The Still Point
A Time of Meditation and Reflection
The Sixth Sunday of Easter

... At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;
Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,
But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,
Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards,
Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point,
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance...

T.S. Eliot, Burnt Norton

Peace on each one who comes in need;
Peace on each one who comes in joy.
Peace on each one who offers prayers;
Peace on each one who offers song.
Peace of the Maker, Peace of the Son,
Peace of the Spirit, the Triune One.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Opening Prayer

Eternal God,
light of the minds that know you,
joy of the hearts that love you,
strength of the wills that serve you;
grant us so to know you that we may truly love you,
and so to love you that we may gladly serve you,
now and always.
Amen.

The Gospel

John 14:15-21

Jesus said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you
will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

Poem: *Let Evening Come*  
by Jane Kenyon

Let the light of late afternoon  
shine through chinks in the barn, moving  
up the bales as the sun moves down.

Let the cricket take up chafing  
as a woman takes up her needles  
and her yarn. Let evening come.

Let dew collect on the hoe abandoned  
in long grass. Let the stars appear  
and the moon disclose her silver horn.

Let the fox go back to its sandy den.  
Let the wind die down. Let the shed  
go black inside. Let evening come.

To the bottle in the ditch, to the scoop  
in the oats, to air in the lung  
let evening come.

Let it come, as it will, and don’t  
be afraid. God does not leave us  
comfortless, so let evening come.
Meditation

In the translation still familiar to many, Jesus promises his disciples, “I will not leave you comfortless.” While “orphaned” is the translation closer to the original, it has very different connotations. Jesus’ assurance of comfort comes at the moment when he is preparing to leave his friends, going first to suffering and death, and then leaving them again at the moment of his ascension. The poem speaks also of endings, the ending of the day, the ending of a season, the ending of life. Like the gospel passage, it suggests that the comfort of God’s continuing presence in the midst of change, can help us to let go of what we cannot keep.

Reflection

Do you find the images in the poem, and the refrain “let evening come,” comforting? Or do they evoke some other emotion in you? How might the images of the poem speak to us about this time of loss and distancing? The gospel and the poem each have a hint of something new, a revealing, an unfolding. Is there something in your life that is beginning as other things may be ending?

Prayers

We bring before God someone whom we have met or remembered today

We bring to God someone who is hurting tonight and needs our prayer

We bring to God a troubled situation in our world

We bring to God, silently, someone whom we find hard to forgive or trust

We bring ourselves to God that we might grow in generosity of spirit, clarity of mind, and warmth of affection

We offer our thanks to God for the blessings in our lives

We name before God those who have died.

Gracious God, you hear all our prayers: those we speak aloud, those we hold in our hearts, and those prayers for which we have no words. Hear the prayers of your people, and grant them as may be best for us, for the sake of your holy name. Amen.

Accept our thanks for all you have done, O God. Our hands were empty, and you filled them.

May Christ’s holy, healing, enabling Spirit be with us every step of the way, and be our guide as our road changes and turns, and the blessing of God our Creator, Redeemer and Giver of life be among us now and remain with us forever. Amen.