

The United Church of Canada  
**St Francis Manoir & Grace Village  
& Manoir Stanstead**

A service for personal meditations at home  
Lent 2021 (week 3)

**Grounding Prayer**

(Take a deep breath, center yourself within the love of God)  
God, You are present, may I be transformed by this encounter.

**Opening Prayer:**

Gracious God, I want to see your goodness in the land of the living—here and now, in this world of flesh and blood, in the midst of deep fears and desperate hopes. Give me grace to put my trust in your mercy, even when my heart aches out in fear. Help us notice the whisper of your presence amid all the noise and news that clamour and threaten. Let your love, like a healing stream, flow through us and carry us onward to a new day. May it be so, may it be so, Amen.

**Christ Light:**

I light this candle, remembering that I live in God's world and I am not alone.

**Prayer of Illumination:**

Challenging God, you have guided your people throughout the ages to sing and pray and reflect. You invite me to listen to timeless stories. Help us to receive the ever-new message of radical love. May it find a place to rest deep in our souls, so that we might draw strength and courage. Amen.

**A Reading from the Gospel of John 2:13-22**

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

*The Living Word, I listen with my heart, my mind and my spirit.*

**Candle Meditation:**

Despite the restrictions in our movements and the reduced number of people many of us see in a day life can still feel too busy, with many things clamoring for our attention. We may fill our free time with TV, radio or phone calling. Where is the time and place to listen for the still, small voice of God? Sometimes it seems that God would have to speak in a whirlwind to be heard above the clamor! Listen now. There is a place of quiet rest, and it is the place where God dwells within you. Close your eyes. Be aware of the place. In Lent we journey to the parts of ourselves known only to God, beneath the clamor. Let the story of Jesus reach us there. Let it teach us wisdom in our secret hearts.

*(Silent time.)*

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of the unrealistic expectations placed upon health care workers, leading to burnout and sometimes suicide. We lament the status of our so-called ange-gardiens : health care workers who are also asylum seekers still waiting for permanent admission into Canada. We lament the chronic under funding of our health care system leading to undervaluing of the role of health care workers. Proper health care begins with respect for the contribution of all health care workers. We are our brother's keeper  
(*A candle is extinguished.*)

**Prayer of Reflection:**

Draw us together in your love, O God. May our restless hearts not resist you, but continue to search until they find their rest in you. Open our hearts and minds to your steadfast presence and help us to put our trust in you. I pray using the words Jesus gave to his disciples;  
*Our Father, who art in heaven...*

**Blessing & Commissioning**

May the path that Christ walks to bring justice upon the earth, to bring light to those who sit in shadows, to bring out those who live in servitude, and to bring new things to all creation, may this path run through our lives. May I be the road Christ takes. Amen.

**Hymn: (VU120) O Jesus, I have promised**

O Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;  
Remain forever near me, My saviour and my friend;  
I shall not fear the journey if you are by my side,  
Nor wander from the pathway if you wilt be my guide.

Oh, let me feel you near me; The world is ever near;  
I see the sights that dazzle, The tempting sounds I hear;  
My foes are ever near me, Around me and within;  
But, Jesus, then draw nearer, And shield my soul from sin.

O let me hear you speaking, In accents clear and still,  
Above the storms of passion, The murmurs of self-will;  
Oh, speak to reassure me, To hasten, or control;  
Now speak, and make me listen, O Guardian of my soul.

O Jesus, you have promised to all who follow you  
That where you are in glory your servant shall be too;  
And Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;  
O give me grace to follow, my saviour and my friend.

Prayers by:

OP: John Moses, Gathering Lent 2021 (Year B), pg.30.

CM: Rev. Lee Ann Hogle, Beulah United-St Paul's United-Georgeville United, Lent 2021.

PI: Laura Turnbull, Gathering Lent 2021 (Year B), pg.37.

BC: Aaron Palmer , Gathering Lent 2021 (Year B), pg.37.