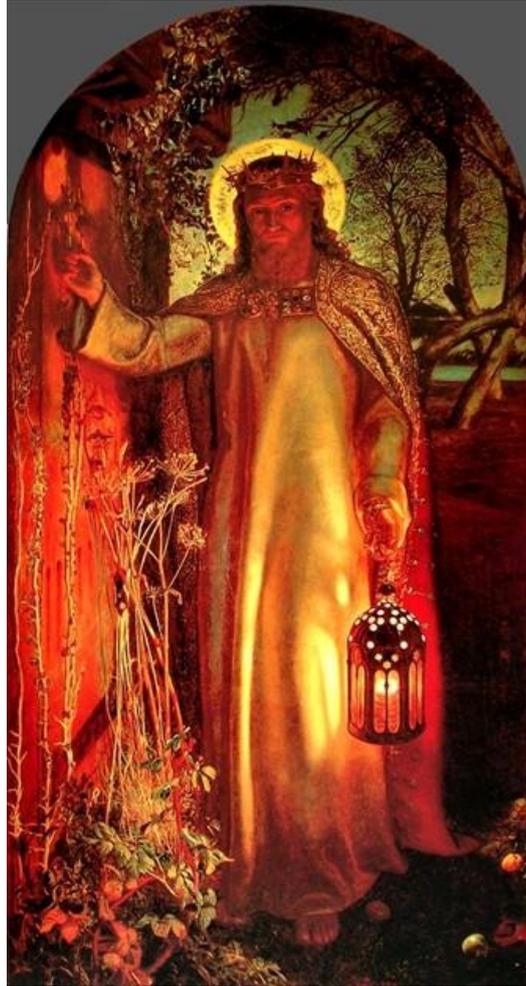


St Matthew's Westminster



Spiritual Resources for Lent Week III

Sunday 7th March – Saturday 13th March 2021

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Introduction

The Sound of Silence

The sound of stillness

Silence is a presence of God. It is in this silence that we shall hear a voice deep within us, speaking to our nobler selves, calling us to high ideals and generous instincts. Silence is the voice of God, sometimes no louder than a whisper, but speaking to us unmistakably if we learn to listen, to listen to God. That silence, that presence of God, will bring peace to our troubled and divided hearts. It will help to heal and restore our society.

St Anselm, a monk of a monastery in Normandy and later Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote:

Come now, turn aside from your daily employment. Escape for a moment from the tumult of your thoughts, put aside your weighty cares. Let your burdensome distractions wait. Free yourself for a while for him. Enter the inner chamber of your soul. Shut out everything except God and that which will help you in seeking him. When you have shut the door say to him: 'I seek your face. Lord, it is your face I seek. Lord my God, teach my heart where and how to seek you.'

To see God as he is, his beauty and goodness, his power and his truth, to rejoice in the vision of him - for this we are made. It is the purpose of our being, to see the countenance of God, to know his glory.

'No man can see me and live.' But God is gracious. He meets our needs and stoops to help our weakness, to give hints of the glory that is in him. In all that is true, beautiful and good we can find him, if we look, reflect and pray. He gives light to dispel the darkness in our souls. Our senses are windows through which a ray from the glory shines into the inner chamber of our souls.

Basil Hume (1923-99), former Archbishop of Westminster

Reflection and Prayer for the Day

Sunday 7th March - The Third Sunday of Lent

The Mission of My Life

God has entrusted me to do him some definite service; he has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another. I have my mission - I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next.

I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good, I shall do his work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place while not intending it - if I do but keep his commandments.

Therefore I will trust him. Whatever, wherever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve him; in perplexity, my perplexity may serve him; if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what he is about. He may take away my friends, he may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me - still he knows what he is about.

St John Henry Newman (1801-90)

Prayer

Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom, lead thou me on! The night is dark, and I am far from home, lead thou me on! Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see the distant scene; one step is enough for me. I was not ever thus, nor pray'd that thou shouldst lead me on; I loved to choose and see my path, but now lead thou me on! I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears, pride ruled my will: remember not past years. So long your power hath blest me, sure it still will lead me on, o'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till the night is gone; and with the morn those angel faces smile which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

St John Henry Newman (1801-90)

Monday 8th March

Hospitality

Hospitality brings us back to the theme of acceptance, accepting ourselves and accepting others, in a most immediate and practical situation which we cannot evade. There is a knock at the door and I have to respond; as I lay four extra places for supper I know that soon four people will be sitting around the table sharing the meal. If I am actually afraid and defensive (or aggressive, which is much the same), anxious and insecure about the impression that I shall be making, I may offer a glass of sherry or a bowl of soup but any real hospitality of the heart will be lacking; I shall have merely fulfilled the social expectation. I cannot become a good host until I am at home in my own house, so rooted in my centre (as stability has taught) that I no longer need to impose my terms on others but can instead afford to offer them a welcome that gives them the chance to be completely themselves. Here again is the paradox, that by emptying myself I am not only able to give but also to receive. Filled with the prejudice, worry, jealousy, I have no inner space to listen, to discover the gift of the other person, to take down my defences and to be open to what they have to offer.

