

Compline – Monday, August 24, 2020

St. George's Anglican Church, Cadboro Bay / <https://www.stgeorgecadborobay.ca>

From: *Celtic Benediction: Morning and Night Prayer* by John Philip Newell

Opening

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth, from the everlasting to everlasting you are God. (Psalm 90:2)

Be still and aware of God's presence within and all around

Prayer

In infinity of night skies
in the free flashing of lightning
in whirling elemental winds
you are God.

In the impenetrable mists of dark clouds
in the wild gusts of lashing rain
in the ageless rocks of the sea
you are God and I bless you.

You are in all things
and contained by no thing.
You are the Life of all life.
and beyond every name.

You are God and in the eternal mystery I praise you.

Scripture and Meditation

Happy are those whose strength is in you (Psalm 84:5)

Jesus said, 'The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit' (John 3:8)

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

For your Spirit woven into the fabric of creation
for the eternal overlapping with time
and the life of earth interlaced with heaven's vitality
I give you thanks, O God.

For your untamed creativity
your boundless mystery
and your passionate yearnings
planted deep in the soul of every human being
I give you thanks.

Grant me the grace to reclaim these depths
to uncover this treasure

to liberate these longings
and in being set free in my own spirit
to act for the well-being of the world.

Recall the events of the day and pray for the life of the world

Poem – “The Spaces Between” by Liz Lochhead
(for Leslie McGuire)

The boy is ten and today it is his birthday.
Behind him on the lawn
his mother and his little sister
unfurl a rainbow crayoned big and bright
on a roll of old wallpaper.
His father, big-eyed, mock-solemn, pantomimes ceremony
as he lights the ten candles on the cake.
Inside her living-room
his grandmother puts her open palm to the window.
Out in the garden, her grandson
reaches up, mirrors her, stretching fingers
and they smile and smile as if they touched
warm flesh not cold glass.

More than forty thousand years ago
men or women splayed their fingers thus
and put their hands to bare rock, they
chewed ochre, red-ochre, gritted charcoal and blew,
blew with projectile effort that really took it out of them,
their living breath. Raw gouts of pigment
spattered the living stencil
that was each's own living hand
and made their mark.
The space of absence
was the clean, stark picture of their presence
and it pleased them.
We do not know why they did it
and maybe they did not either but
they knew they must.
It was the cold cave wall
and they knew they were up against it.

The birthday boy is juggling.
He has been spending time in the lockdown learning

but though he still can't keep it up for long
his grandmother dumb-shows most extravagant applause.
She toasts them all in tea
from her *Best Granny in the World* mug, winking
and licking her lips ecstatically as they cut the cake,
miming hunger, miming prayer
for her hunger to be sated.
The slim girl dances and her grandmother claps
and claps again, blinking tears.
Another matched high-five at her window.

Neither the blown candles or the blown kisses
will leave any permanent mark
– unless love does? –
on them on this the only afternoon
they will be all alive together on just this day the boy is ten.

Closing Prayer

O Brother Jesus
who wept at the death of a friend
and overturned tables in anger at wrong
let me not be frightened by the depths of passion.
Rather let me learn the love and anger
and wild expanses of soul within me
that are true expressions of your grace and wisdom.
And assure me again that in becoming more like you
I come closer to my true self
made in the image of outpouring Love
born of the free eternal Wind.

Sources:

Celtic Benediction: Morning and Night Prayer by J Philip Newell © 2000 by the Canterbury Press.

Poem – “The Spaces Between Us” by Liz Lochhead. Published online in *the Scottish Poetry Library* (April 2020).