

Morning Prayer – Tuesday, March 31, 2020  
*Celtic Prayers from Iona* – J. Philip Newell

Opening Words (*as candle is lit*)

If I ascend to heaven  
you are there O God  
And if I make my bed in hell  
still you are with me (Psalm 139:8)

*(Be still and aware of the presence of the Divine within and all around)*

Opening Prayer and Thanksgiving

In the beginning O God  
You shaped my soul and set its weave  
You formed my body  
    and gave its breath.  
Renew me this day  
    in the image of your love.  
O Great God, grant me your light  
O Great God, grant me your grace  
O Great God, grant me  
    your joy this day  
And let me be made whole  
    in the well of your health.

*FREE PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING*

The Lord's Prayer

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  
Lead us not into temptation  
But deliver us from evil  
For the kingdom, the power  
    and the glory are yours  
Now and for ever  
Amen.

### Scripture – John 5:1-18 (Contemporary English Version - CEV)

Later, Jesus went to Jerusalem for another Jewish festival. In the city near the sheep gate was a pool with five porches, and its name in Hebrew was Bethzatha.

Many sick, blind, lame, and crippled people were lying close to the pool.

Beside the pool was a man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw the man and realized that he had been crippled for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to be healed?”

The man answered, “Lord, I don’t have anyone to put me in the pool when the water is stirred up. I try to get in, but someone else always gets there first.”

Jesus told him, “Pick up your mat and walk!” Right then the man was healed. He picked up his mat and started walking around. The day on which this happened was a Sabbath.

When the Jewish leaders saw the man carrying his mat, they said to him, “This is the Sabbath! No one is allowed to carry a mat on the Sabbath.”

But he replied, “The man who healed me told me to pick up my mat and walk.”

They asked him, “Who is this man that told you to pick up your mat and walk?” But he did not know who Jesus was, and Jesus had left because of the crowd.

Later, Jesus met the man in the temple and told him, “You are now well. But don’t sin anymore or something worse might happen to you.” The man left and told the leaders that Jesus was the one who had healed him. They started making a lot of trouble for Jesus because he did things like this on the Sabbath.

But Jesus said, “My Father has never stopped working, and that is why I keep on working.” Now the leaders wanted to kill Jesus for two reasons. First, he had broken the law of the Sabbath. But even worse, he had said that God was his Father, which made him equal with God.

### ***SILENCE***

*(Reflect on the gospel and remember that God is with those who are poor and betrayed)*

### Poem – “What You Missed That Day You Were Absent from Fourth Grade” by Brad Aaron

Mrs. Nelson explained how to stand still and listen  
to the wind, how to find meaning in pumping gas,

how peeling potatoes can be a form of prayer. She took  
questions on how not to feel lost in the dark

After lunch she distributed worksheets  
that covered ways to remember your grandfather’s

voice. Then the class discussed falling asleep  
without feeling you had forgotten to do something else—

something important—and how to believe  
the house you wake in is your home. This prompted

Mrs. Nelson to draw a chalkboard diagram detailing  
how to chant the Psalms during cigarette breaks,

and how not to squirm for sound when your own thoughts  
are all you hear; also, that you have enough.

The English lesson was that *I am*  
is a complete sentence.

And just before the afternoon bell, she made the math equation  
look easy. The one that proves that hundreds of questions,

and feeling cold, and all those nights spent looking  
for whatever it was you lost, and one person

add up to something.

### Intercessions

O Christ of the road  
of the wounded

O Christ of the tears  
of the broken

In me and with me  
the needs of the world

Grant me my prayers  
of loving and hoping

Grant me my prayers  
of yearning and healing.

*(Pray for the coming day and for justice and peace)*

### Closing Prayer

*(after which candle is extinguished)*

God before me, God behind me,  
God above me, God beneath me.

I on your path O God  
You, O God, on my way.

In the twistings of the road

In the currents of the river

Be with me by day

Be with me by night

Be with me by day and by night.

### Spiritual Exercises:

- 1) In Brad Aaron Maudlin's poem, the poet speaks about what he had to learn himself. Journal about what you've had to learn yourself. Want to hear a lovely reflection on this poem? Check out Pádraig Ó Tuama's wonderful reading of and reflection on this poem on the podcast *Poetry Unbound*: <https://onbeing.org/programs/a-poem-for-what-you-learn-alone/>
- 2) Draw a self-portrait on a paper bag (or make a collage on the bag that represents you). Inside the bag place items, notes, or anything else that represents things you've learned in your life – whether through joy or through sorrow. Say a prayer of thanksgiving to God for what you've learned.

### Sources:

Prayers are from: *Celtic Prayers from Iona* – J. Philip Newell, New York: Paulist Press, 1997

Poem: "What You Missed That Day You Were Absent From Fourth Grade" by Brad Aaron Maudlin from *Everyone at This Party Has Two Names*: Southeast Missouri State University Press, 2016.

Scripture: *Contemporary English Version*, American Bible Society, 1995.