

ST. ANDREW'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH



The Still Point

February 28, 2021

Welcome to this virtual service. We gather this evening on zoom, so that we can see each other and join together in the responses. Please mute yourself when you are not speaking, and leave yourself on mute to sing. Feel free to turn off your video if it facilitates your participation in the service. And follow the rubrics for standing and sitting only if you feel so moved.

If this service is new to you, we invite you to participate “as you will.” You may want to remain seated for the entire service, and you may want to receive the words and music in silence. At the time of the silent meditation, you may want to enter into a time of prayer, or move about, even read. The time is yours to use as you feel moved.

Children are particularly invited to participate in this service as is comfortable for them. You may want to experiment with [these](#) and other ideas. Older children and youth are invited to notice differences from our Sunday morning worship and to connect the week’s message to [The Way of Love](#).



Prelude: *Spiegel im Spiegel* (Mirror in Mirror)

Arvo Pärt (b. 1935)

All stand as they are comfortable at the invitation of the Officiant

Officiant Peace on each one who comes in need;

People **Peace on each one who comes in joy.**

Officiant Peace on each one who offers prayers;

People **Peace on each one who offers song.**

Officiant Peace of the Maker, Peace of the Son,

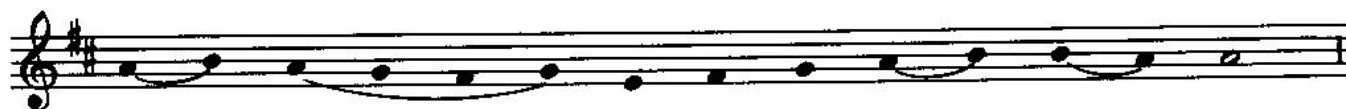
People **Peace of the Spirit, the Triune One.**

All Sing

The Canticle of Praise



1 O Trin - - i - ty of bless - ed light,
2 To thee our morn - ing song of praise,
3 To God the Fa - ther, heaven - ly Light,



O U - - ni - ty of prince - ly might,
to thee our eve - ning prayer we raise;
to Christ re - vealed in earth - ly night,



the fier - y sun now goes his way;
O grant us with thy saints on high
to God the Ho - ly Ghost we raise



shed thou with - in our hearts thy ray.
to praise thee through e - ter - ni - ty.
our e - - qual and un - ceas - ing praise.

The Collect

Officiant May God be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Officiant Let us pray.

We praise you God, that the light of Christ shines in our darkness and is never overcome; show us the way we must go to eternal day; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



The People sit.

The Reading: The Shadow-Cross

by Amit Majmudar

I just couldn't breathe in its shadow.
It weighed what the cross weighed, that shadow
Cross, more than any shadow should.
No sun could shoulder that kind of shadow,
No man kneels there without a shudder.
The dark beams crushed me flat as shadow,
My flesh, grass, matted by the shade. No
Way a mere cedar cross could shed so
Much dark matter, so weighty a shadow.
I just couldn't breathe in that shadow
Until I made myself a shadow-
Swallowing sea and swallowed shadow

The way a sea will swallow daylight.
The shadow splashed down, and the sun's light
Spilled over—only I was the light's
Sole source, both the prism and the light
Beam split into the eye's wide palette.
The splash displaced a volume of light
Equal to one sun, this light the light
That made of the shadow cross a light
Cross to bear, the light that raised my light-
Weight body until then strange to flight

But now, death made light of by his dying,
Light-footed, fallen, risen, flying.

The Interlude



Arioso (from Cantata No. 156)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

The Scripture Reading

Mark 8:31-38

Jesus began to teach his disciples 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.”

The Meditation

I must confess that I've always been a little puzzled by the phrase 'take up your cross'. This year, though, I feel compelled to jump into the darkness of Lent to explore what, at least, taking up the cross means to me. Amit Majmudar's poem gives us a possible way forward, connecting the cross of the crucifixion to our own shadow selves. And, in fact, when I imagine Jesus asking us to take up our shadows, that seems like an invitation I can navigate, whether we're talking about the shadow of death, the shadow of the self, or the shadow of community.

But let's start at the cross anyway. Its long dark shadow is everywhere in the church and the church year - it's the shadow of death from the 23rd Psalm, it's the sword piercing Mary's soul, it's the smudge of dead palms on our foreheads at Ash Wednesday, and it's just around the corner of Christmas with the

slaughter of the Holy Innocents. Wherever we turn, there is the shadow of death.

