

The Still Point
A Time of Meditation and Reflection
Twenty-second Sunday After Pentecost:
Feast of All Saints' Observed

... 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.

Opening Prayer

Praise to you, God, for all your work among us. Yours is the vigor in creation, yours is the impulse in our new discoveries. Make us adventurous, yet reverent and hopeful in all we do.
Amen.

The Gospel

Luke 6:20-31

Jesus looked up at his disciples and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets. But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets. But I say to you that listen, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Poem: "The Painted Saint in the Wood"

by *M. Lyster*

There is a saint in love with God,
That I often sit and watch
In the wood; and I cannot believe him,
For I love what I see and touch.

Yesterday at this time
Some heavy carts passed by;
One peasant sang, as he passed,
A wandering melody.

I was sitting and watching the saint
Painted in white and red --
I shall not understand him

Meditation

Today's poem presents to us something that is probably a familiar feeling: admiring from afar someone else's devotion, thinking to ourselves, "That could never be me!" At the same time, the poet's perspective is probably intentionally naïve - "what I see and touch," after all, is so often the way we are nudged (or even catapulted) into an experience with the divine. This is the gift that the saints offer us: real lives in the world of touching and seeing that allow us to see and feel God's presence. We may recognize ourselves in this poet's viewpoint - watching someone else's faith life unfold - unaware that someone else is also watching, admiringly, our own attempts at a life of faith.

Questions for Reflection

Whose are the lives of faith that you admire today? Who embodies being 'in love with God' to you?

What physical images and feelings have meaning for you in your spiritual life? How does the materiality of those senses connect you to the divine?

What are the 'wandering melodies' that accompany your most holy moments?

Have you ever felt 'in love with God'? When?

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