

Simple Prayer, Simple Praise:
A Worship Service for Sunday, May 17, 2020

Opening Acclamation: (from Acts 17: 24-28a)

The God who made the world and everything in it,
 he who is Lord of heaven and earth,
does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands,
 as though he needed anything,
 since he himself gives to all mortals
life and breath and all things.
From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth,
 and he allotted the times of their existence
 and the boundaries of the places where they would live,
so that they would search for God
 and perhaps grope for him and find him
 —though indeed he is not far from each one of us.
For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’;
as even some of the poets have said ‘For we too are his offspring.’

A reading from the Gospel According to John 14:15-21

Jesus said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

Meditation *(by The Rev. Dcn. Tom Tripp, St. Peter’s, Eggertsville)*

Mid-May brings college commencements. The Covid-19 virus had other plans this year. However, in today’s scripture, it’s quickly approaching apostolic commencement time.

Jesus appears to be frantically teaching, reviewing, inspiring, and consoling his band of disciples, to prepare them for his impending departure from earthly life. I liken this to a coach, giving final instructions before the Super Bowl, knowing that he and his staff (and rod) will be leaving before the game.

The Lord is preparing them for their upcoming liminal time- the threshold they will be experiencing between the familiar (pre-crucifixion) and the unknown (post-crucifixion). Aren't we all in some form of liminal time now, living through this pandemic? There is a learning curve for us as well.

Their new coach, Jesus announces, is the Advocate. AKA- Holy Ghost, Holy Spirit, and Spirit of Truth. Whichever name we choose to abide by, this invisible entity will guide and inspire the disciples, and us in the present, to do the work He has left for all who will follow.

But Jesus does lay down parameters: We can't worship worldly things to receive this gift. We must live into His dual mission- being right with God and loving our neighbors.

The disciples didn't get their diplomas in a timely fashion. It took some time and perseverance. In the same manner, the Advocate will help us learn how to safely matriculate through this crisis of Nature. We will most surely learn more about ourselves and our value systems, as did the disciples- once Jesus was no longer in protoplasmic form. We know now that the Spirit can work through the internet and Zoom!

Can you recall when the Holy Spirit was there for you in a time of need? What would you ask of the Advocate in our current time of uncertainty and fear?



Closing Prayer:

Almighty God, during this difficult season of illness and isolation, assist us with your grace so we may not falter in our faith. Send your Advocate to buoy our spirits and remind us of how we are your beloved children. Strengthen us for the work which you have given us to do, even as we are restricted from our regular ministries, and allow us the gift of being able to support others

through our work, prayers, and witness; this we ask in Christ's name. Amen.

Take a moment now for silent reflection. Think of the people and things that cause you worry or concern; think of the things for which you are grateful. Raise them up in prayer using the words our Savior Christ taught us:

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by 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, and the power, and the glory
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Grace:

*Blessed Jesus, at thy word we are gathered all to hear thee;
let our hearts and souls be stirred now to seek and love and fear thee;
by thy teachings pure and holy, drawn from earth to love thee solely.*

*Gracious Lord, thyself impart! Light of Light, from God proceeding,
open thou our ears and heart, help us by thy Spirit's pleading.*

*Hear the cry thy Church upraises; hear, and bless our prayers and praises.
---Hymnal 1982, # 440. Words: Tobias Clausnitzer; tr. Catherine Winkworth*

Take a moments and think about how the Holy Spirit has empowered you in your own ministry and vocation. Pray for all who are dependent upon the ministries your region's congregations support: food pantries, clothing ministries, feeding programs, and social justice work.



Each Sunday at 10 a.m., Bishop Sean and other leaders from WNY and NWPA will lead worship via the Zoom platform. Anyone can join the service via phone by calling **646-876-9923** use code **127336938#**.

Those wishing to join by instead of video can use this this link: <https://zoom.us/j/127336938> If you are asked for a password, use **lakeerie**.

Simple Prayer, Simple Praise is produced for The Episcopal Dioceses of NWPA and WNY by the Rev. Steve Lane and the Rev. Claudia Scheda, and guest contributors as noted. May 2020.