

Fourth Sunday in the Season of Lent

22 March 2020



The Peace of Wild Things

by Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

GATHERING

Call to Worship

Troubles within and without make us anxious and uncertain,
but here we can find peace which is beyond understanding.

Though we come with many unanswerable questions,
we gather to affirm God's love with and for us.

Amidst the needed precautions and distancing,
we are enfolded into beloved community.

Friends of Christ, let us worship the God who loves us.

We Sing "Come and find the quiet centre"

1
Come and find the quiet centre
in the crowded life we lead,
find the room for hope to enter,
find the frame where
 we are freed:
clear the chaos and the clutter,
clear our eyes, that we can see
all the things that really matter,
be at peace, and simply be.

2
Silence is a friend who claims us,
cools the heat and slows the pace,
God it is who speaks and names us,
knows our being, touches base,
making space within our thinking,
lifting shades to show the sun,
raising courage when
 we're shrinking,
finding scope for faith begun.

3
In the Spirit let us travel,
open to each other's pain,
let our loves and fears unravel,
celebrate the space we gain:
there's a place for deepest dreaming,
there's a time for heart to care,
in the Spirit's lively scheming
there is always room to spare!"

Centring Prayer

Spirit Friend who is in and through all:
open the eyes of our hearts
that we might see you more clearly
in these moments and throughout our day.

Rescue us from anxious chatter
in our own minds or between one another.
Help us to share more of that which promotes
beauty and kindness,
gratitude and generosity—
gifts of your grace sorely needed in this time.

Save us, too, from despair and resignation,
the giving up of hope and trust in your goodness.
For you are God, and we need you.

(prayer continues in silence)

We Sing

“Jesus le Christ”

Lord Jesus Christ, your light shines within us.
Let not my doubts nor my darkness speak to me.
Lord Jesus Christ, your light shines within us.
Let my heart always welcome your love.

Taize Community

ENCOUNTERING

Ephesians 5:8–14

For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light—for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

John 9:1–7

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.

Reflection and Silent Meditation

RESPONDING

We Sing "You are holding our life"

We lift our eyes, behold the hills.
 From where will help and rescue come?
 We call the One who made the earth,
 who bless'd the stars, the moon and sun.

Refrain:

You are holding our life, you are holding our life,
 you are holding our life we believe. *(repeat)*

Turn now our gaze upon the earth
 where is the One who never sleeps?
 We call the One who guards us now,
 our spirit safe in holy keep.

Venturing out or coming home,
 'neath heat of day or cool of night,
 we call the One who hears our voice
 and comes to heal and keep our life.

Invitation to the Table

Friends, this is the table of Christ.

It is made ready for those who are drawn here by God's love—
those who desire to live more fully
in the Spirit of grace and love's fruitfulness.

So, let us remember how it all began:

On the night when Jesus was betrayed,
he sat at supper with his disciples,
and while they were eating,
he took bread, said a blessing,
broke it and shared it among them.

Similarly, Jesus blessed and passed around a cup of wine
from which they all drank:

***A body broken, a life poured out—
in our remembering we are awoken.
In our receiving we are made one with Christ.***

So now, following Jesus example,
we take this bread and wine which the Spirit blesses,
and as Jesus gave thanks before sharing, let us do also:

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

May the Spirit of Christ be with you.

And also with you!

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to God.

Let us give thanks to God who is Wisdom and Love.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

(moments to bring to mind that for which we are grateful)

In this time and place, O God, you prepare a table,
 offering not just bread or wine, but your very self
 that we may be filled, forgiven, encouraged and sent out again.
 Therefore, with the whole realm of nature;
 with earth, sea and sky, we join our voices with faithful everywhere:

***Holy, holy, holy, God of mercy and love,
 heaven and earth are full of your glory.***

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the One who comes in the name of our God.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessing the Bread and Cup

Crucified and risen Christ, present with us now,
 for all that you have done
 and all that you have promised,
 what have we to offer?

***Our hands are empty,
 our hearts often full of petty things.***

***But is your love's power to change us
 that remains our hope and courage for the living.***

Holy God, pour out your Spirit upon us
 and on these gifts of bread and wine,
 that they may be for us
 the body and blood of Christ.

United to him may we become

all that you call us to be—

present and alive to the world

until at last your reign of justice and peace comes.

Prayers of the People

*Together, we will voice our concerns to God.
You might use the words, "I pray for..." to begin
and name simply your desire ending with:
In your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Disciples' 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.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.***

Breaking the Bread and Distribution

...Jesus is here, shared abundantly among us
In broken bread and poured wine.

The gifts of God for the people of God!

Prayer after Communion

***God of grace,
you renew us at your table with the bread of life.
May this food strengthen us in love,
keep our souls from fear
and help us serve you in each other.
We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.***

JOURNEYING

We Sing

“In full flight”

We can't quite see what tomorrow will offer.
Nothing's that clear, so little in place.
Yet “All shall be well,” the wise lady whispers;
all shall be well, a goodness to trace.

Refrain:

Bird in full flight, bird on the wing.
Soaring above, beyond on the run.
Journey's of change, vistas of wonder.
Leading to life through the heart of the One.



Wonders of birth, pained separations.
Myst'ries too deep, too hard to explain.
Beauty and hope in each new day dawning,
the presence of joy at play once again.

We who are called to live out Love's passion.
Those who set out on the journey of faith;
need look to the skies only to fashion
the daring of birds, bold courses they take.

In grateful memory of Thomas Merton
Words: Sean Gilbert Music: Jill Scott

Benediction

Go as far as your courage takes you,
for you cannot go beyond the reach of God.
Give as extravagantly as you may,
for you cannot expend the riches of God.
Care as lavishly as you are able,
for you cannot exhaust the love of God.
Keep on journeying as people of light,
for God will always be with you.