

MONDAY
6 JULY
Hosea 2:14-16.
19-20
Psalm 145:2-9
Matthew 9:18-26

TUESDAY
7 JULY
Hosea 8:4-7. 11-13
Psalm 103:8-12
Matthew 9:32-end

WEDNESDAY
8 JULY
Hosea 10:1-3. 7-8.
12
Psalm 115:3-10
Matthew 10:1-7

THURSDAY
9 JULY
Hosea 11:1. 3-4. 8-9
Psalm 105:1-7
Matthew 10:7-15

FRIDAY
10 JULY
Hosea 14:2-end
Psalm 80:1-7
Matthew 10:16-23

SATURDAY
11 JULY
Isaiah 6:1-8
Psalm 51:1-7
Matthew 10:24-33

REFLECTION

Matthew turns from the healings of chapter 9 to explaining how difficult it will be to follow Jesus. There will be persecutions, families will betray each other and many will deny him.

Peace will be in short supply, but despite it all, Jesus' followers are valuable and God will not desert them.

In the centuries that have passed since Jesus lived on earth, there have been many persecutions, splits in the church, family rifts, and terrible bloodshed and violence. We might read these words of Jesus as referring to conflict between those who follow Christ and those who do not. They are spoken in the context of the first mission of the disciples to the house of Israel. But the evidence shows that, while interfaith conflict has been a problem down the ages, internal disputes have torn apart the lives of many who count themselves Christians.

Knowing all this, Jesus sent out the twelve on their first mission. He sends us, too. We are all called, each with our own particular mission. It may not be to travel from town to town, but we can be sure that it will present us with a challenge.

PRAYER

Lord, make us strong in the mission you set before us, and equip us for all we face.
We ask for courage where we find conflict, compassion where we find suffering, and wisdom where we find foolishness.



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INNER JOURNEY, OUTER JOURNEY

PART I – FINDING GOD INSIDE AND OUT

James Roose-Evans is one of Britain's most experienced and innovative theatre directors, and has directed productions in the West End, on Broadway and in Paris. His production of 84 Charing Cross Road won awards both sides of the Atlantic. In 1974 he founded the Bleddfa Centre for the Creative Spirit in mid-Wales. James is also a non-stipendiary Anglican priest, author of twenty-two books and a blog. Inner Journey, Outer Journey was first published over thirty years ago, and has remained an enduring classic, called by Rowan Williams "A very precious and very practical book which deserves to be loved and revisited." Over the following weeks we serialise extracts from the new, third edition.

Some claim that God is solely immanent – hidden in the psyche. But God is also transcendent, outside and beyond the present dimension of time and space. To be truly *homo religiosus* (a religious person), one must bring together the outside and the inside, finding God both "out there" and "in here." It is here that the creative process comes into its own, assisting the spiritual process. From childhood onwards my ability, at certain moments, to act or visualise – through dance, gesture, movement, sound, drawing, painting or words, these inner states of worship and conflict, yearning, lust, love, anger and jealousy – has enabled me to go on growing. By visualising and acting out it is possible to bring together the outer and the inner in daily living. The creative process enables us to absorb experience with our being, to give it form and shape. As the poet Robert Frost once said to me, "Each poem that I write is one more stay against confusion." By gaining conscious control of unconscious imagery we bring into order our own chaotic psyches. It is a process of self-healing. The songs and dances, drawings and carvings, poems and ceremonials that come forth from the depths of our being enable us to master those emotions which might otherwise overwhelm us, enabling each of us, through histrionic or other creative means, to understand our own condition more clearly.

James' blog can be found at: www.jamesrooseevans.co.uk. Inner Journey, Outer Journey is available from Redemptorist Publications: 01420 592974. Product code: 1852. ISBN: 9780852315569. Price: £9.95

LIVE the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by Caroline Hodgson and Heather Smith



Fourth week after Trinity

Monday 6 July to Saturday 11 July 2020

WEEK

MONDAY

13 JULY

Isaiah 1:11-17
 Psalm 50:7-15
 Matthew 10:34
 – 11:1

TUESDAY

14 JULY

Isaiah 7:1-9
 Psalm 48:1-7
 Matthew 11:20-24

WEDNESDAY

15 JULY

Isaiah 10:5-7.
 13-16
 Psalm 94:5-11
 Matthew 11:25-27

THURSDAY

16 JULY

Isaiah 26:7-9.
 16-19
 Psalm 102:14-21
 Matthew 11:28-
 end

FRIDAY

17 JULY

Isaiah 38:1-6. 21-
 22. 7-8 [sic]
 Canticle: Isaiah
 38:10-16
 or Psalm 32:1-8
 Matthew 12:1-8

SATURDAY

18 JULY

Micah 2:1-5
 Psalm 10:1-5a. 12
 Matthew 12:14-21

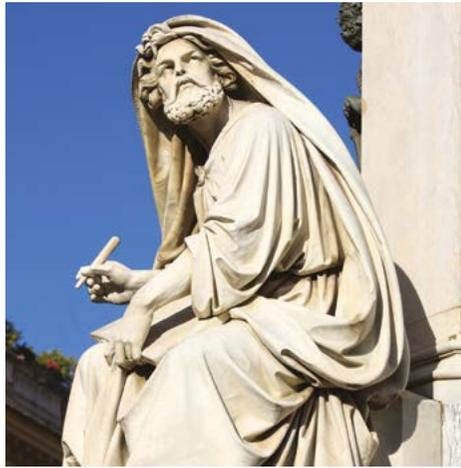
REFLECTION

Isaiah is the story of God's messages through the prophet as they endured being assailed by the surrounding empires. People were at a loss to understand how God could let it happen. After all, God had given them the land when they escaped from Egypt. Isaiah and the other prophets explained that the behaviour of their leaders, the kings, was a major reason. Our first reading from Isaiah this week also explains that God is tired of their sacrifices – the people were going through the motions, but their actions did not match up to them.

