

The Still Point
A Time of Meditation and Reflection
Fifth 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

John 13:31-35

At the last supper, when Judas had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Poem: “love is more thicker than forget”

by e.e cummings (b.1894)

love is more thicker than forget
more thinner than recall
more seldom than a wave is wet
more frequent than to fail
it is most mad and moonly
and less it shall unbecome
than all the sea which only
is deeper than the sea
love is less always than to win
less never than alive
less bigger than the least begin
less littler than forgive
it is most sane and sunly
and more it cannot die
than all the sky which only
is higher than the sky

Meditation

In today's Gospel, Jesus gives his disciples his New Commandment, a radical reconsideration or recontextualization of all other commandments. This, of course, is surrounded by other acts of love: the washing of the feet, Jesus's establishment of the Eucharistic bread and wine, and the Paschal sacrifice that awaits him. Today's poem - as is typical for e.e. cummings - plays with English syntax and standards of pronunciation, as well as with the concept of love. Paired with the Gospel reading, the poem may help us consider how, if we act in love, we hold in tension the enduring qualities of love with the very human limits (forgetting, death, competition) that make love difficult to maintain.

Musical setting: If you're interested, watch this [local performance](#) of a setting of the poem, featuring two friends of your poem selector for the month.

Questions for Reflection

What phrases of the poem resonate most with you?
When has love given you a glimpse of the divine?
When has loving another helped you love God?

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