

PRAYER GROUP

May 20, 2020

A TIME FOR A CHECK-IN

GREETING

Leader: Jesus said,
“Where two or three are gathered in my name,
there am I, in the midst of them.

LIGHTING THE CANDLE

Leader: We light this candle as a reminder that Jesus,
who is for us the light of the world,
will be with us always,
even until the end of the age.

OPENING SENTENCES

Leader: One thing I have asked of God
this is what I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of God
all the days of my life;
to behold the beauty of God
and to seek God in God’s temple.

Who is it that you seek?

We seek God, the Holy One.

Do you seek God with all your heart?

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Do you seek God with all your soul?

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Do you seek God with all your mind?

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Do you seek God with all your strength?

Amen. Christ, have mercy.

DECLARATION OF FAITH

Leader: To whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life,
and we have believed and have come to know
that You are the Holy One of God.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ,
King of endless glory.

PRAYER

Reader: Christ, as a light illumine and guide us.
Christ, as a shield overshadow us.

All: **Christ under us; Christ over us;
Christ beside us on our left and our right.**

Reader: This day be within and without us,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.

Reader: Be in the heart of each to whom we speak;
in the mouth of each who speaks unto us.

Reader: This day be within and without us,
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.

All: **Christ as a light; Christ as a shield;
Christ beside us on our left and our right.**

AN INVITATION INTO STILLNESS

Richard Bott

Breathe in.

Know the Holy Spirit is around,
and in, and with you.

Breathe out.

Know that all creation is dancing,
arm in arm with the Creator.

Breathe in.

Know that the peace of Christ,
the peace that passes all understanding,
rests and remains with all things,
all creatures, all people,
all places, all times.

Breathe, beloved siblings.,

and know that each breath is a prayer -
of lament and of joy,
of hallelujah, whole or broken,
but always holy.

Breathe.

PRAYER *John Philip Newell, Sounds of the Eternal, adapted*

We seek your presence, O God,
not because we have managed to see clearly
or been true in all things,
not because we have succeeded in loving
or in reverencing those around us,
but because we want to see with clarity,
because we long to be true,
because we desire to love as we have been loved.

Renew our inner sight,
make fresh our longings to be true
and grant us the grace of loving
that we may end this day as we had hoped to live it,
that we may end this day restored
to our deepest yearnings,
that we may end this day as we intend
to live tomorrow,
as we intend to live tomorrow.

AN INTRODUCTION TO “UNIVOCITY OF BEING” *John Duns Scotus*

“We can speak with one consistent and true voice about a rock, a tree, an animal, a human, an angel, and God! They all participate in the one same state of Being to varying degrees, and “Deus est Ens”, he often wrote: “God is Being itself.”

REFLECTION “God is Being Itself”—*Richard Rohr, CAC*

The Franciscan philosopher and theologian John Duns Scotus (1266–1308), whom I studied for four years in seminary, wrote that “God first wills Christ as his supreme work.” [1] In other words, God’s “first idea” and priority was to make the Godself both visible and shareable.

The word used in the Bible for this idea was *Logos*, which was taken from Greek philosophy, and which I would translate as the “Blueprint” for reality. *The whole of creation*—not just Jesus—is the partner in the divine dance. Everything is the “child of God”—no exceptions. When you think of it, what else could anything be? All created beings must, in some way, carry the divine DNA of their Creator.

Without a sense of the inherent sacredness of the world—in every tiny bit of life and death—we struggle to see God in our own reality, let alone to respect reality, protect it, or love it. The consequences of this ignorance are all around us, seen in the way we have exploited and damaged our fellow human beings, the dear animals, the web of growing things, the land, the waters, and the very air. It took until the twenty-first century for a pope to clearly say this, in Pope Francis’ prophetic document *Laudato Si’*. May it not be too late and may the unnecessary gap between practical seeing (science) and holistic seeing (religion) be fully overcome. They still need each other.

Franciscan mysticism has an *incarnational worldview*, which is the profound recognition of the presence of the divine in literally “every thing” and “every one.” It is the key to mental and spiritual health, as well as to a kind of basic contentment and happiness. An incarnational worldview is the only way we can reconcile our inner worlds with the outer one, unity with diversity, physical with spiritual, individual with corporate, and divine with human.

What we see in Franciscan mystics, again and again, is a joyful and unitive consciousness that intuits and experiences what Duns Scotus called “the univocity of being.”

By this, Duns Scotus meant that we can speak with *one consistent and true voice* about a rock, a tree, an animal, a human, an angel, and God! They all participate in the one same state of Being to varying degrees, and *Deus est Ens*, he often wrote: “God is Being itself.” This eliminates any clear distinction between the sacred and the profane, because Christ existed in matter from all eternity (Colossians 1:15–20; Ephesians 1:3–11), ever since God decided to materialize and reveal who God is through creation. It is summarized on our Franciscan coat of arms by the Latin phrase *Deus Meus et Omnia*: “My God and All Things!”

GATEWAY TO ACTION & CONTEMPLATION:

What word or phrase resonates with or challenges me? What sensations do I notice in my body? What is mine to do?

A VIDEO PRAYER “We Bow Before The One”

Saint Paul's Prayer from Ephesians 3.14-21 rendered by Chris Neufeld-Erdman, The Work of the People, <https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/we-bow-before-the-one>

We bow before the One,
from whom the whole creation flows,
in whom the whole cosmos grows
toward the fullness of Love divine.

From riches inexhaustible,
may strength rise in us,
the Christ-light fill us,
illuminating us in Love sublime.

And may grace unite us
with all who sing Love's song
until we know how high and wide and deep and long
is this Love supreme.

All Abundance now is ours:
we, filled up by this Three-Person'd Love--
within, beneath, beside, above,
more than all our wildest dreams.

Glorious is God among us.
Glorious is Christ within us.
Glory from Beginning to End,
Now and forever. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

O Great Love, thank you for living and loving in us and through us. May all that we do flow from our deep connection with you and all beings. Help us become a community that vulnerably shares each other's burdens.

Listen to our hearts' longings for the healing of our world.

That from our depth new life emerges
thanks be to you, O God.

That through our body
and the bodies of men and women everywhere
heaven's creativity is born on earth,
children of eternity are conceived in time
and everlasting bonds of tenderness
are forged amidst the hardness of life's struggles,
thanks be to you.

That in our soul
and the soul of every human being
sacred hopes are hidden,
longings for what has never been are heard
and visions for earth's peace and
prosperity are glimpsed,
thanks be to you.

For those near to us who are in turmoil this day
and for every family in its brokenness,
for the woundedness of our own life
and for every creature that is suffering,
O God of all life, we pray...

THE LORD'S PRAYER

WORDS OF BLESSING

Leader: The strength of the rising sun,
the strength of the swelling sea,
the strength of the high mountains,
the strength of the fertile plains,
the strength of the everlasting river
flowing in us and through us this day,
the strength of the river of God
flowing in us and through us this day.