



Daily Meditations

October 19 - 24, 2020

The Biblical readings are taken from the Daily Office in the Book of Common Prayer for Year 2 and written by the St. Stephen's Meditation Writing Team: Dave Boyd, Becky Denton, Pat Gillory, Traci Maxwell, Jay Nickel, Bob Reed, T.Cay Rowe, and Carroll Wilson.

Click on the scripture reading for each day to go directly to link.

COLLECT, PROPER 24

Almighty and everlasting God, in Christ you have revealed your glory among the nations: Preserve the works of your mercy, that your Church throughout the world may persevere with steadfast faith in the confession of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Help Us, Lord!

Monday, October 19, 2020

Psalm 25

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

I watched the first presidential debate last night, and I was sickened by the depths to which our political discourse has sunk. Rather than a comparison of reasoned ideas on the best way to lead our country forward out of the complex and critically important crises of pandemic, economic collapse, climate change, and racism, we were subjected to a chaotic hour and half of lies, personal attacks, and dog whistles aimed at some of the most extreme partisan groups in our society. I can only echo the psalmist's plea for God to lead us in his truth and show us a path forward toward a world of peace and stability. Lord, help us! We desperately need it!

All Shall be Well

Tuesday, October 20, 2020

Psalm 26, 28

"To you, O Lord, I call; my rock, do not refuse to hear me, for if you are silent to me, I shall be like those who down to the Pit...Blessed be the Lord, for he has heard the sound of

my pleadings. The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts..." - Psalm 28: 1, 6-7

The psalm begins with a fearful call for God to answer the psalmist's prayer and ends with thanksgiving to God for answering. But in my experience the prayers I make are rarely answered in such straightforward fashion. It is only after the fact that I can look back and say, "Oh, yes, God; you did answer my prayer...but almost never in the way and on the timetable that I expected." Instead, opportunities opened up that I was not expecting, or someone said something to me, often weeks later, that provides me with the germ of an idea that leads me to a new answer or a new path.

Lord, give me the patience to accept the sound advice of Dame Julian of Norwich: "All shall be well, and all be well, and all manner of things shall be well."

Wait for the Lord

Wednesday, October 21, 2020

Psalm 38

"But it is for you, O Lord, that I wait; it is you, O Lord my God, who will answer." - Psalm 38:15

This psalm emphasizes a fundamental truth about prayer: It is much more about waiting patiently for God than it is about me ceaselessly telling God what I want.

The guest house at the New Camaldoli Hermitage at Big Sur, California is perched atop a steep wooded hillside with breath-taking views of the ocean far below. A plaque on the wall with a quote from St. Romuald reads:

Empty yourself completely and sit waiting, content with the grace of God, like the chick who tastes nothing and eats nothing but what his mother brings him.

Sound contemplative advice.

Wait Patiently, but then Vote

Thursday, October 22, 2020

Psalm 37:1-18

Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him; do not fret over those who prosper in their way, over those who carry out evil devices." - Psalm 37:7

These psalms appointed for this week should be called the "patience" psalms, for they continually counsel patience and waiting for the Lord. In this psalm in particular, we are advised "do not fret" over those who prosper in their way and carry out evil plans. That is really hard, when each day's news brings more revelations of tax cheating, grift, embezzlement, and use of high political office for personal gain or exploitation of innocent people and the environment. Perhaps we should change this psalm to "do not fret, but **do vote!**"

Trust

Friday, October 23, 2020

Psalm 31

Into your hand I commit my spirit...Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord." - Psalm 31:5,24

One more time this week we have a psalm advising us to wait for the Lord. In verse 5, we have the ultimate example of patient waiting: "Into your hand I commit my spirit." You may recognize these as the last words of Jesus hanging on the cross in the gospel of Luke. Despite the sarcastic jibes from the temple authorities and the soldiers: "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" Jesus was faithful and courageous to the end, waiting in agony and trusting that the Father would save him and all of us, which is exactly what He did.

Righteousness

Saturday, October 24, 2020

Psalm 30, 32

*Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart."
- Psalm 32:11*

"Righteous" is another of those religious words we toss around without really considering its meaning. Unfortunately, these days it is often used pejoratively, as in "self-righteous." But the word righteous literally means to be in a right relationship with God, so self-righteous would imply that we could somehow put ourselves in a right relationship with God, which is something beyond our capability. But the good news is that Jesus has already taken care of that for us. The overriding message of scripture is that Jesus has already put us in a right relationship with God...it's only up to us to accept it.

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