The shadow of death, for mere mortals, is everywhere, too. Our own fear of death extends like the arms of the cross into all sorts of directions: What if I die before I have the opportunity to x,y, or z? What if a loved one dies before I do? What if I die before a loved one does? There's an odd comfort in the fact that the answer to all of those questions is, first, you will. They will. You will.

But the shadow of death also pops up in other ways, leading in one extreme, to a cautious life lived so carefully, so afraid of taking risks, that the fear of harm or death ends up taking all of the life out of life. Or, in the other extreme, to a glorification of war, of hero worship, of selfish risk-taking that ends up sacrificing community for self, rather than the other way around.

So, what is one to do? Majmudar's words may resonate with you: I just couldn't breathe in that shadow until I made myself a shadow. Paradoxically, embracing our mortality just might allow us a certain relief - relief that being mortal means we don't have to live forever. relief at the gift of not having to be perfect.

Being mortal means not only living under the shadow of death, but also coming to terms with the shadow of the self.

It's no wonder that many religious traditions include some kind of shadow symbolism of duality, whether it's the yin and yang of Taoism, or St. John of the Cross's Dark night of the Soul.

If we make ourselves shadows, if we take up our cross, if we take up our shadows, we admit our mortality, we acknowledge the ugly parts of the self and hold them up to the divine light, in part because hiding them only makes them creep out or leap out like an unwanted growth.

Some attributes of our shadow selves are results of cultural shadows: scars of trauma or abuse, shadows of sexism, racism, homophobia, and other discrimination.

And some of our shadows are just part of who we are: negative versions of positive attributes. Stubbornness that in better light looks like confidence, debilitating passivity that in better light looks like saintly forbearance.

To pretend that these shadows don't exist is to love only part of oneself, and therefore to not love completely. Again, there's a comfort in allowing ourselves the freedom to 'own' what we most hate about ourselves, and to let go of the pressure of keeping those things unnamed. (Before coming out of the closet, I remember keeping a list of all of the people who knew my big secret - and it was stressful to manage that list, to manage conversations, and to carry that weight of worrying who else might know. That shadow is mostly no longer a shadow, one cannot avoid absorbing societal and culture homophobia deep in the soul.)

Anyway, the alternative to taking up our shadow is to go on silencing and ignoring the shadow. In doing so, we let those shadow attributes, like the unnamed Voldemort in Harry Potter, continue to have power. As Dumbledore said, "Fear of a name increases fear of the thing itself."

To me, then, to deny oneself as Jesus asks in today's reading from Mark requires us first to take up our shadow and embrace our full self - shadow and light, fear and hope, clumsy ineptitude and graceful gesture. To be a shadow is to face the light, to own the light of truth, to accept the healing presence of Christ's light.

Of course, it isn't ever all about us - at some point, following Jesus's invitation to take up the cross means to acknowledge the shadows in our culture and society. This means naming and admitting the role we play in our societal shadows. Owning our participation in the shadow of systematic racism, in the shadow of harm done to the earth. It means, in short, to shine the light of truth on injustice, and to seek the light of Christ in all persons.

But it all starts with taking up the cross and facing our shadows.

Lent is the time for reconfiguring the shadow not as a mark of shame, but of evidence of the beauty of brokenness and of mortality. All - or at least most - beauty reaches the eye, the ear, the heart, the brain, because of the effect of

contrasting forces: dark/light, loud/soft, high/low. Why would the beauty of our own selves be any different?

Questions for reflection:

- What are your own shadows? How do these shadows show up in your day-to-day existence? When have you been able to see them as gifts?
- Imagine a beloved figure - a grandmother, a mentor - wrapping your shadow self in an embrace of light. What does that feel like?
- Re-read Majmudar's poem, this time considering its yin/yang structure. What does the poem leave you feeling? wondering?

Quiet Reflection

We invite you to enter with us into five minutes of silence. Feel free to sit quietly, to move about, do yoga, handwork, reading -- anything that for you facilitates a time of wondering, resting, stillness. This time is yours to enjoy as you choose.



Trio Sonata in C minor; Andante

Johann Joachim Quantz (1697-1773)

Bidding to Prayer

Ad te, Domine, levavi

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; in you, my God, I put my trust. Let me not be humiliated, not let my enemies triumph over me; let none who look to you be put to shame.

Psalm 25

All stand as they are comfortable.

The Prayers of the People

Officiant As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray,

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

I invite your petitions, silent or spoken.

