

Simple Prayer, Simple Praise:

Sunday, August 30th, 2020

Opening Acclamation:

Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: Graft in our hearts the love of your Name; increase in us true religion; nourish us with all goodness; and bring forth in us the fruit of good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. *Amen.*

A reading from the Gospel According to Matthew 16:21-28

Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?"



Tissot, James, 1836-1902. Get Thee Behind Me, Satan.
<http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56514>

"For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

Meditation

This is not the plan Peter and the disciples had envisioned. Jesus is not supposed to suffer and die. He's supposed to overthrow the Romans and restore the Jewish kingdom. And what does He mean "be raised on the third day"? When Peter says this can't happen, he gets demoted from the rock upon which Jesus will build his church to stumbling block. And being called Satan? We can only imagine his humiliation.

Jesus has his work cut out for him. It will take a great deal to convince the disciples that what is about to happen to Him is essential. He must find a way to move them from earthly things to divine things, a great task for all of them.

Those words about denying yourself, losing your life for his sake, taking up a cross, just to follow Him. Are the disciples now wondering what challenges they're about to face? They're being called into a new world with only their belief in Jesus to sustain them.

Like the disciples, our lives and our faith are constantly being challenged by uncertainty and the unknown in this world. We face trying to dismantle age old discriminations, a plague with no cure that mutates as it travels between us, civil unrest -- all happening at once.

What is God calling us to do?

God calls us to the peace that only He can give when He becomes the center of our lives. In this way we will lose our lives in serving Him, taking up a cross of compassion and understanding, and following Him into the chaos of this world to seek justice and equality. Above all else, He calls us to show the light of Christ to all whom we meet and to see the light of Christ in them.

Rev. Mary Lord

Prayer:

Creator God, we have heard the call of Jesus to take up our cross and follow. Give us the Grace and wisdom to recognize our own cross, the strength to carry that cross and the love of the Spirit to radiate your love in service. We ask this in Jesus' name, confident that you will hear us.

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.**

Invitation to Follow

Abandon the illusion you're a self-contained individual.

Be a part of this wounded world, and find yourself with Christ.

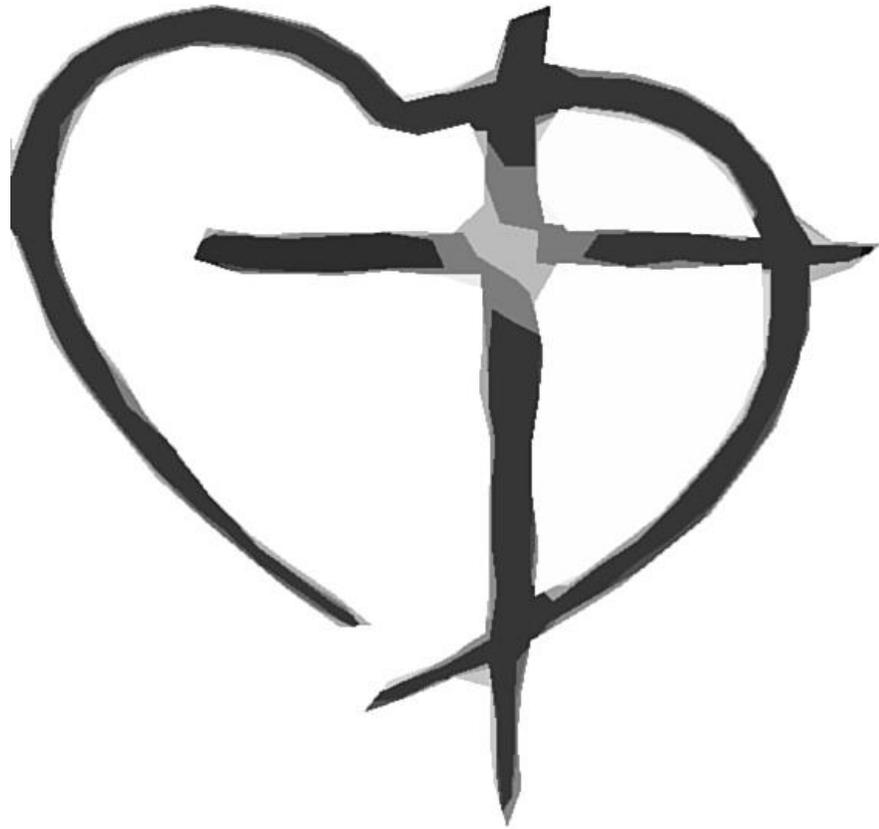
Set aside your own desires, give yourself fully for others; be the hands and heart of Jesus.

Renounce self-protection, accept your brokenness, and reach out for love.

Let go of your own plans. Join in the healing of the world. You will not be alone.

Follow your soul, not your ego. Follow it right into people's suffering. Follow it right into the heart of God.

Pour yourself out; let the world pour in; then you are one with the Beloved.



~ written by Steve Garnaas-Holmes and posted on Unfolding Light. <https://www.unfoldinglight.net/>

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 127 336 938**. Those wishing to join by instead of video can use 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.

Prayers and pictures from Vanderbilt Library July 2020