

Evening Prayer on 30th August 2020

Theme: Presence

In the name of the Creator, and of the Redeemer, and of the Companion. Amen.

Welcome and Introduction

We step out of the busyness of our day and come before God and each other, giving thanks for this time together.

Amen.

From many different backgrounds and experiences,

We come to seek your presence, O Lord.

From the varied circumstances of life,

We come to seek your presence, O Lord.

From good weeks and bad weeks,

We come to seek your presence, O Lord.

From the stress and pressure of life,

We come to seek your presence, O Lord.

2 Minutes of Silence

We remember the past week. We remember the times when we were present to ourselves, to God, to one another: family, friends, neighbours, and work colleagues. And we ask forgiveness for the times when we did not give God or others the gift of our loving attention.

2 Minutes of Silence

Creator of Light, Son of Love and Companion of Hope, be born among us, that we may ourselves be born in prayer, worship, friendship, grief and happiness. May we be a hopeful sign of community in the places where we live, work and worship.

Amen, let it be so.

Scripture Reading: Exodus 3:1-15

Moses was taking care of the flock for his father-in-law Jethro, Midian's priest. He led his flock out to the edge of the desert, and he came to God's mountain called Horeb. The Lord's messenger appeared to him in a flame of fire in the middle of a bush. Moses saw that the bush was in flames, but it

didn't burn up. Then Moses said to himself, Let me check out this amazing sight and find out why the bush isn't burning up.

When the Lord saw that he was coming to look, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!"

Moses said, "I'm here."

Then the Lord said, "Don't come any closer!

Take off your sandals, because you are standing on holy ground." He continued, "I am the God of your father, Abraham's God, Isaac's God, and Jacob's God." Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God.

Then the Lord said, "I've clearly seen my people oppressed in Egypt. I've heard their cry of injustice because of their slave masters. I know about their pain. I've come down to rescue them from the Egyptians in order to take them out of that land and bring them to a good and broad land, a land that's full of milk and honey, a place where the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites all live. Now the Israelites' cries of injustice have reached me. I've seen just how much the Egyptians have oppressed them. So get going. I'm sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt."

But Moses said to God, "Who am I to go to Pharaoh and to bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

God said, "I'll be with you. And this will show you that I'm the one who sent you. After you bring the people out of Egypt, you will come back here and worship God on this mountain." But Moses said to God, "If I now come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' they are going to ask me, 'What's this God's name?' What am I supposed to say to them?"

God said to Moses, "I Am Who I Am. So say to the Israelites, 'I Am has sent me to you.'" God continued, "Say to the Israelites, 'The Lord, the God of your ancestors, Abraham's God, Isaac's God, and Jacob's God, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever; this is how all generations will remember me.

A Poem: Stillness by Andrew Carter

An Anthem

Thought for the day

Having fled in fear and disgrace from Egypt and now living comfortably in Midian, Moses doesn't anticipate a divine call, but it comes to him on an ordinary day on his way to work. Our most "secular" activities are chockful of the "sacred." Once upon a time, a rabbinical gathering considered the question, "Why was the bush burning but not consumed?" The rabbis posited a variety of answers until one responded, "It was burning and not consumed so that one day, as Moses walked by, he would notice it."

The encounter of God with Moses could take up a sermon series. First, Moses' encounter with God describes the character of divine communication: God is always calling and sometimes we notice. God's omni-activity and omnipresence remind us that we are always being addressed and confronted by the Divine One. We are always on holy ground, the world is full of "thin places," and every so often we stop, take off our sandals, and bathe ourselves in the constancy of divine revelation.

Too busy to notice these God moments, we fail to see beauty, wonder, and love right where we are. Spiritual formation is about taking time to pause, notice, open, yield and stretch, and then respond to the holiness everywhere.

A Poem: The Moor by R S Thomas

It was like a church to me.
I entered it on soft foot,
Breath held like a cap in the hand.
It was quiet.
What God was there made himself felt,
Not listened to, in clean colours
That brought a moistening of the eye,
In movement of the wind over grass.

There were no prayers said. But stillness
Of the heart's passions — that was praise

Enough; and the mind's cession
Of its kingdom. I walked on,
Simple and poor, while the air crumbled
And broke on me generously as bread.

A Time of Prayer: Being present to God and present to myself

The Examen is a method of reviewing your day in the presence of God. It has been called a process of 'rummaging around for God in the stuff of our day.' It is a time of discerning God's presence in the moments of your day and allowing your spirit to give thanks for all you have been given and all you have received. After each invitation seek to open yourself to the Spirit's guiding.

Ask God for light and insight as you review your day.

Give thanks for the day you have just lived is a gift from God.

Review the day discerning:

- Moments of desolation
- Moments of consolation and blessing

Look towards the coming day and ask God for the grace to live, open to God's presence, and as a channel of God's love and peace in each and every encounter.

Prayer for the Coming Week

Triune God we offer these prayers and reflections to you. We pray for the communities in which we live, for friends and neighbours with whom we will be in touch in the week to come. Help us awaken to your presence, and to be channels of your presence in the lives of those we meet.

Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayers and the reflections of our hearts. Amen
Ending Liturgy

In the name of the sacred three, we go once more into a world which needs our presence as a channel of God's love and grace.

Let us this week remember what it means to love God and love our neighbour in whatever disguise we find them.

May we realise that all people are one and that there cannot really be joy for any until there is joy for all.

We seek to love God and our neighbours.
In the name of Christ.

Amen.

Blessing & Dismissal

May the love of God the Creator, the peace of Christ the Redeemer, and the friendship of the Holy Spirit go before you and with you into the life you will lead this week. In the name of Christ. Amen.