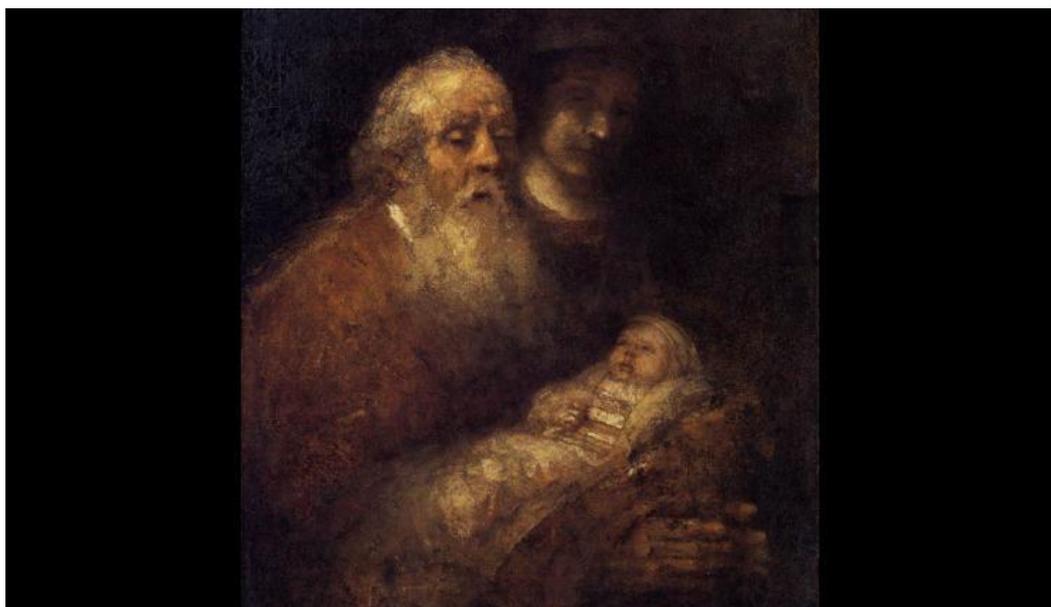




Epiphany and Holocaust

January 26<sup>th</sup> 2020



Simeon in the Temple Rembrandt

Call to thoughtfulness Denise Levertov (1923–1997) *Candlemas*

With certitude  
Simeon opened  
ancient arms  
to infant light.  
Decades  
before the cross, the tomb  
and the new life,  
he knew  
new life.  
What depth  
of faith he drew on,  
turning illumined  
towards deep night.

**HYMN 148** *The spacious firmament on high*

ISAIAH 9 1-4

But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined.

You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.

For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.



The gathering prayer      Still the wise journey, search diligently, wonder and gaze into the heavens

Day by day, dear Lord, of you three things we pray:

to see you more clearly  
to love you more dearly  
to follow you more nearly      day by day

Reflection      A time to despair      Job's battle with God

JOB 38 1-7      34 – 38      God's moment to spell out a few home truths

HYMN      Rhyme and reason      Words Andrew Pratt      Music Somos Pueblo 262 (Piano)

When we seek to sound life's purpose, probe to understand God's will,  
Lack of knowledge can confound us; Questions stay unanswered still:

Never can we be so certain of the rightness of our stance  
To deny what others reason, giving them no second chance;

Never fathom why God chooses people who betray that trust,  
Never can see how God uses fickle people such as us;

Never can see how love fuses people with such different views,  
How divinity still muses prejudice to disabuse.

There is always room for error as we stumble in the dark,  
As we strain to hear God's whisper, persevere to meet the mark;

Yet, within misunderstanding, we have sometimes glimpsed a sign;  
God, we thank you for disclosing wanted reason, hidden rhyme!

HymnQuest ID: 70109

NEVER FORGET      JUSTICE IS WHAT LOVE LOOKS LIKE IN PUBLIC



Solar Eclipse shot by Joshua Cripps

G.K. Chesterton (1874–1936) *A Prayer in Darkness*

This much, O heaven—if I should brood or rave,  
Pity me not; but let the world be fed,  
Yea, in my madness if I strike me dead,  
Heed you the grass that grows upon my grave.

If I dare snarl between this sun and sod,  
Whimper and clamour, give me grace to own,  
In sun and rain and fruit in season shown,  
The shining silence of the scorn of God.

Thank God the stars are set beyond my power,  
If I must travail in a night of wrath,  
Thank God my tears will never vex a moth,  
Nor any curse of mine cut down a flower.

Men say the sun was darkened: yet I had  
Thought it beat brightly, even on—Calvary:  
And He that hung upon the Torturing Tree  
Heard all the crickets singing, and was glad

HYMN Source of peerless grace Words John Bell Music Hyfrydol 519

Ageless God of boundless wonder, endless source of peerless grace,  
who, to shatter speculation, came incarnate face to face;  
you we praise, almighty Maker, Parent of humanity,  
Power behind the powers we cherish, Lord of life as life should be.

None among us stood attentive when you brought the world to birth,  
nor can any claim full knowledge of the future states of earth.  
Fascinated, still we struggle to make sense of what has been,  
and with differing dreams imagine what, as yet, remains unseen.



Banksy Mural, Dover

Each idea still gestating, each conviction in its youth,  
each encounter, each engagement, each impassioned search for truth-  
these we offer, not for blessing, but for shaping to your will.  
Here, good Lord, inspire, amaze us, fire our insight, fuse our skill.

Train our science to be servant of the needs we must perceive;  
teach our intellects, where blinded, that to see we must believe;  
in our politics prevent us from confusing means and ends;  
and through faith and doubt direct us to pursue what Christ intends.

HymnQuest ID: 78860

EPILOGUE Star struck! And stars extinguished: we call to mind the events of Holocaust

MATTHEW 6 22-34 may be it's not what you see, but how you see it?

OFFERTORY HYMN All it took was a for a few good people to do nothing

Words Andrew Pratt Tune Nettleton 339

How can people praise the Godhead,  
save in humble penitence?  
How can we avoid the verdict  
of these years' indifference?  
If our God has come among us  
then we have betrayed a call;  
out of selfish pride our grasping  
puts our gain ahead of all.

If that God was born among us  
then the people of that birth  
suffered taunting and derision,  
persecution on this earth.  
Driven from their given cradle,  
scattered seeds upon the wind;  
Christians led that desecration  
and, we wonder, will it end?

NEVER FORGET JUSTICE IS WHAT LOVE LOOKS LIKE IN PUBLIC



Holocaust, crusades, apartheid,  
inquisition, slavery,  
all have had a Christian presence,  
justifying butchery;  
every century adds locations  
pictured on a map or chart  
scenes of human devastation  
hatred honed, become an art.

Now we stand and, just like Peter,  
we've no cause to strut or crow,  
we are self-deceived if claiming  
righteousness, our debts you know:  
debts of love we owe each other,  
debts we never can repay;  
for two thousand years' denial  
Lord forgive, for this we pray.

Enter rooms of desolation,  
bring your love to cleanse, to spare;  
'Peace be with you', once you uttered,  
let us hear and let us share;  
bring us from this darkest moment  
into dazzling, gleaming light,  
may the blaze of this millennium  
end the horror of our night.

HymnQuest ID: 76067

Prayers URC hand book p 15 Beyond darkness The Lord's prayer

HYMN 622 We sing a love that sets all people free

The Blessing after which we sing

May the God of peace go with us as we travel from this place  
May the Love of Jesus keep us firm in hope and full of grace

*We are all in the gutter but some of us are looking at the stars*

*Oscar Wilde*

