

Daily Prayer

Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Maximilien Kolbe

Wednesday, August 14, 2024

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 Lord, open our lips.

And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Make me to know your ways, O Lord,

and teach me your paths.

The First Reading

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in so far as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you. Yet if any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace, but glorify God because you bear this name. For the time has come for judgement to begin with the household of God; if it begins with us, what will be the end for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And

'If it is hard for the righteous to be saved,

what will become of the ungodly and the sinners?'

Therefore, let those suffering in accordance with God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator, while continuing to do good.

1 Peter 4.12-14, 16-19

The Psalm

Your word is a lantern to my feet ♦
and a light upon my path.

I have sworn and will fulfil it, ♦
to keep your righteous judgements.

I am troubled above measure; ♦
give me life, O Lord, according to your word.

Accept the freewill offering of my mouth, O Lord, ♦
and teach me your judgements.

My soul is ever in my hand, ♦
yet I do not forget your law.

The wicked have laid a snare for me, ♦
but I have not strayed from your commandments.

Your testimonies have I claimed as my heritage for ever; ♦
for they are the very joy of my heart.

I have applied my heart to fulfil your statutes: ♦
always, even to the end.

Psalm 119.105-112

The Gospel Reading

'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving

you these commands so that you may love one another.

'If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you.

'When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.

John 15.12-19, 26-27

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 Word of the Lord

Return to the Lord, who will have mercy,
to our God, who will richly pardon.

Seek the Lord while he may be found, ♦
call upon him while he is near;

Let the wicked abandon their ways, ♦
and the unrighteous their thoughts;

Return to the Lord, who will have mercy; ♦
to our God, who will richly pardon.

'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, ♦
neither 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.

'As the rain and the snow come down from above, ♦
and return not again but water the earth,
'Bringing forth life and giving growth, ♦
seed for sowing and bread to eat,
'So is my word that goes forth from my mouth; ♦
it will not return to me fruitless,
'But it will accomplish that which I purpose, ♦
and succeed in the task I gave it.'

Isaiah 55.6-11

*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.*

Return to the Lord, who will have mercy,
to our God, who will richly pardon.

*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 flourishing of God's gifts to his Church, saying:
Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

God our Father, 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.
Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

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

Bless those who minister healing,
that they may bring wholeness to others,
yet know your healing in themselves.
Lord of the Church,
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.
Lord of the Church,
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.
Lord of the Church,
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.
Lord of the Church,
hear our prayer,
and make us one in heart and mind
to serve you with joy for ever. Amen.

Our prayers conclude

O God,
we bless you for the witness of your martyrs
Maximilien and Dietrich,
who walked in the bitter path of the Cross
and gave their lives that others might live.
Grant that our devotion may issue in the deeds of love,
and our confession of your holy Name
in a readiness for justice;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive 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 God grant to the world justice, peace and truth.

Amen.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Maximilien Kolbe—14 August

Martyrs, 1945, 1941—Commemoration

Today we honour Maximilien Kolbe and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, two very different Christians who suffered martyrdom at the hands of the Nazis during the second World War.

Kolbe was a Polish Franciscan priest who sheltered Jews and other refugees after the Germans conquered his country in 1939. Two years later he was arrested and sent to the concentration camp at Auschwitz. He had been there only a short time when, as punishment for another prisoner's escape, the camp commandant ordered that ten inmates be chosen at random and starved to death. One of the chosen victims fell to his knees and begged for mercy. Kolbe stepped forward and offered to take his place. His offer was accepted, and he was thrown into the starvation cell with nine other prisoners. He spent his time either praying or nursing his fellow victims. After two weeks, only Kolbe and three of his companions remained alive. On August fourteenth, 1941, they were killed with an injection of carbolic acid.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran pastor and one of the most promising theologians of his generation. He opposed the Nazi regime from the very first and committed himself to resistance by non-violent means. But after the outbreak of the

second World War, his sense of Christian responsibility in a situation of evil drew him into a plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler. The plot failed, and when his complicity came to light, he was marked for extermination. He was shunted from one concentration camp to another until, early on the morning of April ninth, 1945, he was hanged at Flossenburg.

We remember these two different martyrs together because each assumed a Christ-like responsibility for the lives of others — Kolbe by stepping forward to take the place of a fellow-prisoner at Auschwitz, and Bonhoeffer by working to free Germany and the world from the curse of Adolf Hitler.

Credits:

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