**Saint Patrick’s *“Breastplate”* Prayer**

I bind unto myself today

The strong Name of the Trinity,

By invocation of the same,

The Three in One and One in Three.

I bind unto myself today

The power of God to hold and lead,

His eye to watch, His might to stay,

His ear to hearken to my need.

The wisdom of my God to teach,

His hand to guide, His shield to ward,

The Word of God to give me speech,

His heavenly host to be my guard.

Christ be with me, Christ within me,

Christ behind me, Christ before me,

Christ beside me, Christ to win me,

Christ to comfort and restore me.

Christ beneath me, Christ above me,

Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,

Christ in hearts of all that love me,

Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

I bind unto myself today

The strong Name of the Trinity,

By invocation of the same,

The Three in One and One in Three.

Of Whom all nature hath creation,

Eternal Father, Spirit, Word:

Praise to the Lord of my salvation,

Salvation is of Christ the Lord.

**Quotations from the Five Sunday Gospels**

**Sunday March 9th**

**“One does not live on bread alone”**

**Matthew 4:4**

**Sunday March 16th**

**“This is my Son, the Beloved;**

**he enjoys my favour. Listen to him”**

**Matthew 17:5**

**Sunday March 23rd**

**“Those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty.**

**The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life”**

**John 4:14**

**Sunday March 30th**

**“I am the Light of the World”**

**John 9:5**

**Sunday April 6th**

**“I am the resurrection and the life, if anyone**

**believes in me, even though he dies he will live,**

**and whoever lives and believes in me will never die”**

**John 11:25**

Denise Levertov (1923 – 1997)

“Beginners”

We have only begun

To imagine the fullness of life.

How could we tire of hope?

---so much is in bud.

How can desire fail?

---we have only begun

to imagine justice and mercy,

only begun to envision

how it might be

to live as siblings with beast and flower,

not as oppressors…

Not yet, not yet---

there is too much broken

that must be mended…

We have only begun to know

the power that is in us if we would join

our solitudes in the communion of struggle.

So much is unfolding that must

complete its gesture,

so much is in bud.

Gethsemane

The grass never sleeps.

Or the roses.

Nor does the lily have a secret eye that shuts until morning.

Jesus said, wait with me. But the disciples slept.

The cricket has such splendid fringe on its feet,

and it sings, have you noticed, with its whole body,

and heaven knows if it ever sleeps.

Jesus said, wait with me. And maybe the stars did,

maybe the wind wound itself into a silver tree,

and didn’t move,

maybe the lake far away,

where once he walked as on a blue pavement,

lay still and waited, wild awake.

Oh the dear bodies, slumped and eye-shut, that could not

keep the vigil, how they must have wept,

so utterly human, knowing this too,

must be part of the story.

*Mary Oliver*

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*Reflection*

For those who set out again with Christ

and travelled on the pilgrim road with him,

there came a new understanding

that all pilgrims

are wounded and wounding creatures

and need constant healing

and forgiveness.

And the source of this healing

and forgiveness is the Lamb

who takes away

the sins of the world

and gives us peace.

With this understanding

there came a new compassion.

And with the compassion

came a realisation

that we are not knights or gallant crusaders

riding up to the doors of heaven.

Ah! No! we are but humble pilgrims supporting one another

along the road trod by Him

who was hurt but who never wounded

except for healing.

And the Spirit will lead us to the portals of heaven

on whose doors are written large:

“Welcome home, and forgiveness

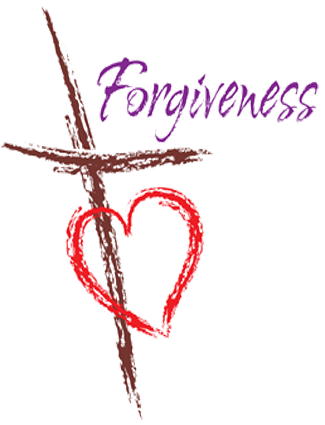
To all who, in turn, have forgiven others”

Good Friday Reflection

They arrived at the appointed place

where He who bore all crosses stood,

welcoming saint and sinner with open arms.

He lifted the burden from each one’s shoulder

and placed it in a circle around the Cross,

which He for us had borne.

They sat around in silence,

and as his gaze looked with love into each heart

they knew instinctively that He knew and understood

the weight and burden of the cross they carried.

He spoke in tongues but no sound came,

yet each one heard his words within the heart,

which changed the weight and texture of the cross they carried.

He then raised his hands and gave a blessing.

Then He gave a strange direction and a choice;

Whoever wished could exchange their cross for his,

or for the cross of those who had caused them pain,

or they could embrace their own,

now transformed with compassionate love.