Esther de Waal, 'Seeking God: The Way of St Benedict'

Almighty God,
from whom all thoughts of truth
and peace proceed:
kindle, we pray, in the hearts of all
the true love of peace:
and guide with your pure
and peaceable wisdom
those take counsel for the
nations of the earth;
that in tranquillity your kingdom
may go forward, till the earth is filled
with the knowledge of your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Francis Paget (1851 - 1911), former Bishop of Oxford

Tuesday 9th March

The Essentials of Anglicanism

To be an Anglican requires many qualities which even some people of highest religious genius have lacked. It requires the courage to apply the individual conscience to the challenge of the faith; it needs the patience to wait till the answer to some problem not yet obvious is revealed, and the honesty on occasions to say, 'I don't know'. It needs the love to be tolerant with those whom we think misguided or foolish in the expression of their opinions. It needs the self-discipline to accept the demands of our faith, not because we are told we must do so, but because we believe such things to be true. Here is the true genius of Anglicanism.'

Gerald Ellison (1910-92), a former Bishop of London

A General Thanksgiving

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men; We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we shew forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

Wednesday 10th March

I Believe in Health, in Friendship and in Wisdom

Two things here on earth are essential: health and a friend. They are the two things most to be prayed for.

Woe to the person who despises them. Health and friendship are natural gifts. God has made human beings for living - hence health - and for not living alone - hence the search for friendship. Friendship begins in the family, with your spouse and children and extends from there to strangers. But who, in fact, is a stranger? All human beings share a common parentage. Do you fail to recognise that person? There's a human being there! Are you dealing with an adversary? There's a human being there! With an enemy? There's a human being there too! Let a friend remain a friend and turn an enemy into a friend.

However, to these two things that we need to have in this world, health and friendship, we must add a third which is not of this world, namely wisdom. Divine wisdom is on a different plane from human beings - stupid, sunk in error, attached to superfluities, ignorant of the eternal verities. Divine wisdom is no friend of the foolish and, because it is not their friend, it is to be found far removed from them.

Nevertheless, by taking to itself what was close to us, divine wisdom has come close to us. In this consists the mystery of Christ. Nothing is further from foolishness than divine wisdom and nothing is closer to human beings than their humanity: divine wisdom has assumed humanity and come close to human beings by means of what is close to them.

So we believe in three things: health, friendship and divine-human wisdom.

St Augustine (354-430)

Prayer

Warm our cold hearts, Lord, we beseech thee.
Take away all that hinders us from giving ourselves to thee.

Mould us according to thine own image.

Give us grace to obey thee in all things, and ever to follow thy gracious leading. Make us this day to be kind to our fellows, to be gentle and unselfish, careful to hurt no one by word or deed, hut anxious to do good to all, and to make others happy. Give us a meek and a loving spirit, which in thy sight is of great price.

We would not live just for ourselves, but for thee.

Ashton Oxenden (1808-92), former Bishop of Montreal



Thursday 11th March

Almighty God grant all go well with thee. Be an honour to the Church, follow Christ's word, clear in thy task and careful in thy speech. Be thine an open hand, a merry heart.

Christ in thy mouth, A life that all may know a lover of righteousness and compassion. Let none come to thee and go sad away. Hope of the poor, and solace to the sad, go thou before God's people to God's realm, that he who follows thee may come to the stars. Sow living seeds, words that are quick with life, that faith may the harvest in human hearts.

In word and example let thy light shine in the black dark like the morning star. Let not the wealth of the world nor its dominion flatter thee into silence as to truth, nor king, nor judge, yea nor thy dearest friend muzzle thy lips from righteousness.

St Alcuin (735-804)

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light,
look favourably on your whole church,
that wonderful sacred mystery.
By the effectual working of your providence,
carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation.
Let the whole world see and know
that things which were cast down are being raised up,
and things which had grown old are being made new,
and that all things are being brought to their perfection
by him through whom all things were made,
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Gelasian Sacramentary

Friday 12th March

The Return of The Prodigal Son

For most of my life I have struggled to find God, to know God, to love God. I have tried hard to follow the guidelines of the spiritual life - pray always, work for others, read the Scriptures - and to avoid the many temptations to dissipate myself. I have failed many times but always tried again, even when I was close to despair.

