

The Still Point
A Time of Meditation and Reflection
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

O God, whose Son Jesus is the good shepherd of your people: Grant that when we hear his voice we may know him who calls us each by name, and follow where he leads; who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Gospel

Luke 23:13-49

Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off. When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire

there, with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."

Poem: "A Poem for Indigo"

by Voice Porter (b. 1979)

For nothing more than the Love of my people
I fight
staying my path
honoring the ancestors
dragging the children to freedom with the passion of the Christ
because even as a child You freed my mind
and I Love Your imperfections
 the way You colored outside the lines
though Your artwork didn't win any prizes
as an adult Your heart's work saves lives
and touches souls unknown even to You
and it pleases God to see You do what You do
because the truth isn't always what's said
but in the hand's work
and no matter what comes and goes
He will be edified through man's work
and You
You've done a lion's share
tending the fields and feeding His sheep until Your hands hurt

what more can we ask for?
from the time they leave it in the morning
'til after the Sun cries
and Your knees hit the floor
and I beseech thee
take a few moments of time to teach these others
who only pretend and fall short
because their work wasn't from the heart
they were monetarily motivated from the start
but from the moment that I opened my eyes
 there You were right where You've always been
with me looking for the truth so hard
making it hard to find it
but here You stand
and I'll believe in You from now until judgment call
I pray that I'll have from now until then to figure out a title to give You
because You are more than a friend
I'm prepared to be the same to You from now until the end
perpetually moving through life cycles until my life cycle ends
these might be my last days
this poem might be my last peace
so I've got to speak my peace
because this piece could very well be my eulogy
in the back of my mind thoughts of You cascade down like waterfalls
as water falls against glass
and drops from my lash
becomes streams on my cheeks
and puddles in my palms
for the celestial being You are
 I give alms to Him
and pray that I receive ilm forthright
and on that night become Your generations' protector
and hear the voice of God saying
 "Protect Her as I protect you"
 "Sanctify Her so that men may see My Love through you"
 "And Wali, believe"
 "My voice Kanika has already told you to just breathe"
so as long as I have breath
 Love I will never leave

I understand that many men may have said things like this before
but from now until the last beat of my heart
every night I'll walk through Your door saying

Baby

I'm home

Meditation

In some ways, the story told in today's gospel reflects what we do in church on a Sunday. First, a story about Jesus (in this case, Jesus helping his clumsy and human disciples find an abundant catch), then a Eucharistic meal together, and finally a commission to go forth and love the world. Of course, it's not just that. There are wonderful details here that perhaps stand out as examples of the blessedly mundane ways that the human world bumps up against the divine. Peter, embarrassed by his nakedness, quickly throws on some clothes and jumps into the water. The fishing nets strain and break at the weight of the miraculous catch. All of these details build to the concluding scene in which Jesus restores Peter to fellowship, to discipleship, to forgiveness, asking him three times for a profession of his love, once for each time Peter denied Jesus.

The concluding charge to feed the sheep, also repeated three times, acquires freshness and immediacy in today's poem by Voice Porter. The ambiguity of the poem (to whom is the poet speaking?) not only asks us to consider our own holiness, but also invites us to see others - family member, friends, strangers - as the capital 'Y' You in the poem. This is the baptismal covenant at work in the world: seeking Christ in all persons. (Listen to a reading of this poem [here](#).)

Questions for Reflection

What details from the poem strike you as profoundly human? Profoundly divine?
When has your own vulnerability and embarrassment prevented you from hearing God's call?
When has your vulnerability brought you closer to God?
Read Voice Porter's poem again, substituting a loved one in the place of the 'You'.
How does this change your perception of this loved one?

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.**

Poem and Reflection offered by: Matt Bentley