Contemplative Service for Wednesday,

June 28, 2023



*image by Kiki Smith*

**First reading**: *adapted from Psalm 91*

You who live in the shelter of the our Holy Friend,  
    who abide in the penumbra of the Presence,   
your voice arises saying, “My refuge,  
    my God, in whom I trust.”

For the Compassionate One will deliver you from the snares of life,  
    and from the many forms of illness;  
Under God’s wings you will find refuge—  
    such faithfulness!  
You will not fear the terror of the night  
    or the arrow that flies by day, the anxiety that stalks in darkness  
    or the distraction that wastes at noonday.

Because you have made the Loving One your refuge   
    and your dwelling place,  
you are free to live in great love and fearlessness. For God will surround you with healing presence  
    to guard you in all your ways. You will be borne up, so that you will not stumble.

Listen, it is the voice of our Mystery: I will protect those who know my name.  
When they call to me, I will answer them;  
    I will be with them in trouble;  
I will satisfy them and show them my healing presence.

**Music**: “When the Roll is Called Up Yonder,” performed by Peter Mulvey

ttps://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQ8xEaTHL94

**Second reading:** *from* “Prayer for the Future”

Written by Ken Untener for Cardinal Dearden

*commonly known as “The Prayer for St. Oscar Romero”*

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.

The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,

it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction

of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying

that the kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted,

knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation

in realizing that. This enables us to do something,

and to do it very well. It may be incomplete,

but it is a beginning, a step along the way,

an opportunity for God's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference

between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.

Amen.

**Music**: “Down in the River” performed by Allison Krauss

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zSif77IVQdY

**Time of Silent Contemplation**

*What role, then, does prayer play in relation to such a presence, a God of intimacy, sovereign ubiquity, variety, mystery, and longing?  I suggest that this God welcomes and creatively embraces whatever we have to offer, whatever expression of ourselves, our lives, our world brews and bubbles up from within our selves and our communities.  In this way, at least, prayer “works”: those who pray are changed.  Arguably, every strand of the Christian tradition stresses that prayer is primarily a divine gift for those who pray.  Prayer is not meant as a tool for manipulating God or the world.  Ultimately, whatever its form, Christian prayer is a process of developing intimacy with God through intentionally communing with Divine Presence.  It is in intimately communing with God that we find the place of grounded stillness of soul.  In the gift of intimately communing with Divine Presence we enter more fully into the life of God as we experience more of God’s fullness in, through, with, around, and among us.  In prayer we come more fully to practice the peace of God.*

*—from a reflection by Andrew Dreitcer*

**Communal Blessing**

God, you sweep away exhaustion and worry with the softest gesture, like film skimmed from the surface of still water. With this residue brushed away, we enter your clarity. Humble as we are, apparently insignificant—still, we reflect back your light, draw refreshment from your depths, move with your current. Oh holy and elemental one, your hand stirs us to the discovery of who we are. Your caress wipes us clean of discontent and we are refreshed in your purity. Amen.

**Music**: “I’ll Fly Away” performed by Allison Krauss

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BPoMIQHwpo

*Deepest peace and contentment to you.*