in lifting the yoke of oppression
from the lives of the poor
and skill in equipping your Church
for mission in many lands.
Make us at all times diligent
to propagate your gospel
and to promote the spread of Christian knowledge
among those who hunger for your truth;
through 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

May the light of Christ our Lord shine in all our hearts.

Amen.

Thomas Bray

Priest and Missionary, Found of SPG and SPCK, 1730—Memorial

Today we honour Thomas Bray, an English parish priest who founded two great missionary organizations at the turn of the seventeenth century: the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

Bray's love of knowledge was first recognized and nurtured by his parish priest, who enabled him to attend Oxford University. He was ordained in the Church of England and appointed vicar of a rural parish, where he developed a comprehensive programme of Christian instruction. In 1695 he became the bishop of London's commissary for Maryland. Throwing himself completely into the work, he quickly realized that Anglican clergy in the colonies were too few and too poorly supported to meet the pastoral needs of the people. Over the next five years he increased the number of Anglican clergy in Maryland by more than a hundred; he also raised funds to enable thirty parishes to set up libraries. To consolidate and broaden his projects — many of which he had funded out of his own small stipend — he organized the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in 1698. This Society had three practical objects: to establish lending libraries in England and in the American colonies; to encourage the building of charity schools in England and Wales; and to distribute Bibles, Prayer Books, and religious tracts, especially among Anglican parishes overseas. The S.P.C.K. proved so successful that, three years later, Bray founded the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in order to recruit and support Anglican missionaries and missionary work in America.

In 1708 he became rector of a London parish and turned his energies to the needs of the urban poor, schooling for the children of black slaves, and the plight of unemployed people who were imprisoned for debt. He died twenty-two years later, filled to the very end with a zeal for the communication of knowledge, a love for the Anglican way, and missionary concern.

Credits:

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Biographical Information: For All the Saints © 2007, General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada

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