

Morning Prayer – Friday, May 29, 2020

*Celtic Daily Prayer – The Northumbria Community *modifications made for inclusive language.*

Opening Words (*as candle is lit*)

O God, you are my God, eagerly I seek you.

As a new day begins

breathe your peace into my soul, and

call out in me again a willingness to love and serve.

Psalm 23 – St. Helena Psalter

The Holy One is my shepherd; *

I shall not be in want.

You make me lie down in green pastures *

and lead me beside still waters.

You revive my soul *

and guide me along right pathways for the sake of your Name.

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I shall fear no evil; *

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; *

you have anointed my head with oil,

and my cup is running over.

Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, *

and I will dwell in the house of God for ever.

(A moment of silence to reflect on the reading)

Canticle

In peace and in truth I put on Christ this day;

I will walk with Christ and Christ will walk with me.

Whatever joys or sorrows the day may bring

Christ will bear all things with me.

Whatever joys or sorrows the day may bring

Christ will guide me through

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (CEV)

We never give up. Our bodies are gradually dying, but we ourselves are being made stronger each day. These little troubles are getting us ready for an eternal glory that will make all our troubles seem like nothing. Things that are seen don't last forever, but things that are not seen are eternal. That's why we keep our minds on the things that cannot be seen.

(A moment of silence to reflect on the reading)

Poem – “What Kind of Times Are These” by Adrienne Rich

There's a place between two stands of trees where the grass grows uphill

and the old revolutionary road breaks off into shadows
near a meeting-house abandoned by the persecuted
who disappeared into those shadows.

I've walked there picking mushrooms at the edge of dread, but don't be fooled
this isn't a Russian poem, this is not somewhere else but here,
our country moving closer to its own truth and dread,
its own ways of making people disappear.

I won't tell you where the place is, the dark mesh of the woods
meeting the unmarked strip of light—
ghost-ridden crossroads, leafmold paradise:
I know already who wants to buy it, sell it, make it disappear.

And I won't tell you where it is, so why do I tell you
anything? Because you still listen, because in times like these
to have you listen at all, it's necessary
to talk about trees.

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS, THE WORLD, AND ONESELF

Closing Prayer

(after which candle is extinguished)

We stretch out our hand and throw,
and many, many seeds we sow.
In truth we do not know
where they will go,
which will take root
or when the unlikeliest ground
will return glimpses of gold.

Sowing at times in tears,
persisting through the years,
blessed again and again
by your harvest of love.
Let us embody your ready kindness
this day
for things will not be
as they were before.
But whatever may be
May we walk in your way of love.

Spiritual Exercises:

- 1) Paul writes in 2 Corinthians that “we keep our minds on things that cannot be seen”. What cannot be seen that we are asked to set our minds on and how might attending to things that can be seen help us delve into those things that cannot be seen?
- 2) Imagine you are writing a letter to yourself from the future about what is essential to attend to at this time. What do you imagine your future self would want to tell your current self about how to be faithful during this time?

Sources

Prayers and Buechner reading are from: *Celtic Daily Prayer: Book Two, Farther Up and Farther In* Northumbria Community, London: William Collins Books, 2015.

Poem: Adrienne Rich, "What Kind of Times are These" from *Collected Poems: 1950-2012*.
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