

Spirituality and the
Seasons of Our Lives
Retreat

Afternoon Liturgy
Monday, May 1, 2023

– Reading for Reflection –

Gather Me to Be with You

Oh God, gather me now
to be with you
as you are with me.

Soothe my tiredness;
quiet my fretfulness;
curb my aimlessness;
relieve my compulsiveness;
let me be easy for a moment.

O Lord, release me
from the fears and guilts
which grip me so tightly;
from the expectations and opinions
which I so tightly grip,
that I may be open
to receiving what you give,
to risking something genuinely new,
to learning something refreshingly different.

Oh God, gather me
to be with you
as you are with me.

Forgive me
for claiming so much for myself
that I leave no room for gratitude;
for confusing exercises in self-importance
with acceptance of self-worth;
for complaining so much of my burdens
that I become a burden;

⁸ By day the Lord directs his love,
at night his song is with me—
a prayer to the God of my life.

⁹ I say to God my Rock,
“Why have you forgotten me?
Why must I go about mourning,
oppressed by the enemy?”

¹⁰ My bones suffer mortal agony
as my foes taunt me,
saying to me all day long,
“Where is your God?”

¹¹ Why, my soul, are you downcast?
Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him,
my Savior and my God.

– Prayer –

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we are to pray, and to give more than we either desire or deserve: Pour upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things for which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Savior; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

for competing against others so insidiously
that I stifle celebrating them
and receiving your blessing through their gifts.

Oh God, gather me
to be with you
as you are with me.
Keep me in touch with myself,
with my needs,
my anxieties,
my angers,
my pains,
my corruptions,
that I may claim them as my own
rather than blame them on someone else.

O Lord, deepen my wounds
into wisdom;
shape my weakness
into compassion;
gentle my envy
into enjoyment,
my fear into trust,
my guilt into honesty,
my accusing finger into tender ones.

Oh God, gather me
to be with you
as you are with me.

– Ted Loder, *Guerillas of Grace* –

– Song of Worship –

As the Deer Panteth for the Water

As the deer panteth for the water
So my soul longeth after Thee
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship Thee

You alone are my Strength, my Shield
To You alone may my spirit yield
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship Thee

You're my Friend and You are my Brother
Even though You are a King
I love You more than any other
So much more than anything

You alone are my Strength, my Shield
To You alone may my spirit yield
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship Thee

You alone are my Strength, my Shield
To You alone may my spirit yield
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship Thee

– Scripture Reading –

Psalm 42

As the deer pants for streams of water,
so my soul pants for you, my God.

² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When can I go and meet with God?

³ My tears have been my food
day and night,
while people say to me all day long,
“Where is your God?”

⁴ These things I remember
as I pour out my soul:
how I used to go to the house of God
under the protection of the Mighty One
with shouts of joy and praise
among the festive throng.

⁵ Why, my soul, are you downcast?
Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him,
my Savior and my God.

⁶ My soul is downcast within me;
therefore I will remember you
from the land of the Jordan,
the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar.

⁷ Deep calls to deep
in the roar of your waterfalls;
all your waves and breakers
have swept over me.