

	<p style="text-align: center;">The Order of St James (UK) Newsletter</p> <p style="text-align: center;">January 2023</p> <p style="text-align: center;">www.orderofstjames.info</p>	
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The Christmas season does not end until 6th January and we continue in our celebration of Christmas in the first newsletter of the year. Also thinking of the coming year ahead, we wish you a very blessed new year.

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HE CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN

Fr Ed Elsey OSJ

From Heaven You came, helpless babe,
Entered our world, Your glory veiled.
Not to be served but to serve,
And give Your life that we might live.
This is our God, The Servant King:
He calls us now to follow Him;
To bring our lives as a daily offering
Of worship to The Servant King.

Once again - funny how it happens on the same date every year - we are invited to come to the manger and 'adore'.

As a student I read, avidly, the writings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, so I looked back on my notes from those 'ancient' days - 1962-65.

He writes this on Adoration:

'To adore means to lose oneself in the unfathomable, to plunge into the inexhaustible, to find peace in the incorruptible, to be absorbed in defined immensity, to offer oneself to the fire and the transparency, to annihilate oneself in proportion as one becomes more deliberately conscious of oneself, and to give of one's deepest, to that whose depth has no end'.

It was such dramatic and challenging purple prose a student gets excited by, especially as a chapel boy finding new avenues of worship and study than had ever been offered to me in chapel sermons: suddenly a chance to think for myself and to rub shoulders with student from other faiths and disciplines. Lecturer, Dr Eric Rolls challenged me – he nearly brought me into Methodist pastorate with my chapel background - think what I was spared!!

(I tease with great affection.)

Archbishop William Temple in his 'The Hope of a New World' wrote:

"To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of Gd, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God. All this is gathered up in that emotion which most cleanses us from selfishness, because it is the most selfless of all emotions - adoration".

He also later wrote the following:

“The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, ‘the Son’, was no less in heaven during the period of His earthly ministry than either before it or after it. What we see as we watch the birth and life of Jesus is the very life of Heaven - indeed of God - in human expression”.

Not that for the majority of the populace the Christmas story, so commercialised as it has now become, means any of the above, though it should do to us, priests and thinkers; but the manger, the Virgin birth, the faithfulness of Joseph the earthly protector of the infant, the adoration of the Magi, the effect on a Roman world, the starting fuse of a fire that would convert nations, will be relived and repeated, yet again, at such a season. Who can know the deeper influences of such a story on all ‘ordinary lives’ - to stop and realise their salvation was borne at this hour and the Redemption of all mankind began in humility, gentleness, and - adoration.

So ‘come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord’

and in our modern challenges, as the popular worship song puts it:

So... let us learn how to serve
And in our lives enthrone Him
Each other's needs to prefer
For it is Christ we're serving/

Amen and so be it.

Fr Ed Elsey OSJ

The Laws of Spiritual Motion: Part 4 - Ministry

Whoever we are and whatever our ability level or social standing, each one of us has a place and role to fulfil in the ministry and health of the church/greater Christian community and in society as a whole.

We have all been given certain gifts, talents and skills, in stewardship by God and these are not intended to be used for our own benefit but instead for the benefit of the church/the greater Christian community and society.

There is no difference between what we might consider to be great or small ministries for all are needed and therefore should be judged in Godly humility as being of equal value, none greater or smaller than the other.

Ministry is not in the sole remit of the clergy or their governing bodies. It is everyone's responsibility.

(On the subject of paid or stipendiary ministry, it should not be assumed to be of greater importance or status than volunteered ministry. Voluntarily given ministry has its reward to come and is given in trust whereas paid ministry has already had its reward and is more likely to be subject to external secular influences and interferences.)

It is our collective duty and responsibility to ensure that none are denied their ministries (the use of these gifts, talents and skills) or the opportunities to use and/or apply them.

Rather, we are called to encourage, support and support all forms of ministry, whether private or public, whether 'great' or 'small'.

To deny or interfere with God given ministry is to deny to and impoverish the greater Christian community.

It is also to deny God His chosen will and also to sit in judgement on God, for God has given us through grace what is needful and beneficial to our present and future circumstances.

That does not mean that ministry should never be 'tested' in some way.

Ministry needs to be recognised as being 'of God' rather than just being in the mind of an individual.

