

Taizé Worship

A quiet reflective service of singing, prayer and silence.

INTRODUCTION and WELCOME: Revd Canon Graham Hedger

Today, during our continued period of restrictions imposed by Covid-19, we continue to gather from our homes, through the internet, to worship God. With holy words, Taize chants, silence and prayer, we explore 'the notion of pondering'.

OPENING SCRIPTURE: Lamentations 3: 22-26: read by Revd Canon Graham Hedger

Because of the Lord's great love, we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion therefore I will wait for him." The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

OPENING PRAYER: Led by Revd Wendy Gourlay

Dear Son of Mary, you took flesh to redeem us,
change our hearts.

Dear Son of God, you came to us with sacrificial love,
change our hearts.

The Son of God bounds towards us reaching out a hand of reconciliation.

Let us take it and listen to God's Word.

THANKSGIVING

Power of powers, **we worship you.**

Light of lights, **we worship you.**

Life of lives, **we worship you.**

Source of Life, **we turn to you.**

Saviour of life, **we turn to you.**

Sustainer of life, **we turn to you.**

Love before time, **we adore you.**

Love in darkest times, **we adore you.**

Love in this time, **we adore you.**

CHANT 1: Seek first the kingdom of God

Mixed Voices
♩ = 84

Seek first the king-dom of God, seek and you shall find. — find.

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:10-19 (NRSV) Read by Heather Whiting

The angel said to them. 'Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!'

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' So, they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

For the Word of the Lord, **thanks be to God.**

PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS

From false desires and selfish deeds, **all-knowing God, deliver us.**

From unworthy thoughts and prideful claims, **all-seeing God, deliver us.**

From unworthy hearts and petty ways, **all-cleansing God, deliver us.**

PSALM 139:1-12 Read by Mary Baker

As the sun sets, **renew the face of the earth.**

Where there are tired and broken people, **renew the face of the earth.**

Where night-life breeds disillusion, **renew the face of the earth.**

Where those we care for dwell, whom we name before you now, **renew the face of the earth.**

As we wait on you now, renew the face of the earth.

May the Spirit of the Lord rest upon you the spirit of wisdom and understanding.

Isaiah 11:2

CHANT 2: Son of God, O Lord Jesus Christ, show us your mercy.

The image shows a musical score for a chant. It consists of two systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The first system begins with a piano (pp) dynamic. The lyrics are: "Son of God, O Lord Je - sus Christ, show us your". The second system begins with a piano (pp) dynamic and ends with a forte (f) dynamic. The lyrics are: "mer - cy. Lord, hear our prayer. Lord hear our prayer".

SCRIPTURE John 19: 25b-27 NRSV Read by Mary Baker

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

For the Word of the Lord, **Thanks be to God.**

MEDITATION : The notion of pondering *An extract from 'Sacred Fire: A vision for a deeper human and Christian maturity', Ronald Rolheiser 2014.*

The one quality that perhaps most deeply exemplifies Mary's faith and discipleship is contained in a single phrase predicated of her: *she pondered*. Mary pondered while others did not. So, what does it mean to ponder in the biblical sense?

Simply put, to ponder, in Hebrew understanding, meant to hold, carry, and transform tension so as not to give it back in kind, knowing that whatever energies we do not transform we will transmit.

Perhaps this can best be captured in an image of Mary standing under the cross.

What is in this picture that invites us to more than simple admiration, piety or sympathy? This is a mystical image, and it is anything but pious.

On the surface it appears that she is not doing anything at all. She does not speak, does not try to stop the crucifixion, and does not even protest its unfairness or plead Jesus' innocence. She is mute, seemingly passive, overtly not doing anything. But at a deeper level she is doing all that can be done when one is standing under the weight of the cross, she is holding and carrying the tension, standing in strength, refusing to give back in kind, and resisting in a deep way. What is meant by this?

In the Gospels, "standing" is a position of strength. Mary "stood" under the cross. She was strong there. Still, why the silence and why her seeming unwillingness to act or protest?

