

The Still Point
A Time of Meditation and Reflection
The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost: Proper 8

... 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

Matthew 10:40-42

Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple-- truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward."

Poem: “A Glass of Water”

by May Sarton

Here is a glass of water from my well.
It tastes of rock and root and earth and rain;
It is the best I have, my only spell,
And it is cold, and better than champagne.
Perhaps someone will pass this house one day
To drink, and be restored, and go his way,
Someone in dark confusion as I was
When I drank down cold water in a glass,
Drank a transparent health to keep me sane,
After the bitter mood had gone again.

Reflection:

Aside from the obvious connection between May Sarton's “glass of water” and Jesus's “cup of cold water,” both texts have a Eucharistic sense of a common cup that only refreshes because its bearer (Jesus, the chalice-bearer, the house dweller in the poem) has already been refreshed. We can take the cup/glass of water in other directions, too: the ministry of the baptized, Jesus's first miracle at Cana (transforming a simple cup of water into, perhaps, the champagne from the poem), and the “still waters” of Psalm 23.

Questions for Meditation:

- Though we have not enjoyed the physical Eucharist in months, we can imagine what sharing a “glass of water” might mean in these times. For you, what does the glass of water represent?
- How have you benefited from someone else’s refreshing gesture, words, or actions recently?
- How have you “passed the cup” recently?

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.**