This is not something to be taken lightly as a great deal of lasting damage can be done if incorrectly accepted or rejected. God sees our need whereas we are often oblivious to the fact.

Therefore, a calling to public ministry is something that should in practice be seen, demonstrated, tested, recognised, acknowledged and validated by the Christian community it serves. This can be done formally or informally.

Similarly, in private ministry, it is often occasionally necessary to self-check one's own motivation for ministry 'in the Name of God's'. A simple question, 'was my action and response for the glory of God or for my own glory?' and a deeply honest response will often be enough.

The basis of all ministry is always in the form of a loving response to need, and when I talk of 'loving', I speak of scriptural love as defined in 1 Corinthians 13 v4-8. It has nothing to do with gaining power over other people or increasing one's personal prestige. It is not about 'us' but 'others'.

Similarly, we are not called to live other people's lives for them – a brief look at our own lives should be convincing enough reason.

'Need' is not something to be enforced on other people but is something they themselves should recognise and acknowledge before seeking and receiving help. This is not a passive process but one which involves them fully and demands their willing involvement and agreement.

Most ministry is 'accidental' and is not pre-meditated. Need presents itself as we go about our daily life and we respond accordingly out of grace and love. This kind of ministry can't really be planned for although it can be prepared for through prayer and being open to the needs of others.

If we are called to serve in some small way or not, then so be it. All we need to be is willing and faithful and take opportunities as they arise. And if not called, then we should give thanks some other has been called to fulfil that task.

We should never be smug enough to think that only we can offer right ministry. There are other children in God's wonderful family.

Many of us do not know or are unsure what gifts, talents and skills we have been given the stewardship of, and that is not a problem so long as we use what we have been given when called willingly and faithfully.

Knowing what our gifts, talents and skills are can occasionally lead to a kind of destructive and unhelpful spiritual smugness and result in us claiming sole ownership of what is not ours to own.

The gifts, talents and skills we have the stewardship of on God's behalf do not belong to us, and what has been given and either not used or misused when needed can be taken from us and given into the stewardship of others.

(The old maxim of 'use it or lose it' applies here.)

Also, these gift, talents and skills, may be given for a short period of need rather than permanently.

When gifts, talents and skills, are not being used then it shows the faith as being powerless and ineffectual and it leads to a growing sense of dis-ease, disenchantment, disappointment and dis-empowerment.

When this happens, it makes the church appear weak, divided and as if it has lost its way, something that is unattractive and uninspiring. Why would anyone want to belong to a church or Christian community with those attributes?

When gifts, talents and skills, are being fully utilised there is a sense of fulfilment and of being empowered. There is also unity, a sense of direction and purposefulness, a coming together in celebration. There is that sense of power too, that knowledge that here we have a God at work in the community as well as in our own lives.

Effective ministry is a good indicator of the spiritual health of a church or Christian community.

Effective ministry is a consequence of a real dynamic relationship with God. That love generates ministry as a natural consequence. This kind of scripturally and spiritually defined love is the foundation for all ministry.

Ministry on its own bears no fruit unless it is driven by genuine love.

So all of have some kind of God given ministry that we hold in Godly and prayerful stewardship. Those ministries are required to meet the circumstances we face or find ourselves in as a church or Christian community.

Whilst being infinitely gracious, God does not give us what we don't need. If He does give us something, it has a reason behind it and we do need it, even if we can't see why for the moment. (Remember 'the stone that was rejected'

We are given those ministries in the form of gifts, talents and skills, for the benefit of others and under the authority of God. They are not personal gifts but are gifts needed by the whole Christian community.

Under that authority, we have a God given right to exercise those ministries without need of human approval. God's approval is, or should be, enough.

We have no authority or right to interfere with or give judgement regarding the ministry of others (unless they are in direct contravention of Holy Scripture).

We therefore minister in God's Name to His glory and none other.

We do not minister in the name of the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church or any other even if we subscribe to their secondary authority – they are similarly subject to the will and authority of God as organizations as we are as individuals. It is simply to God we all answer.

Genuine, meaningful and lasting Christian unity depends on us accepting these simple facts, and not upon different Christian organizations (supposedly) agreeing to work with one another and recognize one another's holy orders.

