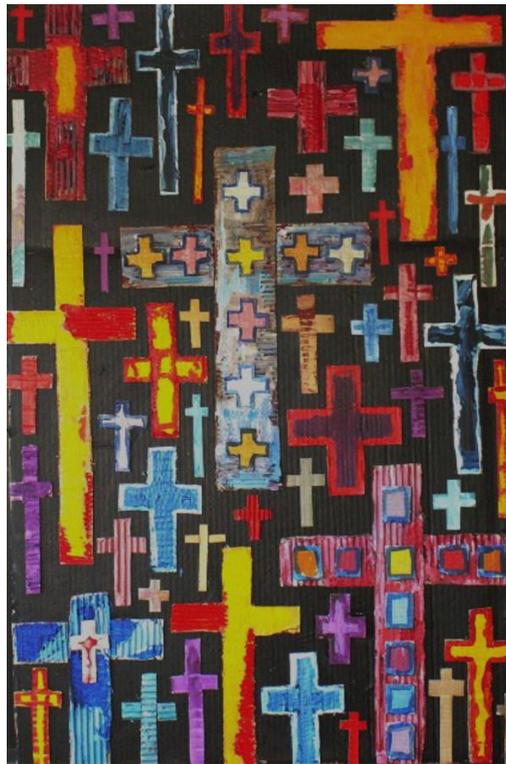




**Reflections & Prayers for Sunday
28 February 2021
The 2nd Sunday of Lent**



*Take Up Your Cross by John Kohan
(sacredartmeditations.com)*

I am very pleased to share with you, this week, a reflection written by Jan Richardson. Jan Richardson is an artist, author, United Methodist minister, and director of The Wellspring Studio. When folks ask her where The Wellspring Studio is, she says, *Wherever I am, there it is...*

I have only recently found Jan's poems, prayers, art and sermons, and am loving the discovery. I hope you do, too. Today's offering is taken from **The Painted Prayerbook**.

Lauryn

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Readings for this Sunday

You may want to find your Bible and read the lessons set for this week:

Genesis 17: 1-7, 15-16 God makes an everlasting covenant with Abraham

Psalms 22: 23-end "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord."

Romans 4: 13-end St Paul reflects on God's promises to Abraham

Mark 8:31-end Jesus says, "Take up your cross, and follow me."

Gospel reading: Jesus teaches his disciples, and foretells his death and resurrection

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

Reflection by Jan Richardson

Christ calls each of us to a path that enables us to find and follow the presence of the holy in the midst of being human, not in spite of being human.

Spiralling once again around the lectionary readings for the next Sunday in Lent, I've been drawn by the thread of hope that weaves through them. *I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations*, God says of Sarai in Genesis 17. *The poor shall eat and be satisfied*, the psalmist sings in Psalm 22. *Hoping against hope, he believed*, Paul writes of Abraham in Romans 4.

In Sunday's gospel reading from Mark, the message of hope is couched in grim words. *Then [Jesus] began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed*, Mark writes. But he closes the sentence with these words: *and after three days rise again*. Peter, it seems, is understandably overwhelmed by the first part of Jesus' teaching here and fails to grasp the import of this last part. *Suffering, rejection, death*, he hears. And though, with the benefit of our hindsight, his response to Jesus may seem selfish and misplaced, Peter is bold to take Jesus aside, seeking to persuade him toward what he believes will be a life-giving path.

We know how Jesus responds to Peter; we hear the harshness of his rebuke and the difficulty of the message he goes on to proclaim to the disciples and the surrounding crowd. We see that the hope Jesus brings to us will ask something of us. It will cost.

Throughout his life and teachings, Jesus makes clear that the hope he embodies, the hope he holds out to us, is not passive. Hope is not an idle wish for things to get better. Instead, hope calls us to action. It asks us to align and ally ourselves with the God who is the source of hope, and who calls us to participate with God in working for the wholeness that God desires for us and for the world.

It is easy to become overwhelmed by the forces that live in fierce opposition to this wholeness. ... I have found myself thinking of a poem by Rumi, where he says,

*There is a secret medicine
given only to those who hurt so hard
they can't hope.*

The hoppers would feel slighted if they knew.

At the heart of Jesus' rebuke to Peter and the hard, hard lesson that follows, there is a message about what it means to hope—to hope against hope, as Paul writes of Abraham; to hope when there seems no cause for hope, to hope in the face of forces that work against hope. We belong to a God who tells us, as Jesus tells his hearers, that what is torn down will be raised up, and what is destroyed will live again. Because we belong to this God, hope lives even when we feel we have lost it, and cannot summon it up in ourselves. Christ knows about the secret medicine that kicks in when hope is at an end. It is part of what he has come to give us.

Hope does not depend on us, but it cannot do without us. By which I mean, hope does not originate with us—it has its beginning in God, who goes on providing it for us with an extravagant stubbornness. It comes as a gift and grace that we cannot manufacture. But hope does need us for its ongoing survival. It asks us to give it legs in this world, to bear it into places of hopelessness, to enter into the rhythms of dying and rising that come as we follow Christ and work with him for the healing of the world.