Now I wonder whether I have sufficiently realized that during all this time God has been trying to find me, to know me, and to love me. The question is not 'How am I to find God?' but 'How am I to let myself be found by him?' The question is not 'How am I to know God?' but 'How am I to let myself be known by God?' And, finally, the question is not 'How am I to love God?' but 'How am I to let myself be loved by God?' God is looking into the distance for me, trying to find me, and longing to bring me home.'

Henri J.M. Nouwen (1932-96)

O God of love, we pray thee to give us love:
love in our thinking, love in our speaking,
love in our doing, and love in the hidden places of our souls;
love of our neighbours near and far;
love of our friends, old and new;
love of those with whom we find it hard to bear,
and love of those who find it hard to bear with us;
love of those with whom we work,
and love of those with whom we take our ease;
love in Joy, love in sorrow;
love in life and love in death;
that so at length we may be worthy to dwell with thee,
who art eternal love. Amen.

Saturday 13th March

The Grace of God

Grace strikes us when we are in great pain and restlessness. It strikes us when we walk through the dark valley of a meaningless empty life. It strikes us when we feel that our separation is deeper than usual because we have violated another life, a life that we loved, or from which we were estranged. It strikes us when our disgust for our own being, our indifference, our weakness, our hostility and our lack of direction and composure has become intolerable to us. It strikes when, year after year, the longed for perfection of life does not appear, when the old compulsions reign within us as they have for decades, when despair destroys all joy and courage. Sometimes at that moment a wave of light breaks into our darkness, and it is though a voice were saying, 'You are accepted'. After such an experience we may not be better than before and we may not believe more than before. But everything is transformed. In that moment grace conquers sin, and reconciliation bridges the gulf of estrangement. And nothing is demanded of this experience, no religious or moral or intellectual supposition, nothing but acceptance. In the light of this grace we perceive the power of grace in our relation to others and to ourselves. We experience the grace of being able to look frankly into the eyes of another, the miraculous grace of reunion of life with life; we experience the grace of understanding each others words.

Paul Tillich (1886-1965)

O Father, give the spirit power to climb
To the fountain of all light, and be purified.
Break through the mists of earth, the weight of the clod,
Shine forth in splendour, thou that art calm weather,
And quiet resting place for faithful souls.
To see Thee is the end and the beginning,
Thou carriest us, and Thou dost go before,
Thou art the journey, and the journey's end.'

Boethius (c477 – 524), Roman Senator, Consul & Philosopher

Reading for the Day

Sunday 7th March – The Third Sunday of Lent

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

1 Corinthians 1.18

Monday 8th March

I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning. O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem.

Psalm 130. 5-7

Tuesday 9th March

Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but I tell you, seventy-seven times.'

Matthew 18.21-22

Wednesday 10th March

As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God? Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.

Psalm 42 1-2, 5-6

Thursday 11th March

Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.

Joel 2.12-13

Friday 12th March

The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned. From that time Jesus began to proclaim, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.'

Matthew 4.16-17

Saturday 13th March

Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Amos 5.24

Spiritual Communion

During this second national lockdown all public acts of worship have been suspended. This means that many people who would have received Holy Communion each Sunday, and some of them every day, are not able to receive the comfort and benefits of the sacrament.

This is a huge loss. However, it is not the first time that the Church has been in such a position. Throughout Christian history some Christian people have found themselves isolated from the sacramental life of the Church for all sorts of reasons, and particularly in times of plague, famine and warfare.

At such times the Church has encouraged people to make what is called a Spiritual Communion. It is a way of uniting yourself with Jesus and entering into communion with him even though you are not able to receive the sacrament itself.

The prayer that follows draws on the story of the woman who comes to Jesus but only touches the hem of his garment. She still receives healing and blessing (See St Mark 5. 25-34). In a way, spiritual communion is like this. We are not able to receive the sacramental bread and wine. But in a spiritual communion we still come to Jesus and he still receives us.

Act of Spiritual Reception

O loving God, in union with Christian people throughout the world and across the centuries gathered to make Eucharist, hearing your holy Word and receiving the Precious Body and Blood of your dear Son, I offer you praise and thanksgiving.

Even though I am exiled from tasting the Bread of Heaven and drinking the Cup of Life I pray that you will unite me with all the baptised and with your Son who gave his life for us.

Come Lord Jesus, dwell in me and send your Holy Spirit that I may be filled with your presence.

