



FINDING A STILL CENTRE

In the midst of our busy lives
A quiet place in the heart of our community
February 4th 2018

The Passion of God: The Passion of Christ.

“Jesus was a person radically centred in God, empowered by that relationship, and filled with God’s passion for the world—a passion that led to his execution and vindication.” Marcus Borg

Music on arrival: Nunc Dimittis - Arvo Pärt

Opening Prayer:

We gather in this circle of community.
We come into this sacred space.
Be not tentative. Bring your whole self!
Bring the joy that makes your heart sing.
Bring your kindness and compassion.
Bring also your sorrow, your pain.
Bring your brokenness and your disappointments.



**Spirit of love and mystery,
help us to recognize the spark of the divine that resides within each of us.**

May we know the joy of wholeness.

May we know the joy of being together. *Adapted from a prayer by Andrew Pakula.*

A reading:

‘Kingdoms Rage’ from *Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth, Prayers of Walter Brueggemann p.105.*

Lectio Divina: Luke 4: 16-21 (NRSV)

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Centering Prayer and time of silence

Music for meditation: The Peacemakers: I offer you peace.
Karl Jenkins (Dedicated to Mahatma Ghandi)



Responsive Prayer

Leader: We are grateful, O God, for those whose lives inspire our own.

All: We pray that we may be more like them.

Leader: Grant that we may aspire to more than fleeting popularity and temporary fame.

All: Make us yearn for true greatness in our midst –for those who serve your kingdom with all their hearts and all their might.

Leader: Give us wisdom to discern those leaders who show integrity in their lives and actions.

All: Give us grace that we might recognise them and honour them while they are living.

Leader: Let the spirit of the Holy One be in us all, to teach us truth, keep us from false paths, and lead us in love.

All: Grant that we, like your servant Martin Luther King, Jr and inspiring leaders from Aotearoa, such as Dame Whina Cooper, Te Whiti te Rongomai and Tohu Kakahi, be ready to be counted and to show courage in the service of your kingdom.

Amen. Adapted from a prayer for Martin Luther King Day from www.ministrymatters.com

Closing blessing:

Living God Bless us!

May our service to others bring

Release

Recovery

Freedom

And Celebratory Joy,

Amen



Edited-from "Act Love Walk" p89.

"You will be encouraged, as Marcus Borg says 'to go beyond your mind' to the space of awe and wonder, to the place where our hearts and minds are infused with the Spirit of God and we are transformed to transform the world."

Jacqui Lewis, Back cover of 'Days of Awe and Wonder' by Marcus Borg.

Practice: Watching the River

To live in the present moment requires a change in our inner posture. Instead of expanding or shoring up our fortress of the small self—the ego—contemplation waits to discover who we truly are. Most people think they are their thinking. They don't have a clue who they are apart from their thoughts. In contemplation, we move to a level beneath thoughts and sensations, the level of pure being and naked awareness.

In contemplative prayer, we calmly observe our own stream of consciousness and see its compulsive patterns. We wait in silence with an open heart and attuned body. It doesn't take long for our usual patterns to assault us. Our habits of control, addiction, negativity, tension, anger, and fear assert themselves. When Jesus is "driven" by the Spirit into the wilderness, the first things that show up are "wild beasts" (Mark 1:13). Contemplation is not first of all consoling, which is why so many give up. Yes, the truth will set you free, but first it will make you miserable.

Many teachers insist on at least twenty minutes for a full contemplative "sit," because you can assume that the first half (or more) of any contemplative prayer time is just letting go of those thoughts, judgments, fears, negations, and emotions that want to impose themselves. We become watchers and witnesses, stepping back and observing without judgment. Gradually we come to realize those thoughts and feelings are not "me."

Thomas Keating teaches a beautifully simple exercise. Imagine yourself sitting on the bank of a river. The river is your stream of consciousness. Observe each of your thoughts coming along as if they're saying, "Think me, think me." Watch your feelings come by saying, "Feel me, feel me." Acknowledge that you're having the feeling or thought. Don't hate it, judge it, critique it, or move against it. Simply name it: "resentment toward so and so," "a thought about such and such." Then place it on a boat and let it go down the river. When another thought arises—as no doubt it will—welcome it and let it go, returning to your inner watch place on the bank of the river. [1]

From Richard Rohr's Daily Meditations - Summary , January 7-Friday, January 12, 2018

{1}Thomas Keating, *Open Mind, Open Heart: The Contemplative Dimension of the Gospel* (Continuum: 2006, ©1986), especially chapter 9.