In these Lenten days, what gives you cause for hope? Where do you place your attention, your mind, your focus, in ways that deepen your capacity to hope and to live out this hope in the world?

from [Lent 2: In Which We Set Our Minds Somewhere](#)

The Painted Prayerbook, March 2009

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Prayers

The collect for the 2nd Sunday of Lent

Almighty God,
you show to those who are in error the light of your truth,
that they may return to the way of righteousness:

grant to all those who are admitted
into the fellowship of Christ's religion,
that they may reject those things
that are contrary to their profession,
and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same;
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

A prayer of confession, based on Mark 8: 31-38

Gracious, caring God,
You know who, and what, we are –
you know us better than we know ourselves.
When we are faithful, we are faithless,
and when you are patient, we are impatient.
Forgive us.
Help us to deny ourselves and follow after you
that we may be good and faithful servants:
for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

We pray for God's grace.
Lord, receive our praise **and hear our prayer.**

Lord God, through your grace we are your people:
through your Son you have redeemed us;
in your Spirit you have made us your own.

We pray for ... (*the Church*)
Make our hearts respond to your love.
Lord, receive our praise **and hear our prayer.**

We pray for ... (*the world*)
Make our lives bear witness to your glory in the world.
Lord, receive our praise **and hear our prayer.**

We pray for ... (*the sick and those in need*)
Make our wills eager to obey, and our hands ready to heal.
Lord, receive our praise **and hear our prayer.**

We give you thanks for ...
Make my voice one with all your people in heaven and on earth. **Amen.**

Parish Prayers for the week ahead

In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer:

Sunday	The Anglican Church of Central America
Monday	The Diocese of Armidale – The Anglican Church of Australia
Tuesday	The Diocese of Arochukwu/Ohafia – The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
Wednesday	The Diocese of Aru – Province of the Anglican Church of the Congo
Thursday	The Missionary Diocese of Asaba – The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
Friday	The Diocese of Asante-Mampong – The Church of the Province of West Africa
Saturday	The Diocese of Saint Asaph – The Church in Wales

In our Diocesan Cycle of Prayer:

Sunday	Parish of Bedford, St Michael and All Angels (Deanery of Bedford)
Monday	Diocesan Secretary and Diocesan Office
Tuesday	Diocesan Board of Finance
Wednesday	Parish of Bedford, St Paul (Deanery of Bedford)
Thursday	Parish of Bedford, St Peter de Merton with St Cuthbert (Deanery of Bedford)
Friday	Parish of Biddenham (Deanery of Bedford)
Saturday	Parish of Cardington (Deanery of Bedford)

For the homes and families in:

Sunday	West Common Close, West Common Grove
Monday	Acacia Walk, Aldwick Road
Tuesday	Alzey Gardens
Wednesday	Aran Close, Ashcroft Close

Thursday Barlings Road, Barnfield Road
Friday Barrons Row, Beech Close
Saturday Beeson End Lane, Bewdley Close

The Sick:

Amy, Claire, Sue, Christine, Hermione, Karen, Enid, Chris, Sophie and all whose names are entered on our St Luke's Cell Prayer List.

For the recently deceased:

Sheila Burley, Jo Young, Francis Stephen, Trevor Neal

On their year's mind:

Simon Griffiths, Renee Grieveson, Geoffrey Liles, Winifred Ellis, Leslie Farnham, Hazel Macdonald, Genevieve Crawford, Brian Lakin, Susan Combe, Malcolm Lacey, Paul Sampson.

LENT WEEK 2: from our Lent@Home offering

The Woman at the well



Get two small containers – a jug or glass, and put some water in one of them.

The Samaritan woman gives Jesus a drink of water. They speak together for a long time. He tells her about living water - to revive the spirit and bring hope. She believes, and others believe because of her.

Read the story of the Woman at the well – John 4:1-30

Pour the water slowly. Think about that water in the desert and what it came to mean to the woman at the well.

Who helped/helps you to believe? Who do you know that needs life giving water - physical or spiritual? Can you support a charity that works to provide clean water for all (eg Water Aid)?

Make contact – email or phone call or text message - with someone who needs to know that they matter.

Prayer: O God, may we thirst for your waters of justice, and learn to deny no-one the water of life. Amen. (Janet Morley)

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER - FRIDAY 5TH MARCH at 10.30am

This year the World Day of Prayer will be rather different as we are gathering on Zoom to celebrate the service from home. It has been prepared by the Christian women of Vanuatu (scattered islands over 1100 miles to the east of Australia) on the theme "Build on a Strong Foundation" (Matt 7:24-27), particularly appropriate at the present time!

If you would like to join us, please contact Pat Hudis via the Parish Office so you can receive the Zoom details and an order of service. Even If you cannot access Zoom, an order of service can be delivered to you if you let us know.

Last year, in the UK alone, WDP raised over £100,000 which was distributed to more than 30 projects at home and abroad - and urgently needs our support this year.

If you'd like to make a donation, please visit wwdp.org.uk. Thank you very much.

A reminder... of this phone service:

Daily Hope – dial 0800 804 8044 for prayer, reflection, music and worship services from the Church of England. A weekly service is available from 9 am every Sunday.

Church at home:

We are delighted to produce each week these printed papers. If you would prefer not to receive these papers each week, please let Julie in the parish office know. If you are aware of others in the parish who would also value the opportunity to worship at home in this way, do please contact a member of the Ministry team or Julie (Parish Office Tel: 01582 712776).