

The Still Point
A Time of Meditation and Reflection
The Third 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. Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Opening Prayer

Glorious Lord of Life,
we praise you,
that by the mighty resurrection of your Son,
you have delivered us from sin and death
and made your whole creation new;
grant that we who celebrate with joy
Christ's rising from the dead,
may be raised from the death of sin
to the life of righteousness;
for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever.
Amen.

The Gospel

Luke 24:36b-48

Jesus himself stood among the disciples and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

Poem: "Rain"

*by Sandor Weores
(translated from the Hungarian by J. Kessler)*

The rain is pounding away
at the rusty eves
Twirling, sliding bubbling foam
well that's rain.

You too, and I should walk now
as free as that
on cloud, on air, the meadow
and the vapor roads.

Move around up there and here below
like this liquid thing
flowing into human life on rooftops
and on shoes.

Meditation

The gospel story again portrays the risen Jesus standing among the disciples, eating in their presence, and reassuring them while "in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering."

The poem depicts a vigorous rain in which the poet urges that we too should "walk now as free" as the rain. An introduction to this poem in *A Book of Luminous Things* suggests that the poet builds upon various symbolic meanings of water, pointing to abundance and growth. For the poet, "the desire to become rain is his longing for the descent of grace into human life. For rain is also often the symbol of grace falling from above, a magnanimous gift."

Questions for Reflection

Do joy, disbelief, and wonder ever blend together for you as they apparently did for the disciples?

Do the poem's images of rain tap into the gospel's messages of resurrection, repentance, and forgiveness? Do other, different images come to mind for you?

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.**