Where legitimate (God authored) ministry is restricted, rejected, interfered with or even forbidden, we stand in danger of bringing God's judgement upon ourselves as our actions damage the whole body of Christ and we exceed our supposed authority.

God chooses who He chooses to work as He wills. It is not up to us to challenge God's choice.

Nor is it up to us to tell others how they should conduct their ministry.

Our responsibilities are simply as follows:-

(1) to be faithful and willing regarding the execution of ministry God has called us to individually,

(2) to be good stewards of the gifts, talents and skills God has individually entrusted to us,

(3) not to get in the way of, interfere with, judge or obstruct other people's ministries,

(4) but instead be supportive and encouraging whenever the opportunity arises.

If only.....

+Ian

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The life of Christ as a model for ministry: 'not my will but yours....'

1. Expect to be obstructed.	4. Expect condemnation.
2. Expect misunderstanding.	5. Expect to be crucified.
3. Expect rejection.	6. Expect to be justified.

+Ian

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There will be signs....

+David

St. John the Baptist calls everyone today to prepare the way for the Lord, so that He may smoothly arrive into our hearts, our families and our world.

“There will be signs,” Jesus said (from the gospel for the First Sunday of Advent, Luke 21:25-36).

When I was a child one of the signs I always looked forward to was my Advent calendar. Every year about this time my brother and sisters and I were given a new Advent calendar. It was usually a beautiful picture that had a bunch of little numbered doors, one for each day of Advent. Each day we would open a little door on the calendar. Behind the door was a Bible verse, part of the Christmas story, or a churchy picture. One year there were chocolates. Each door we opened was a sign Christmas was getting closer.

We were counting down the days. That’s what Advent was about.

I liked Advent. I liked the way the house looked, the music my parents played, the bowls of snacks set out for guests. Advent was a time of expectation, anticipation, and excitement. Yes, it meant Jesus would be born in Bethlehem but it also meant grandparents, presents, and Santa Clause. I looked forward to the future one day at a time.

Then something happened. Somewhere along the way life got really real and Advent changed. Advent was no longer just the season before Christmas, a countdown. Instead it began to describe the reality of my life and world. The gospel texts about the destruction of the temple, war, earthquakes, famines, plagues, and betrayals (Luke 21:1-19) took on new and often very personal meanings. Advent became a season of change, letting go, and looking to a future that was not yet clear or known.

I'm not exactly sure when it began or how it happened but I know it did. All the signs were there.

- It might have been that night when I sat alone, with the lights off, looking out on the bright shining moon and sky, wondering how my life got to that point. I had everything I wanted, and, wanted nothing. I had done all the right things and yet everything felt wrong. "There will be signs," Jesus said.
- It might have been the pain and brokenness in my first marriage, when my wife died from cancer, the guilt and regrets, the dreams that were replaced by a list of could've, would've, and should've. "There will be signs," Jesus said.
- It might have been the day my young sister Irene died, a world ended, and lives were lost, hers, and mine. "There will be signs," Jesus said.
- It might have been reading the headlines and feeling like my prayers are unable to keep up with the pain and the needs of the world. "There will be signs," Jesus said.
- It might have been one too many pictures of another drowned Syrian refugee. "There will be signs," Jesus said.
- It might have been listening to the news of the mass shootings around the world and here in the UK and knowing there will be yet another vigil and moment of silence brought about by violence. "There will be signs," Jesus said.
- It might have been waking up with the world each morning of the past week and finding our garage broken into and many items stolen and now wondering, What's next? Where will it happen? When will it take place? "There will be signs," Jesus said.

It might have been any one of these, all of them, or a thousand other things just like them. These are just a few of my Advent stories, stories about how my life has been changed and the world as I had known it ended. What are your Advent stories? I'll bet you have them. I'll bet you could tell stories about the day your life was changed and your world ended. I'll bet you have lived through seasons of change, letting go, and stepping into an uncertain future, maybe even a future you did not want.

I sometimes wish Advent was as simple and easy as opening a little door on the calendar, eating a piece of chocolate, and knowing that Christmas is one day closer.

But it's not. You and I both know the world is not that simple and life is not that easy.