And if they were to travel further with him

in the peace and joy they now experienced,

they must allow his compassion to flow,

which forgave the other

and sought forgiveness for themselves.

Strange as it may seem

none of them exchanged their crosses of this

and few if any took the crosses of their afflictors.

Those who did left them down again

for they realised that they were heavy,

that their own crosses

fitted their own shoulders best

for the rest of their journey home.

**Frank Fahey**



Reflection

Whatever happens to me in Life

I must believe that somewhere

in the mess or madness of it all,

there is a sacred potential –

a possibility for wondrous redemption

in the embracing of all that is.

For in the unfolding of my journey,

in all its soaring delight

and crushing pain,

I may be sure that God is there –

always ahead, behind, below and above,

encompassing all that befalls me

in a circle of deep compassion.

And there,

Above the darkness

that wraps me round

the bright wings of the Dove

hover and beat

in gentle healing love

and invitation to

New Rising.

**Edwina Gately**

**The Good**

The good are vulnerable

As any bird in flight,

They do not think of safety,

Are blind to possible extinction

And when most vulnerable

Are most themselves.

The good are real as the sun,

Are best perceived through clouds

Of casual corruption

That cannot kill the luminous sufficiency

That shines on city, sea and wilderness,

Fastidiously revealing

One man to another,

Who yet will not accept

Responsibilities of light.

The good incline to praise,

To have the knack of seeing that

The best is not destroyed

Although forever threatened.

The good go naked in all weathers,

And by their nakedness rebuke

The small protective sanities

That hide men from themselves.

The good are difficult to see

Though open, rare, destructible;

Always, they retain a kind of youth,

The vulnerable grace

Of any bird in flight,

Content to be itself,

Accomplished master

and potential victim,

accepting what the earth or sky intends.

I think I know one.

By Brendan Kennelly

1967

**“In your light we see light”**

**Psalm 36**

Jesus standing before the Samaritan woman

becomes the mirror in which she sees not only the face of

God but her own true face.

In the gospels, all the people who encountered Jesus only

by hearsay, by what somebody else believed about him,

by what they’d been told, by what they hoped to get out of him:

all those people left. They still leave today.

The ones that remained – and still remain –

are the ones who have met him in the moment:

in the instantaneous, mutual recognition of hearts

and in the ultimate energy that is always pouring forth

from this encounter.

It is indeed the wellspring.

Cynthia Bourgeanet

**Lent**

**Lent can be more than a time of fasting; it can be a season of feasting.**

**We can choose this Lent, to fast from certain things and to feast on others. It is a season in which we can:**

* **Fast from emphasis on differences; feast on the unity of life**
* **Fast from apparent darkness; feast on the reality of light**
* **Fast from thoughts of illness; feast on the healing power of God**
* **Fast from words that pollute; feast on phrases that purify**
* **Fast from discontent; feast on gratitude**
* **Fast from pessimism; feast on optimism**
* **Fast from worry; feast on divine order**
* **Fast from complaining; feast on appreciation**
* **Fast from negatives; feast on affirmatives**
* **Fast from unrelenting pressures; feast on unceasing prayer**
* **Fast from hostility; feast on non-resistance**
* **Fast from bitterness; feast on forgiveness**
* **Fast from self-concern; feast on compassion for others**
* **Fast from personal anxiety; feast on eternal truth**
* **Fast from discouragements; feast on hope**
* **Fast from facts that depress; feast on verities that uplift**
* **Fast from lethargy; feast on enthusiasm**
* **Fast from thoughts that weaken; feast on promises that inspire**
* **Fast from shadows of sorrow; feast on the sunlight of sincerity**
* **Fast from idle gossip; feast on purposeful silence**
* **Fast from judging others; feast on the Christ dwelling in them**

**From a Benedictine source**

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**The Lantern**

Take down your lantern from its niche and go out!

You may not rest in firelight certainties

Secure from drifting fog of doubt and fear.

You may not build yourself confining walls

And say: “Thus far, and thus, and thus far shall I walk,

And these things shall I do, and mothering more.”

Go out! For need calls loudly

in the winding lanes

And you must seek Christ there.

You pilgrim heart

Shall urge you still one pace beyond,

And love shall be your lantern flame.

**Sister Raphael Considine, 1977**

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**Resurrection**

**To believe in resurrection**

**is to believe in someone who acts**

**in us and for us**

**with immense power,**

**capable of bringing life from death**

**and of making old become new,**

**orientating us to a future**

**of huge dimensions.**

**To believe in resurrection**

**is to believe that no limit,**

**no barrier,**

**no difficulty,**

**nothing in this world,**

**will be able to kill the life and hope**

**which is born in God’s people.**

**Carlos Mesters CEBI Brazil**

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