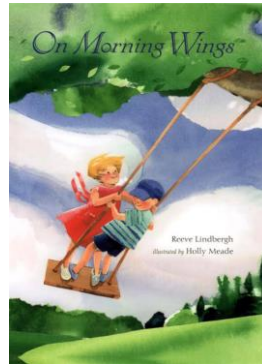


3 MAY 2020

Psalm 139 adapted in “On Morning Wings”
by Reeve Lindbergh, illustrated by Holly Meade

*Lord you look at me and know me
Every step I take, you show me
When I rise, and when I rest
You will always know me best
Where I walk, or sit, or stand
You still hold me in your hand
And if I don't know how to pray
You understand me, anyway
Once when I was lost, you found me
Then I felt your arms around me
When I'm afraid and want to hide
You are always by my side
When I'm lonely, you are near
When I'm angry, you stay here
High as heaven bright, you greet me
Down in darkness, too, you meet me
You are with me everywhere
In light and shadow, fire and air
In every tiny grain of sand
And in the desert, vast and grand
On morning wings, in oceans deep
When I'm awake, and when I sleep
In my secret self, you made me
In the blazing sun, you shade me
Know me, lead me, guide my way
Through every hour of every day
For all my life, in all I do....I will always be with you.*



Prayer

Bless us, O God – this day fresh made
In the chorus of birds – bless us
In the scent of blossom – bless us
In the wet grass and spring flowers – bless us
Bless and heal us, for we come to you in love and in trust
We come to you in expectant hope

Heal us and your grieving world of all that harms us
By the power of your resurrection restore us to new life
Set us on new paths, bring us from darkness to light
Help us to choose hope

Kate McIlhagga (adapted)

Scripture Reading: Jonah 3: 1-10

Reflection: We pick up the well-known and humorous story of Jonah when he is called for a second time to go to Nineveh. We know what happened the first time. Jonah went the opposite way, as far as possible from that sinful town which he considered far beyond God's mercy. While on a ship to Tarshish a storm arises. After praying in vain the sailors realize that Jonah's God is responsible for the potentially deadly storm. Jonah is thrown overboard, spends three days in the belly of a fish and is then spewed back on dry land. That's when "God came to Jonah a second time"

Jonah goes to Nineveh and announces that the city will be destroyed. Hearing Jonah's warning the people have a change of heart and the king tells all his subjects, including the animals, to repent. The king says, "**Who knows**, God might change God's mind" And they repent, and Nineveh is spared, which greatly frustrates Jonah.

“Who knows?” It is an interesting question; it is the question we come to when we realize we have to change our ways, that God is calling us towards a different, a new future but we do not know yet exactly what and how. Just like the king’s question expresses the uncertainty about what may happen, while calling his people to take a bold step towards a new future.

“Who knows?” This is the question we hesitantly ask when we dare to look beyond our “normal” lives, our familiar worldview, recognizing that after the corona crisis, when we have found a vaccine against Covid-19, we cannot go back to business as usual. The world *has* to change, our lives have to change; this time in lockdown gives us time to reflect what kind of world we want to live in. We are faced with the question “who knows?” as we find ourselves at a crossroad. And unsettling as this may be, we know that we are not alone; God is present with us (cf Psalm 139).

Like the Ninevites, we have come to realize that we are on a wrong path; the great social and economic inequalities in our society and the world have become even more evident, the poor and vulnerable in our society and in the world are suffering and will suffer more because of the worldwide economic recession, global warming with its disastrous consequences cannot be ignored and radical action has to be taken.....We have a vision which the biblical stories present to us, of peace and justice for all and this vision should guide us as we try to find the right way forward to the future.

“Who knows?” allows us to be open to new ideas, to try new things, and to re-evaluate who and what is really important and how we respect them/it. Who knows, God might change God’s mind. Or perhaps we should rather say, who knows, God might change our minds. That is possible! The Ninevites changed their ways when

Jonah finally brought God’s message to them. We can change our minds and our ways. Who knows? Anything can happen if we continue to believe that God’s Spirit is at work in our midst. Anything can happen if we continue to be inspired to act for peace and justice for all.

Who knows what the future has in store for us, but the question “who knows?” gives us strength not to conform to the ways of the world if they are contrary to the vision of peace and justice that we work towards. The question “who knows?” leads us, as followers of Jesus, to explore new ways to “another world that is possible!” Yes, **who knows?!**

Hymn: Be thou my vision

Prayer

Loving God, your desire is for our well-being; you wish for all “fullness of life.” We lift up to you the suffering of our world at this time. We grieve precious lives lost and vulnerable lives threatened. We are concerned and fear for ourselves and our neighbours, standing before an uncertain future. But we are also hopeful that love is stronger than fear, and we will overcome the challenges we are faced with. We continue to pray for all the frontline workers who work tirelessly and put their lives at risk. We pray for our leaders that they may discern and choose wisely in their responses to the crisis. Help us as we continue to “socially distance” while we find new and creative ways to come together in spirit and in solidarity. Call us to profound trust in your faithful presence, You, the God who does not abandon....And we pray together....OUR FATHER

Blessing: We are not alone. God is with us. Thanks be to God!
May God bless you and keep you!