Maybe that's why every year on this day, the Second Sunday of Advent, we always hear a gospel text (Luke 21:25-36) that seems to describe the end of the world and the signs that will accompany that ending. This is not just a story about Jesus and his disciples. This is your story and my story. We experience it in our lives. We see it in our world. And today the Church declares it to be the good news of Christ.

"There will be signs," Jesus said. More than ever our world needs to see the signs. The longer I live, the more I see and experience, the more I realise how necessary those signs are. I want to be reminded that the signs are there.

Every Advent story is accompanied by signs. Jesus says if we look we'll see the signs everywhere; in the sun, the moon, the stars; in the distress among earth's nations; and in the roaring of the sea and its waves. I certainly saw the signs that night in my office and the day Irene died albeit a bit more clearly now than then. I can see them today in the pictures of refugees and in the world's violence.

I've no doubt you've seen the signs too, in your life and in the world. They're everywhere and they are not hard to spot. They are, however, too easily and quickly misunderstood and misused.

“There will be signs” are words of hope and reassurance but far too often they are heard as words of warning and threat. And when they are, the signs are used to predict a future of impending doom and loss. They become indicators that the world will end and you better shape up or God is going to get you.

Our misunderstanding of the signs pushes us further into the darkness and deeper into our fear. Our misuse of the signs blinds us to the coming of the Son of Man with power and great glory.

“There will be signs” are not Jesus’ words of warning and threats. Jesus does not ask us to predict the future. He never says these are the signs that the end of the world has come. Instead, he says that when we see the signs we are to stand up, raise our heads, and know that help is on the way; our redemption, our healing, our Saviour has drawn near.

The signs are not a reason to hang our head in despair or shrink from life. That we can see the signs in our lives and world means that the circumstances we face and the events that happen contain and reveal the promise of Christ’s coming. The signs are our hope and reassurance that God has not abandoned us, that God notices us, that God cares, comes to, and participates in our life’s circumstances.

Jesus’ parable of the fig tree teaches us how to read the signs. The Advent signs are as ordinary and common as a fig tree sprouting leaves. We see the leaves and we know something is happening. Winter is already near. It’s a new season, the same in summer with new life, new growth, new fruit. That is the promise and good news of the Advent signs. And yet that promise, that good news, is fulfilled not apart from but in and through the reality of our life’s circumstances and our world’s events, no matter how difficult or tragic they may be.

So, what if we looked on our lives and our world and we began to read and understand the signs in our Advent stories as sprouting leaves? What would we see? What would it mean?

It would mean that the kingdom of God is near. It would mean we are entering a new season. We would see new life and new growth. We would produce new fruit. We could open the doors of our life with new courage and confidence. We could look on the world with a new sense of compassion and hope. We would be strengthened to do the work God has given us to do.

Yes, the Advent seasons of our lives can be long, difficult, and painful. But we never face those seasons without the signs of hope and reassurance, signs that point to the one who is coming.

"There will be signs," Jesus said.

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FURTHER ARTICLES AND PRAYERS FOR MEDITATION:

+David

This Christmas season as we gather with our family, friends and loved ones to enjoy good fellowship and to give thanks to our Lord for all He has done for us and is continuing to do for us. I pray you are able to be with those you care most about during this time and share together in giving thanks.

Of course, there are many who are unable to be with family or friend, who perhaps don't even have either, and who need someone to reach out and show them Christ's love this Advent.

If you know someone like that, please reach out to them and see if you can't share some of our joy in Christ with them. And if you don't know anyone to minister to directly, please consider participating in one of the many ministries that reach out to the genuine homeless, the lost and the forgotten. We show our thanks most when we give of ourselves to others.

Prayers:

"Heavenly Father, we praise, glorify and honour you. Father, we praise you and thank you for all you have done for your people, for all the lives you have changed, for all the relationships you have restored, for all the broken hearts you have healed. We thank you for this opportunity to come together with others and to share our thanks with them as well. Father, we lift up to you the many homeless and hungry around the world for whom every day is a struggle and a hardship. Touch their lives, Lord, restore what is lost, provide what is needed, feed all who are hungry. As we lift our hearts in thanks to you Lord may we always remember to lift others up to you in prayer as well.

