

PRAYER AND REFLECTION

The Revd Heather McIntyre
Friday 12th June 2020



Opening Psalm 8:1-2

O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens.

Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger.

Prayer:

O Holy Spirit, breath of God, move among us this day. Open us to the beauty of the earth, that we may become its servants.

Open us to the wonder of life that we might recognise an angel at every corner.

Open us to the storehouse of your grace and we will be made new for Jesus' sake.

Amen

Reading: Matthew 18:1-4

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

Reflection:

Last weekend I saw my two grandchildren for the first time since lockdown. They are aged one and three, and as I watched them exploring my garden I was reminded of this passage from Matthew’s gospel. Jesus’ words were radical. I don’t think he just meant we must have childlike trust in God; he meant enter into and receive life as a child. For children have the great ability to receive life as a gift. They are able to enjoy life. My two grandchildren spent ages knelt by the side of my rockery watching some bees flit in and out of the flowers on the thyme that grows there. They noticed that some bees were different from others, they listened to their hum and they marvelled every time one flew off and then returned to land on a different flower.

It seems that children's minds are fine-tuned to wonder and that they also have an incredible ability to dwell completely in the present moment.

It is true that lockdown has given us the opportunity to slow down and perhaps notice things, particularly in nature, that we might otherwise have rushed past, but how much time I wonder have we spent worrying about the future rather than being home in the here and now. This may be even more true now as lockdown begins to ease, because we certainly have no idea what the future will look like and whether things will ever return to how they used to be. When it comes to the present, it seems that so often we are not present.

Not one of us knows what the future will hold, but we can all agree that this actual moment now, as I write this and you read it, is the only thing we possess with any certainty. As I played with my grandchildren, I forgot all my worries and preoccupations for those few hours as I was caught up with them in the wonders of nature and in their smiles, their chatter, and their laughter. Those moments were incredibly special and were all that mattered at the time.

Such a way of experiencing things brings the possibility of new delight and new joy in the people and things around us. It offers the possibility of opening ourselves up to amazement like a child and may be in doing so we open ourselves up to a taste of

heaven. Maybe to be a child of God is simply this – to live and enjoy life as a child in readiness for heaven, experiencing heaven now, in this moment.

“Life is not hurrying on to a receding future, nor hankering after an imagined past. It is the turning aside like Moses to the miracle of the lit bush, to a brightness that seemed as transitory as your youth once, but is the eternity that awaits you.”
R.S. Thomas The Bright Field

Prayer:

Today may I give and receive love.
Today may I work for justice.
Today may I listen and pray.
Today may I sing God’s praises.
Today may I delight in God’s beauty.
Today and every day.
Amen

Blessing:

May the blessing of the living God be upon you this day.

In every way may you know his overshadowing around you, within you and for you.

May the blessing, love and affection of heaven be toward you.

Amen