

With God, for God

Bunyan once pointed out protest prayer is not an eloquent patterned description. In many ways we see this in Job's chapters of hurling details of his personal experiences to God. Despite his devotion he was consumed by questions and a silent God.



“Why me” What have I done to deserve this?”

Like Job our present day situation can make praying difficult.

One day our relationship with family and friends was such and the next day we shut our doors on them. It hurts.

Businesses shut down. People made redundant. People furloughed. Schools closed. It hurts.

The church closed their doors. St Mary's Church reaches out with live-streaming, and posting reflections on the web site. But this comes with technological hitches. It hurts.

After three months these hurts are still present. But now we add more anxiety about the timing and safety of moving from closed to open. It hurts.

As individuals and a church community there seems no escaping ordeals of fragile, damaged and broken pieces. Worn out from chasing shadows and trying to care for everyone else sometimes it is hard to pin God down.

When I try to measure you God,
I can't find the words enough for you
or concepts that can capture you
or hold you more than a hint of you.
You are like an eel that slips away from me,
a distant sigh that calls to me,
a beauty always just beyond embrace.
And when I look into the depths of you
and see there is no end of you,
I wonder why you've given me this place.

This verse from Gerald Kelly's poem "Eight" sums up pain in our own bruised life. I can recall a time of deep anguish as family and friends bombarded me with their unwelcome advice. I spent years clinging to the loss of these relationships. What hurt even more was God felt very far away.

When we constantly talk to God we will arrive at the turning point. Under the deepest pain Job makes the right request as well as affirms his faithfulness.

"Who will be my mediator?"

*Still, I know that God lives—the One who gives me back my life—
and eventually he'll take his stand on earth.
And I'll see him—even though I get skinned alive!—
see God myself, with my very own eyes.
Oh, how I long for that day! {19:25-27}*

When Job, as I did, let God into the pain, God is able to reach into the depths of our being. Then we allow God to help.

"Then the Lord answered Job out of a whirlwind. {38:1} {40:6}

Job helps us to understand when prayer is an expression of an event already in progress, then destructive forces outside and within us direct the whole experience.

God helps us to understand prayer is the waiting and knowing within the active relationship between God and the self. Trusting the connectedness *with God for God* we will find the inner freedom we seek.

The invite is to retreat to the place reserved within you for God. In the inseparable space stay long enough to receive strength to endure your wounds. Never lose heart, keep praying.

"Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition and listening to His voice in the depth of our hearts." {Mother Teresa}

Jackie

[Image is "Worn Out" by Vincent Van Gogh]

