

Daily Office Devotional, Monday, October 12, 2020
Proper 23, the week of the nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost
The Rev. David W. Perkins, Th.D.

Today we celebrate the Feast of Edith Cavell. (See below.)

Morning Prayer, Rite 2, page 75, Book of Common Prayer
Evening Prayer, Rite 2, page 115, Book of Common Prayer
Compline (Night Prayer), Page 127, Book of Common Prayer

Daily Office Readings

AM Psalm 1, 2, 3; PM Psalm 4, 7

Micah 7:1-7; Acts 26:1-23; Luke 8:26-39

Daily Office Old Testament Reading, Micah 7:1-7

7:1 Woe is me! For I have become like one who, after the summer fruit has been gathered, after the vintage has been gleaned, finds no cluster to eat; there is no first-ripe fig for which I hunger. 2 The faithful have disappeared from the land, and there is no one left who is upright; they all lie in wait for blood, and they hunt each other with nets. 3 Their hands are skilled to do evil; the official and the judge ask for a bribe, and the powerful dictate what they desire; thus they pervert justice. 4 The best of them is like a brier, the most upright of them a thorn hedge. The day of their sentinels, of their punishment, has come; now their confusion is at hand. 5 Put no trust in a friend, have no confidence in a loved one; guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your embrace; 6 for the son treats the father with contempt, the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; your enemies are members of your own household.

7 But as for me, I will look to the LORD, I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me.

David's Reflections

Theodore Roethke captures the spirit of love feeling alone and empty in this strophe from "What Can I Tell My Bones?"

Mist alters the rocks. What can I tell my bones?
My desire's a wind trapped in a cave.
The spirit declares itself to these rocks.

I'm a small stone, loose in the shale.
Love is my wound. *

The prophet Micah “talks to his bones” in today’s reading. Community had deserted him, and he felt starved as a result. He painted the word picture of loss of community as a fruit orchard picked over and unfruitful. He felt alienated from his fellow Israelites because he experienced them as greedy and exploitive, as predators feeding on one another, especially feeding on the weak and helpless.

The fabric of community in his society was tattered by conflict, exploitation, and competitiveness in families and in the society at large. To be vulnerable in relationships seemed foolish to him, a sure-fire prelude to being “had,” to being used and exploited. How sad to be forced to guard your words and keep your distance even within your own home.

Jesus used the same image of community as a grape vineyard, a vineyard in which he was the root vine and his followers, branches bearing fruit. In such a community one would be nourished not only by Jesus himself but also by those drawing on his life and grace. (See John 15.)

People starve for genuine connection and community, for an emotionally safe place to be and to become, to fail and to begin anew. We pray for and live toward more meaningful community within our own church, toward being a safe emotional and spiritual haven where people find nourishment in each other and find deep connection with each other. In such a community it would not be necessary to “guard the doors of your mouth” (see verse 5 above) and you could do the reverse of “put no trust in a friend” (verse 5).

For Micah love had been a wound. He had learned to reinforce his boundaries and live in isolation. He had discovered that his relationship with God was the only one that never would fail him (see verse 7). He longed for a community in which love would nurture the soul like fresh fruit does the body. We share that longing. In loving community with growing connection to others, we will feel like we are walking in a fruitful garden and no longer resemble a “small stone loose in the shale.”

* Theodore Roethke, *The Collected Poems of Theodore Roethke* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), pp. 181-183.

Collect of the Day: Proper 23, the nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Lord, we pray that your grace may always precede and follow us, that we may

continually be given to good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.* (BCP, 234-235)

Today we celebrate the Feast of Edith Cavell, nurse (died 12 Oct 1915).

http://www.satucket.com/lectionary/Edith_Cavell.html

Collect of the Feast of Edith Cavell

Living God, the source of all healing and wholeness: we bless you for the compassionate witness of your servant Edith Cavell. Inspire us to be agents of peace and reconciliation in a world beset by injustice, poverty, and war. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, to the ages of ages. *Amen.*

A Collect for the Renewal of Life

O God, the King eternal, whose light divides the day from the night and turns the shadow of death into the morning: Drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to keep your law, and guide our feet into the way of peace; that, having done your will with cheerfulness while it was day, we may, when night comes, rejoice to give you thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (BCP, 99)

Of the Holy Spirit

Almighty and most merciful God, grant that by the indwelling of your Holy Spirit we may be enlightened and strengthened for your service; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.* (BCP, 251)

In the Order of Worship for Evening

Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers, creator of the changes of day and night, giving rest to the weary, renewing the strength of those who are spent, bestowing upon us occasions of song in the evening. As you have protected us in the day that is past, so be with us in the coming night; keep us from every sin, every evil, and every fear; for you are our light and salvation, and the strength of our life. To you be glory for endless ages. *Amen.* (BCP, 113)

A Collect for Mission

O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (BCP, 100, 257)

