



Ordinary Time

Lectionary reflections for 21st June - Pentecost 4

Genesis 21:8-21; Psalm 86: 1-10,16-17; Romans 6:1b-11; Matthew 10:24-39

Following Pentecost, the liturgical calendar moves us into Ordinary Time: an ordered sequence of weeks between the major feast days of the Christian year which give Christian communities the opportunity to reflect on the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit, to embody the mission of Jesus, and to grow in our discipleship.

**JUNE:
BELONGING**

In texts that refuse easy reading, Hagar and Ishmael are expelled into the wilderness by household rivalry and power, confronting how enslaved peoples and their children are used and discarded within patriarchal culture.

The Psalm's plea for pity holds space for honest prayer when survival is uncertain.

Paul's baptismal imagination names a break with the death-dealing systems that have enslaved us: as we are joined to Christ's death, we are raised to a new allegiance which puts an end to the ruling powers of our own lives.

Jesus prepares his disciples for the resistance that they will encounter in responding to his "take up the cross" call - both externally against their solidarity with the marginalised, and, internally,

as temptation to flee the consequences of costly truth-telling.

This is the long obedience of liberation in which we learn to see the God who sees, choose solidarity over self-protection, and trust that new life is found where the world says, “There is no water.”

PrayerPoem

God who hears in the wilderness,
when Hagar is sent out with a skin of water
and a heart full of dismissal,
you do not ask her to be quiet.
You hear the cry.
You show a well.
Teach your church to hear like that:
not only the prayers polished for Sunday,
but the raw sob of the cast out,
the child’s thirst,
the grief that has no words.

Merciful One, we confess:
we have used faith as a gate,
as if your love were property.
Break our ownership.
In the waters of baptism, drown what enslaves us —
the old loyalties, the quiet bargains with death.
Raise us into a new allegiance:
life that resists violence, truth that refuses fear.
Jesus, you warn us: speaking you will cost.
So give us a spine made of prayer
and a tenderness that does not retreat.
When the world says, “There is no water,”
teach us to look again
and to walk together toward the well.