In essence, what Mary was doing under the cross was this: her silence and strength were speaking these words: "Today, I can't stop the crucifixion; nobody can. Sometimes darkness will have its hour. But I can stop some of the hatred, bitterness, jealousy, and heartlessness that caused it – by refusing to give it back in kind, by transforming negativity rather than transmitting it, by swallowing hard, in silence, and eating the bitterness rather than giving it back in kind.

Had Mary in emotional and moral outrage, begun to scream hysterically, shout angrily at those crucifying Jesus, or physically tried to attack someone as he was driving the nails into Jesus' hands, she would have been caught up in the same kind of energy as everyone else, replicating the very anger and bitterness that caused the crucifixion.

What Mary was doing under the cross, her silence and seeming unwillingness to protest notwithstanding, was radiating all that is antithetical to crucifixion: gentleness, understanding, forgiveness, peace, light, and courage.

And that is not easy to do. Everything inside us demands justice, screams for it, and refuses to remain silent in the presence of injustice. That is a healthy instinct, and sometimes acting on it is good.

But there are times too when things have gone so far that shouts and protests are no longer helpful, darkness is going to have its hour, and all we can do is stand under its cross and help absorb its bitterness by refusing to participate in its energy. In those situations, like Mary, we have to say: "I can't stop this crucifixion, but I can stop some of the hatred, bitterness, jealousy, brutal heartlessness, and darkness that surround it. I can't stop this, but I will not conduct its hatred.

Sometimes too, as Rainer Maria Rilke says, the only helpful thing is to absorb the heaviness: "Do not be afraid to suffer, give the heaviness back to the weight of the earth; mountains are heavy, seas are heavy." That is not passivity, resignation, or weakness, but genuine, rare strength.

That is what it means to ponder, in the Hebrew sense. This is what is predicated of Mary when the Gospels tell us that she "pondered these things."

REFLECTION TIME (about 2½ minutes): Please ponder the words of this meditation and offer to God the people and concerns of your heart.

INTERCESSIONS Led by Jane Woodbury-Eggins

Jesus, broken on the Cross, we bring to you those suffering from broken dreams, broken relationships and broken promises . . .
Jesus, **have mercy on them.**

Jesus who lost everything, we bring to you those who have suffered loss of work, mobility and well-being . . .
Jesus, **have mercy on them**

Jesus, defenceless victim, we bring to you those who are victims of violence, abuse and false accusations . . .
Jesus, **have mercy on them.**

Jesus, alone and destitute, we bring to you those who are lonely, homeless and hungry . . .
Jesus, **have mercy on them**

Saviour, you died that we may be brought back to you,
save and raise up those who have none but you to turn to . . .
Jesus, **have mercy on them**

As our Saviour taught us so we pray

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;

thy kingdom come, thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

CHANT 3: Kindle a flame to lighten the dark

Bm G/B A Bm/A

Kin - dle a flame to light - en the dark and

G A7 F#

take all fear a - way.

WE BELIEVE IN GOD

We believe in God creating and giving life to the world, mother and father of all, regardless of race, class or gender, love indescribable and beyond our imagining, yet closer than our own breathing.

We believe in Jesus, the Way of God, confronting violence with self-giving, the Truth of God, challenging hypocrisy and false values, the Life of God, inviting us to a realm of forgiveness and new beginnings.

We believe in the Spirit, breathing into us renewing power, interpreting our longings and searchings after truth, and probing with us the depths of God's wisdom.

We believe in the fellowship of God's people, called to live and be one in Christ.

Jan Berry

Our closing chant today embraces the love of God for all our circumstances

CHANT 4: Sing to God with joyful hearts

Sing to God with joy - ful hearts. Praise the Lord for
Singt dem Herrn ein neu - es Lied. Lob - singt ihm

ev - er - more, praise the Lord for ev - er - more.
al - le - zeit, lob - singt ihm al - le - zeit! Last time

CLOSING PRAYER and BLESSING

May the Christ who walks with wounded feet walk with us on the road.

May the Christ who serves with wounded hands stretch out our hands to serve.

May the Christ who loves with the wounded heart open our hearts to love.

And the blessing