

THE MIDDLE MARCHES: PRAYERS, READINGS AND THOUGHTS FOR THE WEEK OF 9TH AUGUST 2020, 9TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

This is the last in this series for now. I hope that at least some of Philip Newell's words have been helpful at the start or end of the day. In this week's two forms, I'm grateful to have been nudged to see our sleepy-dust is washed away with 'the freshness of the day's new light.' And with the world determined to find differences, it's good to be reminded that day and night – Sun and Moon, 'the luminaries of the sky' – are the greatest demonstrators of the eternal harmonic which is God's wish for the world. Keep safe, everyone. Jonathan K



MORNING PRAYER

Awake, my soul!
I will awake the dawn, and give you thanks, O God. – *Psalm 57:8-9*

Silence

Be still and aware of God's presence within and all around

Opening Prayer

With the rising of the sun, life rises again within me, O God. In the dawning of the morning light you, lead me from the mists of the night into the clarity of the day. In the new light of this day, bring me to a clearer knowing of the mystery that first bore me from the dark. Bring me to a clearer knowing of the love from which all life is born.

Scripture and Meditation

Let me hear of your steadfast love in the morning, for in you I put my trust – *Psalm 143:8*

Jesus said,

'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.' – *John 15:12*

Be still and reflect on those words

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

For the first showings of the morning light, and the emerging outline of the day, thanks be to you, O God. For earth's colours drawn forth by the sun, its brilliance piercing clouds of darkness and shimmering through leaves and flowing waters, thanks be to you. Show to me this day, amid life's dark streaks of wrong and suffering, the light that endures in every person. Dispel the confusions that cling close to my soul, that I may see with eyes washed by your grace, that I may see myself, and all people, with eyes cleansed by the freshness of the new day's light.

Pray for the coming day and for the life of the world

Closing Prayer

O Sun behind all suns – O Soul within all souls – grant me the grace of the dawn's glory, grant me the strength of the sun's rays, that I may be well in my own soul and part of the world's healing this day – and part of the world's healing this day. Amen.



NIGHT PRAYER

Yours is the day, yours also is the night;
you made the luminaries of the sky – the sun, moon and stars – *Psalm 74:16*

Silence

Be still and aware of God's presence within and all around

Opening Prayer

Glory be to you, O God of the night, for the whiteness of the moon and the infinite stretches of dark space. Let me be learning to love the night as I know and love the day. Let me be learning to trust its darkness and to seek its subtle blessings. Let me be learning the night's way of seeing that in all things I may trace the mystery of your presence.

Scripture and Meditation

Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation. – *Psalm 25:5*

Jesus said, 'You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.' – *John 8:32*

Be still and reflect on those words

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

That you have placed a harmony of light in the heavens – that night is followed by day and the glowing of the moon by the glistening of the sun – thanks be to you, O God. That you have placed a harmony of lights in my soul – that there is gentleness and firmness of strength, intuitive knowing and enlightened reasoning – thanks be to you. Let me be so sure of your law of harmony in all things, that I seek it in my own depths; and knowing it in my inner life, yearn for it in the torn relationships of my world – man and woman, black and white – sun and moon in a harmony of movement.

Recall the events of the day and pray for the life of the world

Closing Prayer

In the beginning, O God, you placed seeds in the womb of the earth. On the surface of the earth, and its seas and skies, you made male and female of every species. And above the earth, you called the two great lights into relationship. Renew me this night in the fruitful intermingling that you have woven into creation, that I may awake in the morning enlivened by love – that I may wake in the morning enlivened by love. Amen.



Here are this week's Collect and set readings – and a 'Ponderer'.

Collect

Almighty God, who sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your Church: open our hearts to the riches of your grace, that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in love and joy and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

1 Kings 19:9-18

When Elijah reached Horeb, the mountain of God, ⁹he came to a cave, and spent the night there. Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' ¹⁰He answered, 'I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.' ¹¹He said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.' Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; ¹²and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. ¹³When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' ¹⁴He answered, 'I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.' ¹⁵Then the LORD said to him, 'Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. ¹⁶Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. ¹⁷Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill. ¹⁸Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.'

Psalms 145:15-22

8 I will listen to what the Lord God will say,
for he shall speak peace to his people and to the faithful, that they turn not again to folly.
9 Truly, his salvation is near to those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land.
10 Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other;
11 Truth shall spring up from the earth and righteousness look down from heaven.
12 The Lord will indeed give all that is good, and our land will yield its increase.
13 Righteousness shall go before him and direct his steps in the way.

Romans 10:5-15

Moses writes about the righteousness that comes from The Law, that 'the one who does them will live by them.' However, the righteousness that come by trust says: 'Do not say in

your heart, "Who will go up to heaven?" (for that is bringing Christ down) or: "Who will go down into the abyss?" (for that is bringing Christ up from the dead). Instead, what does it say? 'The word is near your mouth and your heart.' That 'word', of course, is the 'word' of faith that we proclaim. Because if you confess the Lordship of Jesus with your mouth; and if you believe with your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved. The point is, it is with the heart that people believe – and that leads to righteousness. And it is with the mouth that people confess – and that leads to salvation. For Scripture says, 'No one who believes in him will be let down'. There is no distinction between Jew and Greek. For we all have the same God, who is generous with his wealth to all who call on him: 'For all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved.' But how can people ask God for help if they have no faith? And how can they come to faith in someone they have never heard about? And how will they get to know of him unless someone tells them? And how can the news be passed on unless someone tells them? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'

Matthew 14:22-33

Immediately after feeding the crowd with the five loaves and two fish, ²²Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. ²⁵And early in the morning he came walking towards them on the lake. ²⁶But when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified, saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out in fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.' ²⁸Peter answered him, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.' ²⁹He said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus. ³⁰But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!' ³¹Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?' ³²When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'

A Ponderer....

The Collect, said and then forgotten, is a new composition for *Common Worship* by Professor David Frost from Cambridge University. New! Really? Take a look at *Galatians 5:16-22* and *Ephesians 5:9* and you'll catch some of its inspiration. Prof Frost also wrote the prayer we often use before Communion ...*your love compels us to come in...* which reflects George Herbert's poem *Love*, and passages from *Matthew*, *Luke*, *Psalms 24*, *James*, the Canaanite woman and *Exodus*. He also wrote the after-Communion prayer ...*thanks and praise that when we were still far off...* which again is full of scriptural echoes - not the least of which is the Prodigal Son story. Our liturgy doesn't just 'happen'. These are words thought, prayed, researched. Rooted in scripture and tradition, they bring reason to our worship.