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TRINITY SUNDAY B

26th May 2024

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

Living, loving God, you call me into relationship, with you and with the people around me.

Today, I come to meet with you, held together by your Spirit,
Come Lord Jesus, come triune God.

Pause

From Psalm 29: Ascribe to the LORD you heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendour of his holiness.

Glorious God, I come to worship you today as an earthly being who, nevertheless, wants to give you honour and praise to the best of my ability. Your greatness lifts me beyond my ordinariness and in the radiance of your splendour, I am able to shine.

Mighty and majestic God, enthroned over all people and places, I humbly receive the strength you offer and the blessing of your peace today. I am nothing without the assurance of these and we are truly grateful.

Today, help me to give you all the glory.

Amen.

You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar

Reading: John 3:1-17 – [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the reading

On this Trinity Sunday, the lectionary readings take us to Nicodemus – who came by night seeking enlightenment – appears in John's Gospel three significant times. He's got a trinity of appearances: here in chapter 3, then in chapter 7, and then in chapter 19. In her full reflection written for *The Vine*, Rev Val Ogden explored this 'trinity' of Nicodemus in full [*you can find out more and subscribe to *The Vine* by emailing us at thevine@twelvebaskets.co.uk*] – today lets explore a shorter version of that reflection.

Firstly, Nicodemus is the Discoverer

He is alone, remember, and comes by night: it's dangerous for him to meet Jesus and try to discover more about him. He respects this fellow Rabbi and sees the workings of God in him. So he searches him out and seeks to know more. Nicodemus the discoverer - wide eyed at the one who earlier in the Gospel changes water into wine, who causes havoc in the Temple. These miraculous and astonishing actions are signs of the Kingdom of God, right? But Jesus says. Nicodemus – very truly I tell you – no-one can see the Kingdom of God without being born from above. The signs alone aren't enough. There are many sermons to be preached on that phrase, 'born again' or 'born from above' but the point is, Nicodemus the discoverer – the searcher, the seeker - finds he has SO much more to learn

than he ever realised, if he is in any way going to grasp what God's Kingdom is all about. And recognising that, we can all stand side by side with Nicodemus can't we? We ALL need to keep searching and seeking – to be on a never ending journey of discovery with God.

Secondly, Nicodemus is the Defender

A courageous defender. By the time we get to John 7.50. this Jesus has really been causing problems – theological and practical ones. So, in a meeting which John's Gospel records took place with the temple police, the chief priests and his fellow Pharisees, Nicodemus is shown as a lone voice of defence. In Chapter 7.51 we read, 'Our law does not judge people without first giving them a hearing to find out what they are doing, does it?' He didn't make himself popular being the lone voice of defence mind you. He was ridiculed in fact. Are you from Galilee too? The second person of the Nicodemian Trinity – the courageous defender – speaks to us powerfully, I think. When might God call you or me to be the lone and unpopular voice in our defence of Jesus?

Thirdly, meet Nicodemus the Disciple

Jesus who had so challenged his faith development and urged his spiritual transformation has now died and Nicodemus – along with Joseph of Arimathea whom John calls 'secret disciple' – are paired together in chapter 19. And there is something of great magnitude here. The Gospel writer chooses to draw our attention to a small but significant detail.

When disciple Nicodemus (Chapter 19.39) came to pay his respects, to do what was necessary before burial, he carried with him an enormous quantity of myrrh and aloes – the traditional substances of anointing – about one hundred pounds. In John chapter 12.2 – when Mary anointed Jesus with costly perfume – the Gospel speaks of one pound of nard - and Judas complained that was a waste of money. One hundred pounds: what does John's Gospel want us to grasp because of that detail? Rudolf Bultmann's commentary suggests that when Nicodemus the disciple brings this huge and costly devotion in spices, it speaks of a truth of immense quantity that has dawned upon him. Yet it is at precisely this moment that the world waits to be 'born from above' through Resurrection and Pentecost. As Nicodemus the disciple attends his Lord's burial with his costly devotion, he reflects, surely, on the many ways the person of Jesus has affected his person. And Nicodemus's new birth – the one he was so confused about initially - is just around the corner. But it's the whole world which is going to be born again - not just him.

Questions for reflection:

1. What does your 'journey of discovery' in life and faith look like at the moment? What are you searching and seeking for?
2. Have you ever judged a person or situation without giving them or the circumstances a fair hearing? What is it important for you to defend?
3. How do you react to the idea that God intended the whole world to be 'born again' or 'born anew' through Jesus, not just individuals?

Responding in music:

As part of your response, you might like to listen to all or some of these three songs:

451 STF – Open the eyes of my heart - [YouTube](#)

416 STF – There is a wideness in God's mercy - [YouTube](#)

663 STF – I, the Lord of sea and sky - [YouTube](#)

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Blessing

As I rise and head out into the world,
I go to meet you, Lord God,
To discover where you are already at work,
And to get involved.
Show me the way, I pray.

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers

(The prayers for Tuesday and Wednesday come from Annekathrin and Matthias Buchold, German Methodist Mission Partners who are also supported by the Global Relationships Team of the Methodist Church in Britain. They currently serve in South Africa and have requested and written the following prayers – translated from German).

Monday 27th May

- It's Bank Holiday Monday! What will you do differently today, that might not normally be possible? How will you feel about the change?
- What about your discipleship journey: are there things that you need, want or feel called to do differently? How will you feel about the change?
- Commit any thoughts or reflections you have in response to these questions to prayer.

Tuesday 28th May

- A new president will be elected in South Africa at the end of May.
- Lord we pray for stability in the country and non-violent elections. We ask for self-determined and active voter participation, fair cooperation and, in the end, a beneficial result for the country and its rainbow nation. Amen.

Wednesday 29th May

- After announcements of cuts in the social sector in South Africa, more and more NPOs (non-profit organisations) have to close their doors.
- Lord, we pray... for all NPOs that are currently waiting for the necessary financial benefits from the state and are unsure whether they can continue to exist. We also ask for all children, people with disabilities and sick people who suffer from such cuts and ambiguities. We ask for ways of hope and clarity, ways of courage and trust. We thank all employees, for strength and perseverance and love that sustains despite everything. Amen.

Thursday 30th May

- Find a comfortable position to sit or lie down in. Take a deep breath in through your nose, and let it out through your mouth. When you are ready, say out loud or in your head: 'Lord, I come into your presence'.
- Breathe in...breathe out. 'I come just as I am'
- Repeat the breathing, and the mantra, for as long as you can. And hold the space of holiness.

Friday 31st May

- In a moment of stillness, bring all the things that are weighing heavily on your heart to God in prayer, all the sad news and difficult situations in your own lives, your family, your church and our world.

Saturday 1st June

- Holy God, today I am thankful. I come in prayer, recognising and remembering this day that all I have received is grace, all is gift. I have received so much, and so often I take it for granted. Today, I come with a thankful heart, knowing how richly blessed I am, and seeking to offer gratitude.
- You might like to list the things you are grateful for – go on as long as you possibly can!
- Thank you God. Amen.