

Making Space for God

Opening Prayer

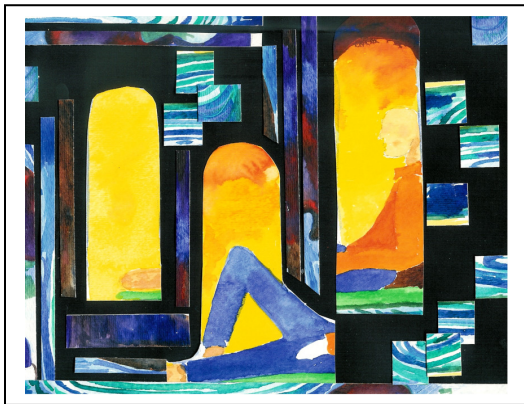
Almighty God, as you have sent Jesus to be for us light and truth, send now your Spirit upon us to grant us grace and strength to follow in his footsteps this day.
Amen

Looking Back

Take some time to settle yourself. Invite the Holy Spirit to help you quiet your mind. Review your calendar and journal for the past two months.

- List the people, projects, and events that have occupied your time.
- What emotions colored your experiences?
- When did you sense that Jesus was present to you?
- When did he seem distant or you seem distant from him?
- Note any life lessons or themes that have surfaced for you in this time. Offer that up to Jesus.

Scripture Study - The Healing at the Pool - John 5: 1-15



*Les Invalides, Watercolor on paper, Steven Stuckey
2007*

¹Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews. ²Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. ³Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. ⁵One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. ⁶When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"

⁷"Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me."

⁸Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." ⁹At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, ¹⁰and so the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat."

¹¹But he replied, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.' "

¹²So they asked him, "Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?"

¹³The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

¹⁴Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you." ¹⁵The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.¹

Reflection Questions: Imagine the scene by the pool of Bethesda. What were the sights, sounds, smells, and feelings? How do you respond? "Invalid" comes from the Latin and means "not strong." This was a place for the weak and broken. How does that compare/contrast with the people and world we work with? Put yourself in the place of the invalid. What do you experience when Jesus says, "Do you want to get well?" Jesus says, "Pick up your mat and walk." Why didn't he just say, "Walk?" Jesus heals anonymously. When have you experienced an anonymous blessing? Bethesda means "House of Mercy." How might you become a house of mercy for the people you serve? Comment on Jesus' pastoral care when he finds the man in the temple.

Exercise and Rest Take some time to walk around and enjoy the area around the library. It is his gift to you today.

Reading for Reflection

The choice between God and every other god is a real choice. Both make promises, both demand loyalty. It is possible to live by both. If there were no real alternative to God, all humanity would choose God. Indeed, God is the more difficult choice to justify in terms of provable results.

The chief difficulty is that God demands of us that we live by faith: faith in God, God's sovereignty over the future, God sufficiency for the present; while on the other hand, the various other gods whom we can serve appeal to us in terms of the things which we can see and the forces which we can calculate. The choice between the life of faith and the life of sight is the choice between a God whom only faith can apprehend and gods whom one has only to see to understand.

D.T. Niles in The Bible Through Asian Eyes

Although speech is often good and serves as a means of helping one another, it is not a sacrament. There is sometimes a problem with people in positions of power who think their every word is golden. Occasionally one gets the impression that some suppose that all issues can be resolved by talking. Non stop talking can be a means of insulating oneself from the shock of the real... I think many of us would be much better off if we did not speak as much as we do.

Michael Casey in Living in the Truth, page 172

Saints can be as narrow and cranky as the rest of us. The difference between us and them is that they are fully aware of their own fragility; we judge ourselves to be sturdier than we are.

Michael Casey in Living in the Truth, page 182

Bless the Lord, O my soul. Do not forget all his benefits.

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