

The meanings behind the prayers

<p>Lord, open our lips,</p>	<p>Without deep truth and justice within us, we have nothing to say except empty words. If you, God, give us words, we have something worth saying.</p>
<p>And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.</p>	<p>But with justice within us we can speak words of justice, of beauty and of confidence. Which are the qualities of deep reality and so we will reflect that deep reality.</p>
<p>O God, make speed to save us.</p>	<p>We need help. It's a relief to have somewhere to say the truth. Whether climate chaos on the outside or character chaos on the inside, we need help. This isn't self-negation, but a statement of what's true - did I make the right decision years ago, am I endangering my most important relationships, why don't I make sense to myself? I need help. It's a relief not to have to be perfect.</p>
<p>O Lord, make haste to help us.</p>	<p>A poetic variation of the former. Or a more local need - I need some specific help.</p>
<p>Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.</p>	<p>But my needs are in the context of something gorgeously beautiful which is permanent.</p>
<p>The kingdom of God is at hand, O come, let us worship. <i>This 'sentence' (a verse from the Bible) changes throughout the year in response to major themes during the year.</i></p>	<p>A short one-sentence meditation in response to our need and the eternal underlying reality. Our society believes that fulfillment is not anywhere near, and thus we are pushed into fear, insecurity and an attitude of scarcity. Generosity becomes impossible if fulfillment is impossible. To say such a meditation daily is to re-connect ourselves with the deep reality. This is not self-deception, but grounding ourselves in what is actually the case. Generosity becomes easier, and in that sense, the kingdom is very close indeed.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">The “Venite”</p>	<p>Pronounced “ve-NIGHT-ee” (Latin for the first word of the following psalm, Psalm 95)</p>
<p>Come, let us sing to the Lord; let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation.</p>	<p>Thanks that the underlying reality does indeed provide us with fulfilment.</p>
<p>Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.</p>	<p>And we are delighted to say so.</p>

<p>For the Lord is a great God, and a great king above all gods.</p> <p>In his hand are the caverns of the earth, and the heights of the hills are his also. The sea is his for he made it,</p> <p>and his hands have moulded the dry land.</p> <p>Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, and kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand. Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!</p> <p><i>Read the psalm(s) for today. Read the two passages for today.</i></p> <p>Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first and the great commandment. The second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.</p>	<p>An image that the God of justice makes slaves out of all the other gods - there are many other gods - the various forms of oppression, both inward and outward, but deep justice will never be overcome.</p> <p>Deep justice and beauty reign everywhere - in the depths, the heights, in the wet and the dry. The caverns are the dark unknowable places in ourselves. The heights are those wonderful moments when we are fulfilled. The sea was scary to the ancient Jews since they lived inland and were used only to lakes - deep goodness is present in chaotic situations and fear, and even they are ultimately based in deep goodness. Dry land, where we are secure, comes from deep justice - we don't have to imagine that it's up to us to invent security or justice. We cooperate and allow it to happen, we aren't ultimate responsible to invent justice.</p> <p>We are delighted that we live in such a world!</p> <p>It's like being cared for and protected and nurtured at every moment.</p> <p>We long to experience this more and more deeply.</p> <p>Now we listen to that voice in the poetry of a psalm, and two other readings.</p> <p>The readings will have stimulated us to grounding ourselves in our commitment to justice and beauty and confidence. That experience of God is to deepen our commitment to two principles of living: be utterly loyal to justice and be utterly loyal to whomever you encounter. This is a quote from the Hebrew Bible (Deuteronomy, the book of laws.)</p>
--	--

Personal prayers:	The first way in which we love and seek justice is to pray for people
The church	We pray first for the church, not because of any sense of superiority, but because that's the place where there is a conscious intention to live life founded exclusively on justice. The church is the community which has committed itself to live by justice and hope. At present, we are acutely aware of how the church community has failed in that regard, but part of justice is acknowledging we need help (as we said at the beginning of this meditation.) We pray for the church and its leaders to be loyal to its calling to justice.
Our political leaders.	We pray for Trump that he would respond to God's call to justice and lead his country in that direction. We to pray for Trudeau with the same intention. Also for the premier and the mayor. Leaders in a democracy have a risky calling – sometimes to stand against public opinion when resisting oppression. We simply lift these people up to God, in the sense of raising them into the reality of that deep justice, and leave it there. There is no sense that we are trying to manage behaviour we would want for ourselves, this is not magic!
Those most vulnerable.	These are the ones who are oppressed and not given dignity or respect. The purpose of the prayer is to associate ourselves with the deep commitment of profound justice that is already present, so we are aware of that power and unite ourselves to the poor learning from them that we, too, can trust only in generosity for everything we are.
Those in need.	This is not an attempt to influence an outcome, rather an openness to the desire of the HOLY that every person be fulfilled.
Our families and ourself.	We ourselves need justice and are being also lifted up.
The collect of the day.	A prayer often related to the time of the year or to the Sunday liturgical readings. It is called a “collect” because its original purpose was for the community, physically together in prayer, to have a common prayer to collect the personal prayers of the individuals. The year is divided into two six-month periods. The first, from early December until late May focuses on the life of Jesus – from the anticipation of his birth, through his enacting of the kingdom, to the futile attempt of evil and injustice to take over the kingdom in his death and resurrection, to his modern presence in the form of Justice-Spirit,. The second half of the year focuses on the power of Justice-Spirit in our present community and world. The collects often reflect our chronological location in that sequence.

<p>The Lord's Prayer.</p> <p>Let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God.</p> <p>May the God of peace fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit.</p>	<p>Our prayers are summarized by using the only extended prayer that Jesus taught. The words are to be said thoughtfully, not by rote.</p> <p>We give thanks to God at the completion of the whole meditation – this time has been about God, not about our experience.</p> <p>A concluding verse from Paul's letter to the community in Rome.</p>
---	--

© Harold Munn 2018