

Opening Poem: *Voices* by R.S. Thomas

Who to believe?

The linnet sings bell-like,
a tinkling music. It says life
is contained here; is a jewel
in a shell casket, lying
among down. There is another
voice, far out in space
whose persuasiveness is the distance
from which it speaks. Divided
mind, the message is always
in two parts. Must it be
on a cross it is made one?

Stand

**Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;
as thou hast been thou forever wilt be.**

Refrain:

**Great is thy faithfulness!
Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see:
all I have needed thy hand hath provided--
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!**

**Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love. [Refrain]**

**Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! [Refrain]**

The Lord be with you
And also with you

Let us pray.

Generous God, you give us our voices, no two the
same, no finer instruments with which to praise you.
For these we thank you, O Lord.

You gave us words with which to wound or wonder,
bore or bless, inspire or diminish.

For these we thank you, O Lord.

In your Church you have gathered us. In your
community of common folk and complainers, prophets
and puzzled people, you have made a place for us.

For these we thank you, O Lord.

Let what we say and do here, what we ponder and
decide here, be real for us and honest to you, and
prepare us for the life of the world in which you are
also praised.

Amen.

Sit

Ecclesiastes 3.1-7

For everything there is a season, and a time for every
matter under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather
stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from
embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.

Matthew 5.1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain;
and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then
he began to speak, and taught them, saying:
"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom
of heaven.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be
comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for
righteousness, for they will be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called
children of God.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for

righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you".

Address

Prayer: Kyrie from Mass for Hard Times by R.S.Thomas

Because we cannot be clever and honest
and are inventors of things more intricate
than the snowflake – Lord have mercy.

Because we are full of pride
in our humility, and because we believe
in our disbelief – Lord have mercy.

Because we will protect ourselves
from ourselves to the point
of destroying ourselves – Lord have mercy.

And because on the slope to perfection,
when we should be half-way up,
we are half-way down – Lord have mercy.

Silence

Poem: Gift by R.S.Thomas

Some ask the world
and are diminished
in the receiving
of it. You gave me

only this small pool
that the more I drink
from, the more overflows
me with sourceless light.

The Lord's Prayer

Stand

**Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He has loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword:
His truth is marching on.**

Refrain:

Glory, glory! Hallelujah!

**Glory, glory! Hallelujah!
Glory, glory! Hallelujah!
His truth is marching on.**

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;

He is sifting out the hearts of all before his judgment seat.

Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer him; be jubilant, my feet!

Our God is marching on. [Refrain]

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,

With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me.

As he died to make us holy, let us live to make all free,

While God is marching on. [Refrain]

Blessing

May God bless you with discomfort,
at easy answers, half-truths,
and superficial relationships
so that you may live
deep within your heart. **Amen.**

May God bless you with anger
at injustice, oppression,
and exploitation of people,
so that you may work for
justice, freedom and peace. **Amen.**

May God bless you with tears,
to shed for those who suffer pain,
rejection, hunger and war,
so that you may reach out your hand
to comfort them and
turn their pain to joy. **Amen.**

And may God bless you
with enough foolishness
to believe that you can
make a difference in the world,
so that you can do
what others claim cannot be done. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God our Creator, Jesus Christ the Incarnate Word who is our brother and Saviour, and the Holy Spirit, our Advocate and Guide, be with you and remain with you, this day and forevermore. **Amen.**