We pray for peace in this world torn with war. We pray for light where there is darkness, truth where there are lies, faith where there is hopelessness. We lift up to you the orphan and the widow, all those who have lost a loved one, all those displaced from their homes. We lift up the dispossessed and despised, the hated and loathed, the unwanted and unloved. May you work in each of their lives. Father we lift up those cruelly exploited by their fellow human beings, the cast-off and abandoned, and the cruelly trafficked. May each have their pains eased and their hearts restored through your wondrous love.

Father, we thank you today and all days, and keep you in our hearts at all times. Be with our clergy, all who attend our Churches and Oratories and give them each, strength and courage. Be with us today and every day. In all these things we pray in Jesus's name. Amen."

May our Lord's greatest blessings rain down abundantly on you and yours. May your heart be filled with joy, praise, and thanksgiving. May His love be with you at all times. Thank you again, and God bless you and yours.

Yours in Christ,

✠David.

"CHRISTMAS: A RIGHT PERSPECTIVE"

+David

(This was a Sermon I presented December 2013)

What's your perspective? Without the right perspective, it's easy to miss something important. Wilbur and Orville Wright repeatedly tried to make their plane fly. It was a design failure, experiment redesigned till they did what man had never done before. They actually flew. Elated they messaged their sister Katherine. "We have actually flown 120 feet. Will be home for Christmas."

Hastily Katherine rushed the news scoop of the century - to the local newspaper editor. He smiled and said, "Well, well, how nice. The boys will be home for Christmas."

What's your perspective on God's perspective and involvement in the world? On endless debates as to where we can hold Church services, post the 10 Commandments even display a Nativity scene? Isn't it sad that our MPs and courts feel those are issues THEY need to rule on and restrict? To make it even worse I quote a few examples of simple mindedness.

Public schools (our educational institutions) many suppress the Christmas spirit. Several examples of school officials overstepping their bounds, inconsistently banning expressions of Christmas while allowing symbols of other religions:

* School employees prohibited from handing out Christmas cards because those with a Christian message "may not be a legally protected right on public school premises."

* Two students disciplined for wearing red and green scarves in a Christmas show by ending the presentation wishing the audience, "Merry Christmas."

* Students having to remove "religious" decorations and jewellery from uniforms and lockers, but allowed to leave secular ones.

* A school deleted the word "Christmas" from the school calendar substituting "holiday" after the Governing Body threatened legal action.

* A Certain public schools policy allows display of the Jewish menorah and Muslim crescent, but not the Christian nativity. A memo from the Schools chancellor said, "The display of secular religious symbol decorations is permitted. Such symbols include, but are not limited to, Christmas trees, menorahs, and the star and crescent."

That statement alone displays much lack of knowledge from a person who should know better.

I am getting tired of all the controversy from people who don't want any religious emphasis in Christmas. That maybe, we give in to the secular crowd and accept a deal? We will give them all the non-religious stuff and we'll keep the things of Christmas that promote all the controversy, the religious side.

Here's how it will work. "They get the large chap in the red suit." They don't get his name because that's a derivative of Saint Nicholas, an obvious religious connection. Further, they don't get gifts because that traces back to the wise men. So now his sack is empty. We get most of the music, in fact we get the best music (Handel's Messiah, the great Christmas Carols) and they get Rudolph, Frosty and Jingle Bells. They can get Christmas trees they aren't in the Bible. I heard that it was Martin Luther, a religious leader, who popularised them and put candles on to represent Christ, as the light of the world. So the trees are debatable. In fact, we get most of the decorations, including lights and tinsel because tinsel represents the gold given by the wise men.

We get the date because it's really unknown as to when Christ was actually born so maybe we can just join the Orthodox brethren who celebrate on January 7th. They can call their celebration Sparkle Season or Winter Celebration but we get Christmas because obviously the name Christ is right in it. So when you break it all down, they get a date, an anonymous fat chap with an empty sack, accompanied by Jingle Bells & Frosty. Oh and they get the fruit cake! Not the CHRISTmas cake.

The point is that obviously without CHRIST, there just isn't much left to Christmas.

