

Morning Prayer – Thursday, June 4, 2020

Praying with the Earth: A Prayerbook for Peace by John Philip Newell

Opening Words (*as candle is lit*)

Blessed are the forgiving, for they are free (Matthew 5:7)

Prayer of Awareness

We wake
to the forgiveness of a new day.
We wake
to the freedom to begin again.
We wake
to the mercy of the sun's redeeming light.
Always new
always gift
always blessing
We wake
to the forgiveness of this new day.

(Be still and aware)

Scripture and Meditation

God is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love (Psalm 103:8)

(pause)

Forgive not seventy times but seventy times seven times (Matthew 18:22)

(pause)

Return evil with good and your enemy will become your friend
(Quran – Revelations Well Expounded 41.34)

(Be still and aware)

Poem – “Blueberries” by James Lasdun

I'm talking to you old man.
Listen to me as you step inside this garden
to fill a breakfast bowl with blueberries
ripened on the bushes I'm planting now,
twenty years back from where you're standing.
It's strictly a long-term project—first year
pull off the blossoms before they open,
second year let them flower, watch the bees

bobbing in every bonnet,
 but don't touch the fruit till year three,
 and then only sample a handful or two . . .
 Old man I'm doing this for you!
 You know what they say about blueberries:
 blood-cleansing, mood-lifting memory-boosters;
 every bush a little fountain of youth
 sparkling with flavonoids, anthocyanin . . .
 I've spent all summer clearing brush
 sawing locust poles for the frames,
 digging in mounds of pine needles, bales of peat moss—
 I thought I'd do it while I still could.
 You can do something for me in turn:
 think about the things an old man should;
 things I've shied away from, last things.
 Care about them only *don't* care too
 (you'll know better than I do what I mean
 or what I couldn't say, but meant).
 Reconcile, forgive, repent,
 but don't go soft on me; keep the faith,
 our infidels' implicit vow:
 "not the hereafter but the here and now . . ."
 Weigh your heart against the feather of truth
 as the Egyptians did, and purge its sin,
 but for your own sake, not your soul's.
 And since the only certain
 eternity's the one that stretches backward,
 look for it here inside this garden:
 Blueray, Bluecrop, Bluetta, Hardy Blue;
 little fat droplets of transubstantiate sky,
 each in its yeast-misted wineskin, chilled in dew.
 This was your labor, these are the fruits thereof.
 Fill up your bowl old man and bring them in.

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS, THE WORLD, AND ONESELF

Prayer for the Life of the World

May our enemy become our friend, O God,
 that we may share earth's goodness.
 May our enemy become our friend, O God,
 that our children may meet and marry.
 May our enemy become our friend, O God,
 that we may remember our shared birth in you.
 May we grow in grace
 may we grow in gratitude

may we grow in wisdom
that our enemy may become our friend.

(silent prayers for justice and peace)

Prayer of Blessing

The blessings of sun
the blessings of moon
the blessings of east and of west
to guide us on the way
to lighten our eyes
to strengthen our will and our loving
The blessings of earth
the blessings of air
the blessings of fire and water
to fill us with heaven
to free us with mercy
to stir us with flames of compassion.

Spiritual Exercises:

- 1) Reflect on things you've done to bring joy or fulfillment to your future self. How might you do something to bless your future self this day?
- 2) Make a piece of art that expresses an experience of forgiveness or the idea of forgiveness.

Sources

Prayers: Praying with the Earth: A Prayerbook for Peace by John Philip Newell. Eerdmans, 2011.

Poem: James Lasdun, "Blueberries" from *Bluestone*. Copyright © 2015 by James Lasdun. Farrar, Straus and Giroux