The Angelus

for which the church bell rings out daily at the beginning of the day, at noon, and at the start of evening, recalling the centrality of the Incarnation.

The angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary:
and she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessèd art thou among women, and blessèd is the
fruit of thy womb Jesus.

**Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now
and at the hour of our death.**

Behold, the handmaid of the Lord:
be it unto me according to thy word.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessèd art thou among women, and blessèd is the
fruit of thy womb Jesus.

**Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now
and at the hour of our death.**

And the Word was made flesh:
and dwelt among us.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessèd art thou among women, and blessèd is the
fruit of thy womb Jesus.

**Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now
and at the hour of our death.**

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God:
that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Almighty God, pour thy grace into our hearts;
that as we have known the Incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ
by the message of an angel, so by his ✠ Cross and Passion
we may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection;
through the same Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Simple Form of Morning Prayer

Opening Sentences

✠ In the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Lord, open our lips;
and we shall praise your name.

Let your ways be known upon earth,
your saving help among the nations.

**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.**

Opening Prayer

Banish, O Lord, all darkness from our hearts and minds,
through Christ, the Dayspring from on high,
who fulfilled your ancient promise
that we should find our freedom in your peace;
for all ages belong to you,
yesterday, today and for ever. **Amen.**

Scripture Reading

Taken from the daily readings found on pages [9-10](#)

The Gospel Canticle | Benedictus

Refrain: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.

✠ Blessèd be the Lord, the God of Israel:
who has come to his people and set them free.
He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour,
born of the house of his servant, David.
Through his holy prophets, God promised of old
to save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all that hate us;
to show mercy to our ancestors,
and to remember his holy covenant.
This was the oath God swore to our father, Abraham,
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
free to worship him without fear,
holy and righteous in his sight, all the days of our life.
And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
to give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of all their sins.
In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
to shine on those who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.
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.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.

Prayers

- Give thanks for a new day, for all God's blessings.
- Pray for those we will encounter today, and those far from us.
- Pray for the blessing of peace for all nations and people.
- Pray that our time may be consecrated by the presence of Christ.

Collect

Lent 2

Almighty God,
you show to those who are in error the light of your truth
that they may return to the way of righteousness:
grant to all those who are admitted
into the fellowship of Christ's religion,
that they may reject those things
that are contrary to their profession,
and follow all such things as are agreeable
to the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen

Conclusion

May God our Redeemer show us compassion and love. **Amen.**

✠ Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

A Simple Form of Evening Prayer

Opening Sentences

✠ O God, come to our aid:
O Lord, make haste to help us.

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.

The Blessing of Light

Blessèd are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers,
creator of the changes of day and night,
giving rest to the weary,
renewing the strength of those who are spent,
bestowing upon us occasions of song in the evening.
As you have protected us in the day that is past,
so be with us in the coming night;
keep us from every sin, every evil, and every fear;
for you are our light and salvation,
and the strength of our life.

Blessèd be God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Blessèd be God for ever.

Scripture Reading

Taken from the daily readings found on pages [9-10](#)

The Gospel Canticle | Magnificat

Refrain: Come, let us return to the Lord,
for our God will richly pardon.

✠ My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
He has looked with favour on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
The Almighty has done great things for me
and holy is his name.
He has mercy on those who fear him,
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm
and has scattered the proud in their conceit.
Casting down the mighty from their thrones
and lifting up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
He has come to the aid of his servant, Israel,
to remember his promise of mercy,
the promise made to our ancestors;
to Abraham and his children for ever.
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.
Come, let us return to the Lord,
for our God will richly pardon.

Prayers

- Give thanks for the day past, for the means of grace and the hope of glory.
- Pray for all who are in need, for those who are sick in body, mind or spirit.
- Pray for those who have died, those we have loved,
those who have inspired us.
- As the day fades we commend ourselves to the love and mercy of God.

Collects

O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed: Give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that both our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that by thee we being defended from the fear of our enemies may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Evening Prayer may conclude with the Antiphon Ave, Regina caelorum

Hail, O Queen of Heaven
Welcome, O Queen of Heaven.
Welcome, O Lady of Angels
Hail! thou root, hail! thou gate
From whom unto the world, a light has arisen:
Rejoice, O glorious Virgin,
Lovely beyond all others,
Farewell, most beautiful maiden,
And pray for us to Christ.

V. Allow me to praise thee, O sacred Virgin.

R. Against thy enemies give me strength.

Grant unto us, O merciful God, a defence against our weakness, that we who remember the holy Mother of God, by the help of her intercession, may rise from our iniquities, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Contact Details

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