

Thy Kingdom Come – Day 3

Praying with tradition, ritual and symbol

Maundy Thursday by Malcolm Guite

Here is the source of every sacrament,
The All-transforming presence of the Lord,
Replenishing our every element,
Remaking us in his creative Word.
For here earth herself gives bread and wine,
The air delights to bear his Spirit's speech,
The fire dances where the candles shine,
And waters cleanse us with his gentle touch.
Here he shows the full extent of love
To us whose love is always incomplete
In vain we search the heavens high above,
The God of love is kneeling at our feet.
Though we betray him, though it is night,
He meets us here and loves us into light.

I know it is not Maundy Thursday, but this poem reminds us that it is God who meets us in our praying, through the words we inherit, through the actions and practices that might open us to that presence and through the symbols cherished within our worship and faith.

For many people traditional prayers provide a structure within which to come to God. Prayers handed down to us also provide a link with all those of faith who have gone before, and all those with whom we share the words now. Praying them is a communal, not just an individual act, even when we are separated. Having some favourite prayers to hand also can help those times when our own heart is dry and we do not know how to come to God. You might like to create a prayer note book – collecting prayers that help you in this way.

Another idea that members of our church have suggested they have found helpful is to make a time to end the activity of the day and say Evening Prayer from the Book of Common Prayer –

reading through chapters of each Testament day by day. The Church of England website has details on line of how to do this with Common Worship too. <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-service-daily-prayer>

As the poem suggests, creating a prayerful space and time can be helped by lighting a candle. The tradition of making the sign of the cross is also about setting your intention and attention for prayer in God's presence.

Giving our days and weeks, our months and years a rhythm may also have a place in this day's thinking. Choosing to step back from busy-ness on a Sunday is perhaps a lost tradition we need to find again. Our pattern of Church seasons is about helping us focus on different blessings of faith. I wonder if any of you have suggestions you have discovered about how the new rhythms of this time have helped you make new habits that you value?

God bless