

Reflection: *The notion of Lament*

[This might be read in conjunction with the notice about ribbons outside the Church and the talk for Sunday.]

I don't believe that we can go into any brave new world of post-pandemic life without an acknowledgement of the individual and communal (including national) losses that we have endured. It is as if we have at the very least simply lost the time from late March to the present, as if Easter never really happened. But there are far worse things, loss of life, loss of saying goodbye properly, loss of physical contact, loss of job, loss of hope. It is these sort of things, lesser and greater, that we are ritualising by ribbons on the church railings. What about our spiritual resources? Turn to the Psalms first!

It is here that our disorientation and disequilibrium are writ large. Take further verses from Psalm 22 for example: "I am poured out like water, all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it melted within my chest". We can shout and rail against God using the psalms, in language which we might otherwise resist. These words may enable us to speak out of the chaos of our feelings. The Psalms also re-orientate us in their praise and thanksgiving to a new life with God—for example tears are replaced by the banquet: "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies" (Ps 22:14).

You can read more about this in Walter Brueggemann's excellent book *Praying the Psalms* (2007).

Even if you cannot join the service by telephone or video on Sunday, it would be good to try to say our prayers in some form **at 10.30** that morning, and to be intentionally holding each other up to God, and praying for the wider community of St Thomas.

NEXT SUNDAY 28.06.20 St Peter and St Paul

SERVICES Public worship suspended



READINGS

OT Zechariah 4.1-6a, 10b-14

NT Acts 12. 1-11

GOSPEL Matthew 16. 13-19

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St Thomas, Exeter

Sunday 21st June 2020

2nd Sunday after Trinity

The PCC agreed in principle to open the St Thomas Church building as soon as is practically possible; so we are waiting on a hand sanitizer and permission to install it. We are also drawing up a cleaning rota—thanks to those who have volunteered. Are there others who would like to do this—we're aiming at one duty per fortnight and so need 10 people? Entry will be restricted to the St Thomas Chapel for **private prayer and the lighting of a candle.**

Sunday worship by Zoom The telephone numbers are the same: 0203 051 2874, 0203 481 5237, 0203 481 5240, 0131 460 1196, bearing in mind that's it's worth trying a second one if the first isn't very good. **The meeting number is 846 4638 6622 and the access code/password 425499.** These should now remain the same until the end of July.

Fun & Fundraising Do we have a favourite recipe to share—stuff we have perhaps only leant to cook recently, or improved on? Keep your recipes coming and perhaps we could make a book to sell?

Fr David



Collect

Lord, you have taught us that all our doings without love are nothing worth: send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love, the true bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whoever lives is counted dead before you. Grant this for your only Son Jesus Christ's sake, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Jeremiah 20:7-13

O Lord, you have enticed me,
and I was enticed;
you have overpowered me,
and you have prevailed.
I have become a laughing-stock all day long;
everyone mocks me.
For whenever I speak, I must cry out,
I must shout, 'Violence and destruction!'
For the word of the Lord has become for me
a reproach and derision all day long.
If I say, 'I will not mention him,
or speak any more in his name',
then within me there is something like a burning fire
shut up in my bones;
I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot.
For I hear many whispering:
'Terror is all around!
Denounce him! Let us denounce him!'
All my close friends
are watching for me to stumble.
'Perhaps he can be enticed,
and we can prevail against him,
and take our revenge on him.'
But the Lord is with me like a dread warrior;
therefore my persecutors will stumble,
and they will not prevail.
They will be greatly shamed,
for they will not succeed.
Their eternal dishonour
will never be forgotten.
O Lord of hosts, you test the righteous,
you see the heart and the mind;

let me see your retribution upon them,
for to you I have committed my cause.
Sing to the Lord; praise the Lord!
For he has delivered the life of the needy
from the hands of evildoers.

Romans 6:1b-11

What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 10:24-39

Jesus said, 'A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household! 'So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body

but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.^a Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

'Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

'Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one's foes will be members of one's own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

Post-Communion Prayer

Loving Father, we thank you for feeding us at the table of your word; sustain us with your Spirit, that we may serve you here on earth until our joy is complete in heaven, and we share in the eternal banquet with Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

NOTICES

Time to Mourn. These are difficult times and you are invited to add a ribbon or piece of material to the Church railings as a token of your loss, whatever that may be. It's already showing the deep pain felt by so many people in St Thomas and we hope you will join us by making your own tribute to the difficult period we have all experienced.