What's your perspective? What will your Christmas celebration be like this year? The one whose birth we celebrate also said this, "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners' love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that." (Luke 6:32-33)

If our Christmas celebration is limited to exchange of gifts with those who love us, we haven't even begun to take the first steps of faith in our Christmas celebration. Be sure to keep the right Christmas perspective this year. Have you ever done anything to deliberately celebrate the birth of Christ during Christmas? Or is your Christmas celebration the same thing you've always done - the same traditions your family has always observed? Over and over without changing. Some call it a rut. That's how our Christmas celebration can be. We do the same thing year after year. Watch people while they're in the Supermarkets? The long queues waiting to see you know who! - The cashier. Ever heard them talk how hurried they are, how frustrated?

What would it take to give you a new perspective on Christmas? To celebrate the birth of the one who said as a man, "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?" There's nothing of a Christian perspective in buying expensive gifts for family and friends. That loves those who love us. Challenge your Christmas perspective this year.

Challenge yourself with the words of the one whose birth we say we are celebrating. Mathew 10:32-33 "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven." What an opportunity to say, "Hey, have you forgotten about what the season is all about?"

What a gift to Jesus! To just say, Lord, I don't know how I can do this but in faith I'll trust you if you will help me to forgive another person.

You know we all get a bit weary at Christmas. We all get a bit weary leading up to Christmas it's so hard, to squeeze in time to visit family and friends. I've heard that - we're so busy celebrating Jesus' birth that we can't do the things Jesus said. Isn't that a bit strange?

Does your Christmas perspective include any room for our elderly, hungry, thirsty, sick, our youngsters who have lost their parents and loved one's?

I used to assist on night shift at a rescue house run by Christian's. All felt they had to do that to tell Jesus how thankful they were for their home. That's an interesting perspective? They also got a new perspective talking with people in the house; some grateful for the service they were receiving, some angry at the world wanting even more, feeling the world owed them a living. What's your Christmas perspective?

Is it a day off, a day of giving and receiving gifts? Or the celebration of the one who has drastically changed lives and provided eternal life for you? And does your celebration include acts of gratitude to the one who gave his life for you?

With all the blessings we have received and continue to reap, is it too much to ask for a bit of sacrifice, a gift to Jesus even now when we feel we're just so busy. Sure we all get a bit weary in this Christmas season, but isn't the King whose birth we celebrate worth whatever sacrifice and gift we can give, isn't the King of Kings worth all of that and even a bit more? To think a moment about Jesus on CHRISTmas day.

Isn't that the right perspective?

✝David

'Why doesn't God answer me?'

I read Psalm 77 recently it had a personal relevance and a meaning for me. I had earlier completed reading another booklet which again covered Psalm 77. How strange! It could be said the question this psalm asks 'Why doesn't God answer me?'

If you've ever asked God for anything when very low, and then not had a response, you rightly may well think that God doesn't care that much about you.

Well, hold on a moment. It might surprise you that there are people in the Bible, such as a man called Asaph, who wrestled with this same issue. Coincidentally, there is a location near Cardiff in Wales actually called St Asaph and is a very famous location.

Below I have copied and included Psalm 77 (NIV). By studying Psalm 77, one of Asaph's heartfelt prayers, you'll discover the true purpose, privilege and power of prayer!

Therefore, we must remember the simple truths that Psalm 77 affirms to us in our times of mourning to cry aloud to God and seek Him, pray and meditate for wisdom and discernment throughout the process, and remember His faithfulness in previous times of need.

Psalm 77

For the Director of Music.

For Jeduthun. Of Asaph. A Psalm.

1

I cried out to God for help;

I cried out to God to hear me.

2

When I was in distress, I sought the Lord;

at night I stretched out untiring hands,

and I would not be comforted.

3

I remembered you, God, and I groaned;
I meditated, and my spirit grew faint.

4

You kept my eyes from closing;
I was too troubled to speak.

5

I thought about the former days,
the years of long ago;

6

I remembered my songs in the night.
My heart meditated and my spirit asked:

7

“Will the Lord reject forever?
Will he never show his favour again?

8

Has his unfailing love vanished forever?
Has his promise failed for all time?

9

Has God forgotten to be merciful?
Has he in anger withheld his compassion?”

10

Then I thought, "To this I will appeal:
the years when the Most High stretched out his right hand.

11

I will remember the deeds of the Lord;
yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.

12

I will consider all your works
and meditate on all your mighty deeds."

13

Your ways, God, are holy.
What god is as great as our God?

14

You are the God who performs miracles;
You display your power among the peoples.

