

PRAYER GROUP

June 23, 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

Let us now take a moment to settle into the silence.

Hear and feel the quiet of this place
and this community of people.

Hear and feel your quiet breathing.

Inhale the good gifts that God provides,
and exhale all of the things
that you need to release.

Breathe in strength. *(Pause for breath...)*

Exhale exhaustion. *(Pause for breath...)*

Breathe in freedom. *(Pause for breath...)*

Exhale all that holds you back. *(Pause for breath...)*

Breathe in a new sense of direction. *(Pause for breath...)*

Exhale the paths you no longer want to use.
(Pause for breath...)

Breathe in hope. *(Pause for breath...)*

Exhale self-doubt. *(Pause for breath...)*

Breathe in unconditional love. *(Pause for breath...)*

Exhale distrust and hate. *(Pause for breath...)*

In this time of prayer,
may our minds be open to new truth,
and our hearts be receptive to love.

Let us open ourselves to the Spirit of Christ
in our midst.

A REFLECTION—“Awakening In the Cosmos”

Richard Rohr, from The Centre For Action And Contemplation

My friend and fellow CAC teacher Dr. Barbara Holmes has the ability to bear witness to the expansiveness of the cosmos, the major systemic shifts taking place in society, and the small and sacred moments of daily life—all at the same time. Her writing is a poetic and prophetic call for us to wake up and pay attention to everything that is happening around us.

It is time to awaken to self, society, and the cosmos, for none of us has the luxury of sleepwalking through impending cultural and scientific revolutions. In the last sermon that he preached before he was assassinated, Martin Luther King Jr. urged us to “remain awake through a great revolution.” [1] . . .

Up above our heads, there are worlds unknown and a canopy of grace, light, air, and water that supports our survival. Without realizing it, we expend massive amounts of energy to block out the vastness of our universe. This is to be expected, for, in its totality, this information can be more than human systems can take. However, by riveting our attention on the mundane, we filter out the wonder that is available with each breath.

Although we have a fascination with space and the possibility of life in other realms, we steadfastly refuse to respond when the universe invites us to broaden our lines of sight. We are beckoned by blazing sunsets and the pictures returned by powerful telescopic lenses, yet, on any given day, we court a busyness that beguiles us into focusing on the limited perspectives in our immediate space.

Today, scientific information about the universe is increasing exponentially while ethnic and racial balances within the United States are shifting radically. In the scientific realm, the epistemological foundations for hierarchy, dominance, and rationality are crumbling, while proponents of gender, class, [racial,] and sexual equity have found their public voices. . . .

We are not hamsters on a wheel, waiting to fall into the cedar shavings at the bottom of the cage. We are seekers of light and life, bearers of shadows and burdens. We are struggling to journey together toward moral fulfillment. We are learning to embrace the unfathomable darkness where God dwells with enthusiasm that equals our love of light. Physics and cosmology have metaphors and languages to help us awaken to these and other possibilities. . . .

We are not just citizens of one nation or another, but of the human and cosmic community.

Awareness is the moment when we rise with eyes crusted from self-induced dreams of control, domination, victimization, and self-hatred to catch a glimpse of the divine in the face of “the other.” Then God’s self-identification, “I am that I am / I will be who I will be” (Exodus 3:14) becomes a liberating example of awareness, mutuality, and self-revelation.

Barbara teaches us that “everything belongs”—from moments of personal awakening, to mind-bending discoveries with the potential to change everything. Growing in awareness of a “Christ-soaked universe” helps us to awaken to wonder and see the divine in 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?

STORY FROM OUR COMMUNITY:

I wait for the ruby-throated hummingbirds to arrive. They are amazing birds, so tiny, and highly energetic. They have beautiful iridescent plumage which reflects the sunshine. They drink nectar from flowers and eat bugs caught midair for protein. The Wild Red Columbine blooms in time with the arrival of these hummingbirds. These two species are in a mutually beneficial relationship, tubular columbine flowers are pollinated, hummers are fed. I like to understand how God has encouraged this. God seeks nourishing relationships. *Fawn P.*

A VISUAL READING—Genesis 1 <https://youtu.be/4V365a5ZrjQ>

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...

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.