



EVENING PRAYER DEVOTIONAL

TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2020

Readings: Psalm 39, 41; Proverbs 16; Philemon

I am thoroughly enjoying the new psalter in the ACNA Prayer Book. Please check the ACNA website (<http://anglicanchurch.net/>) where you can download the psalter. Our psalms appointed for tonight seem to encapsulate both the season of Lent and our heightened anxiety with the coronavirus.

In Psalm 39, the psalmist cries, "Lord, let me know my end and the number of my days, that I may learn how short my life is. Behold, you have made my days as a span in length, and my age is even as nothing before you; and truly, everyone living is but a breath." Talk about remembering our dust, right? It appears the psalmist desires to know his days because the pain is so great. He wants to know when it will all come to an end. He cries again, "Take your affliction from me; I am consumed by the blows of your heavy hand."

Perhaps you feel like the psalmist tonight. Perhaps you feel like you have reached a certain limit, and you don't know how you can handle one more day like today. Your fears feel greater than your hopes because you find yourself within the scope of risk with this virus. Your affliction might be for your family members and friends. You hope for the best, but you can't help but see the worst. This is your psalm. And you are given permission to pray with the psalmist.

We should not be afraid to tell God our fears and anxieties. I often hear Christians wanting to be strong before the Lord, not fearing or having anxiety. They want the Lord to see that they are confident and faithful Christians. Yet the psalms direct us otherwise. We name all that is wrestling within us, and God's grace always welcomes our tears. As the psalmist declares, "Hear my prayer, O LORD, and with your ears consider my cry; hold not your peace at my tears."

In the end, we can pray to God with all of our emotions because we know He can take it. As I have said before, if God can handle the sins of the whole world, He can certainly handle all of your shaky and fearful prayers. In fact, He welcomes them. For when we can truly speak what our hearts long to say, where we ask the question with the psalmist, "And now, Lord, what is my hope," (vs 8) we can hear once again, truly, my hope is in you.

Baptized child of the Triune God, rest easy on your pillows tonight. Amen " – Fr. Joe