The People offer their prayers after each bidding

We bring before God someone whom we have met or remembered today

We bring to God someone who is hurting tonight and needs our prayer

We bring to God a troubled situation in our world

We bring to God, silently, someone whom we find hard to forgive or trust

We bring ourselves to God that we might grow in generosity of spirit, clarity of mind, and warmth of affection

We offer our thanks to God for the blessings in our lives

We name before God those who have died.

The Officiant adds a concluding Collect

Gracious God, you hear all our prayers: those we speak aloud, those we hold in our hearts, and those prayers for which we have no words. Hear the prayers of your people, and grant them as may be best for us, for the sake of your holy name. **Amen.**

Anthem

Dum clamaturum

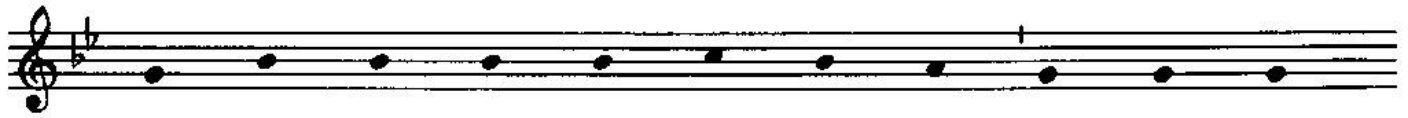
When I called upon the Lord, he heard my voice and delivered me from those who pressed hard upon me; the Lord God brought them low, he who sits enthroned of old, whose kingdom will have no end. Cast your burden upon the Lord, and he will strengthen you. Hear my prayer, O God, do not hide yourself from my petition: listen to me and answer me.

Psalm 55

All remain seated to sing

The Office Hymn

45



1 To you be - fore the close of day, Cre - a - tor
2 Save us from trou - bled, rest - less sleep, from all ill
3 A health - y life we ask of you, the fire of
4 Al - might - y Fa - ther, hear our cry through Je - sus



of all things, we pray that in your con - stant
dreams your child - ren keep; so calm our minds that
love in us re - new, and when the dawn new
Christ, our Lord Most High, whom with the Spi - rit



clem - en - cy our guard and keep - er you would be.
fears may cease and rest - ed bo - dies wake in peace.
light will bring your praise and glo - ry we shall sing.
we a - dore for ev - er and for ev - er - more.

Words: Latin, 6th cent.; ver. *Hymnal 1982*. St. 4, James Waring McCrady (b. 1938)

Music: *Te lucis ante terminum*, plainsong, Mode 8

LM

Stand as you are comfortable.

Closing Prayer

Officiant O Trinity of Love, You have been with us at the world's beginning,

People **Be with us till the world's end.**

Officiant You have been with us at our life's shaping,

People **Be with us at our life's end**

Officiant You have been with us at the sun's rising,

People **Be with us till the day's end. Amen.**

Please be seated for the Postlude.

Postlude: Bassoon Sonata: I. *Largo*

J. F. Fasch (1688-1758)



You are invited to remain on the screen for a time of fellowship after the postlude.

Those That Serve This Evening

Officiant: The Rev'd Elizabeth P. Randall, *Rector*

Homilist: Matt Bentley

Music: Tim Krueger

Sources:

Texts: Iona Community (*adapt.*), New Zealand Prayer Book (*adapt.*);
Enriching Our Worship

Music: e-mail music@standrewdenver.org with any questions about
the performers in the music clips

Your Gift Will Help Support our Mission and Ministries

Though our doors are closed, we are open and our operations continue. This means **our need for your pledges and giving is unchanged.**

Please give generously to support our mission and ministries
in one or more of the following ways:

- Go to the St. Andrew's website (www.standrewdenver.org) and use the **Donate** button at the bottom of the page using a credit or debit card. (We are working to fix the glitches some of you experienced last week.)
- Text to donate: text to 310-582-5828 (For your first text you will have to setup an account and provide a credit/debit card number. After that it is as easy as texting! Please contact our Treasurer Bob Mosher (bobdmosher@gmail.com) for details on setting this up.)
- Automatic withdrawal: arrange for a monthly (or any frequency) withdrawal directly from your checking account. No need to remember whether you have donated or not. (To set this up there is a simple form to submit. Contact our Treasurer Bob Mosher (bobdmosher@gmail.com) for details on setting this up.)
- Mail your check to the church (2015 Glenarm Place, Denver CO 80205)

Annual License w/Podcasting, Category C average weekly attendance 101 to 200.
A-735592 for Jun 15, 2020 - Jun 14, 2021