15

With your mighty arm you redeemed your people,
the descendants of Jacob and Joseph.

16

The waters saw you, God,
the waters saw you and writhed;
the very depths were convulsed.

17

The clouds poured down water,
the heavens resounded with thunder;
your arrows flashed back and forth.

18

Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind,
your lightning lit up the world;
the earth trembled and quaked.

19

Your path led through the sea,
your way through the mighty waters,
though your footprints were not seen.

20

You led your people like a flock
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

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Prayers for the nation:

Rev David Startup, OSJ

Dear Lord, we need you to know that we rejoice in you, give thanks,
and find salvation, love and grace. Only when we depend on you fully
for everything are we free to experience the abundance of your love
and everything that goes with it.

Lord in your mercy, *Hear our prayer*

Dear Lord please grant strength, wisdom and righteousness to all those in leadership, especially King Charles and we pray that he follows your teaching as his mother did.

May all Leaders work for the good of your people, not for the few – practicing the fruits of the spirit for each and every one.

We pray for the Armed Forces that they may protect us. The emergency services - that they may keep us safe and secure - that the Doctors and Nurses that look after us when we are ill.

Help us Lord to love our neighbour as ourselves and do all in our power to support and help them when in need.

Ukraine.....and indeed all armed conflict.

God of Peace and justice, we pray for the people of Ukraine today.
We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.
We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow,
that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.
We pray for those with power over war or peace,
For wisdom, discernment and compassion
to guide their decisions.

Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear,
that you would hold and protect them.

We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Amen

We pray for all immigrants, that calmness and order prevails on both sides

We pray for all mankind particularly children, where abuse prevails.
those that are orphaned, left with no homes and in any degree of fear, stress and sadness and those subjected to trafficking.

On a more personal note Lord, we pray that when trouble finds any one of us, we shall not turn away from you or deny you our faith, or stop listening.

We shall look to you for healing, for peace and listen to your way forward for us.

Through what we do, what we say and the attitude we have towards others, you will know that we are so very grateful and privileged to know you.

Dear Lord we need your encouragement, your hope and your peace to be evident in our lives, please help us to listen, trust and obey even more that we do.

The idea of eternal, forever, and never - ending encouragement and hope is the foundation on which to build our lives. Lord, when we do fall flat on our faces, pick us up again.

As we walk in Your truth and seek it with longing and righteous intention, we will only think and dwell on that is from You and of You.

Keep us from the edge of doubt so that we do not follow the path of false teachings and waste more of the precious time we have together to worship You and do good to others.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer*

Nearer to home we pray for peace, joy and contentment and the healing of those who are suffering from various illnesses – remembering especially at this time.....

Please heal them Lord and give strength to those who care for them.

We pray for the departed remembering at this time.....

Give comfort to those bereaved.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Dear Lord, Belief and Trust in you is paramount in our lives and if *everyone* felt the same all our problems and challenges would disappear. Help us Lord....please.

Merciful Father. *Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.*

-oOo-

Teacher, don't you care if we drown? (Mark 4 35-41)

How many times are we “up” and how many times are we “down”?

I can only speak for myself – having said that, I am normal and quite ordinary and as I age and talk to others, begin to realise that they are in the same “boat of doubt”.

The good news is of course the realization that Jesus was sleeping in a boat in rough seas and His disciples were afraid let's face it, of death by drowning in a rough and unfathomable sea.

They called to Him - perhaps it was too rough to swim, perhaps some or all of them, could n't?

No lifeboats, no life belts, no helicopters, nowhere near land.

I reckon they tried their very best to deal with the danger themselves. I wonder how much time they spent worrying about their lives?

All of a sudden they realise who they are sitting with! No worries - was there?

Doubt can be a dangerous thing. How many times do we try to sort problems, challenges and dangers out?

Praying to Jesus is not the last thing we should do – but the first!

I recently purchased a fridge magnet from York Minster, which is now living in the kitchen. It says –

If you pray only when you are in trouble - you're in trouble.

As we all realise I'm sure, the Lord is a good listener, our prayers become conversation and I 'm sure that brings us closer to Him.

It's simple -

when full of fear and doubt we *must* remember talk to him *first*
and *any time*.

And yes, let's read His book more often too!

Rev David Startup, OSJ (UK)

