

Morning Prayer – Thursday, March 26, 2020  
*New Zealand Book of Common Prayer*

Opening Words  
*(as candle is lit)*

We light a candle  
to remember that we are not alone.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. (Psalm 46:1)

O come, let us sing to the Lord,  
let us rejoice in the rock of our salvation.  
We sing to you, O God, and bless your name;  
and tell of your salvation from day to day.  
We proclaim your glory to the nations,  
your praise to the ends of the earth.

Glory to the holy and undivided Trinity, One God  
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be for ever more. Amen.

*(Be still and aware of the presence of the Divine within and all around)*

Scripture – Ephesians 5:8-14 (The Message)

You groped your way through that murk once, but no longer. You're out in the open now. The bright light of Christ makes your way plain. So no more stumbling around. Get on with it! The good, the right, the true—these are the actions appropriate for daylight hours. Figure out what will please Christ, and then do it.

Don't waste your time on useless work, mere busywork, the barren pursuits of darkness. Expose these things for the sham they are. It's a scandal when people waste their lives on things they must do in the darkness where no one will see. Rip the cover off those frauds and see how attractive they look in the light of Christ.

Wake up from your sleep,  
Climb out of your coffins;  
Christ will show you the light!

So watch your step. Use your head. Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times!

*(a time for reflection on the reading)*

Poem – “Staring Match” by Pádraig Ó Tuama

I stare at the icon  
the sacrament and  
the sacred story.

I stare at the window  
the bread and the  
familiar words.

With only myself to blame  
I repeat the questions that  
restrain me:

What is all this for? and:  
What will all this bring? and:  
What should I do now?

And then there's that  
great silence  
that greets me.

So I try to greet it  
with liturgy for the morning  
a little vitamin, hoping that

opening the day with rhythm  
might calm the encounter  
with the selves I ignore.

Might help a life be lived  
more generously.  
Might help the eye see inside the icon.

Might help the story sound.  
Might help the bread be found  
by the place that's hungry.

**Prayers**

Make your ways known upon earth, O God,  
your saving power among all peoples.

Renew your Church in holiness,  
and help us to serve you with joy.

Guide the leaders of this and every nation,

that justice may prevail throughout the world.

Let not the needy, O God, be forgotten,  
nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

Make us instruments of your peace,  
and let your glory be over all the earth.

Holy and everliving God,  
by your power we are created  
and by your love we are redeemed;  
guide and strengthen us by your Spirit,  
that we may give ourselves to your service,  
and live each day in love to one another and to you,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(Time of silence for personal thanksgivings and intercessions)*

Closing words

*(after which candle is extinguished)*

In darkness and in light,  
in trouble and in joy,  
help us, heavenly Creator,  
to trust your love,  
to serve your purpose,  
and to praise your name,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Spiritual Exercises:

- 1) Ó Tuama writes in his poem about “the great silence” greeting him and inviting him to encounter the parts of himself he does not know (or perhaps does not wish to know). What happens for you when you greet “the great silence”? What does the silence teach you?
- 2) Spend some time reflecting on what “rhythm” you want/need at this time. Most all of us have had our usual rhythm thrown asunder as of late. Try to create a new rhythm writing down hope for how your days/weeks will go during this time. Would you like to begin your day in prayer, in exercise, in nature? Would you like to have a virtual lunch break with colleagues you used to chat with in the lunchroom? Would you like to make sure you and your family have supper together?

Sources:

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Poem: "Staring match" by Pádraig Ó Tuama from *In the Shelter: Finding a home in the world*, 2015, London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd.

Scripture: *The Message: The Bible In Contemporary Language* by Eugene H. Peterson, NavPress.