For most of us, the idea that God inflicts punishment in the form of invasion by hostile countries is not something we would feel comfortable with. But it is certainly true that the behaviour of our leaders affects all of us for good or bad, and that our own behaviour affects our relationship with God. When it comes to choosing a leader, integrity is surely a vital consideration. And when we consider our own behaviour, we should ask ourselves whether we are really doing what is right, or just appearing to do so.

PRAYER

Gracious God,
 help us to strive for what is right in ourselves
 and in our leaders.
 Give us the wisdom to recognise integrity in our leaders,
 and the self-awareness to be right judges of ourselves.



Statue of the prophet Isaiah in Rome

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INNER JOURNEY, OUTER JOURNEY

PART II –
THE RETURN JOURNEY

We continue our series of extracts from James Roose-Evans' classic book.

In 1980 I was given a slim volume of letters, entitled *84 Charing Cross Road*, by Helene Hanff. I acquired the stage rights, adapted it, and in 1981 directed it at the Salisbury Playhouse. It was so successful that it transferred to the West End, starring Rosemary Leach and David Swift. I went to New York to direct it on Broadway where, with Ellen Burstyn and Joseph Maher in the leading roles, it ran for three months. It won various awards: Best Actress, Best Actor, Best Play and Best Director. In 1986 it was made into a film starring Anne Bancroft and Anthony Hopkins.

While this outward journey was unfolding, another inner journey was nearing its completion, resulting in my being ordained deacon on St David's Day at Glasshampton Monastery, surrounded only by the brethren. Then, four months later, I was ordained priest in Hereford Cathedral.

I had had a dream which clearly signalled upheaval and change. Such dreams are not like puzzles, capable of a quick solution and then, once solved, of no further use; they have, rather, an enigmatic quality, capable of many levels of interpretation, and of lasting a lifetime. In the dream I was giving a lecture and explaining how, out of nothing, be it a blank sheet of paper for the writer, a blank canvas for the artist, or a block of stone for the sculptor, something is created. As I spoke I was projecting images from a slide projector. The screen dissolved into a glass window. From far away, out of space, travelling towards me, I could see a shape I recognised, even within the dream, as a deeper aspect of myself. The question was: Do I go through the glass to meet it, or do I wait for it to draw nearer? Franz Elisch urged me to wait, saying that to try and anticipate what was already in motion would be the act of my ego and would result in harm. My task was to wait for this aspect of the Self to reveal its purpose.

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LIVE
the WORDSUSTAINING YOU
THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by
 Caroline Hodgson
 and
 Heather Smith



Fifth week after Trinity

Monday 13 July to
 Saturday 18 July
 2020

WEEK

MONDAY**20 JULY****Micah 6:1-4. 6-8****Psalm 50:3-7. 14****Matthew 12:38-42****TUESDAY****21 JULY****Micah 7:14-15. 18-20****Psalm 85:1-7****Matthew 12:46-end****WEDNESDAY****22 JULY****Mary Magdalene****Song of Solomon****3:1-4****Psalm 42:1-10****2 Corinthians 5:14-17****John 20:1-2. 11-18****THURSDAY****23 JULY****Jeremiah 2:1-3.****7-8. 12-13****Psalm 36:5-10****Matthew 13:10-17****FRIDAY****24 JULY****Jeremiah 3:14-17****Psalm 23***or Canticle:***Jeremiah 31:10-13****Matthew 13:18-23****SATURDAY****25 JULY****James the Apostle****Jeremiah 45:1-5***or Acts 11:27 – 12:2***Psalm 126***Acts 11:27 – 12:2**or 2 Corinthians***4:7-15****Matthew 20:20-28**

REFLECTION



Sometimes we are blinkered because we're so used to thinking in a certain way that alternative explanations pass us by. This week Jeremiah points out the failings that the people do not recognise in themselves, while the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew's Gospel want a sign, as if Jesus' words and actions are not enough. Jesus places himself in the context of the Old Testament story of Jonah, who spent three days in the belly of the sea monster. Jesus will spend three days in the earth, but will the scribes and Pharisees recognise the sign and make the connection when it happens? And why have James and John not understood that requests to sit at Jesus' right and left are not the point?

In the second half of the week Jesus explains how difficult it is for hearers to understand the parables he tells. We have the benefit of the explanations he gave to the disciples, but have they become so familiar and stale that they no longer speak to us? Can we recognise the signs that God is giving us, each time we read them?

PRAYER

Lord, teach us to listen and to really hear,
whether it be your words or those of other people.
Help us to lay aside our own assumptions
and be open to new interpretations
and to other points of view.

INNER JOURNEY, OUTER JOURNEY

PART III –
WATERING THE SEED

Concluding our series of extracts from James Roose-Evans' classic book.

After being accepted as a candidate for ordination I developed an acute and painful depression that continued for weeks. I was convinced that it had nothing to do with any anxiety as to whether or not I would be accepted for ordination, and so I did what I often do in such circumstances: I sat down and drew the situation. I began by drawing a picture of what I was feeling: at the bottom of a dried-up well. My pen sketched a deep vertical tunnel with a little stick figure at the bottom, representing myself. At the well-head I drew a friar lowering a bucket from a winch which had a traditional tiled roof surmounted by a cross, rather like a sketch for a church. As I drew I saw that the bucket contained single drop of moisture. Then at the bottom of the well I noticed a slight opening, and so I began to draw further, realising that I had to make myself very small in order to crawl through this aperture. Beyond lay a cave. In the cave was an altar and on that altar lay a seed, circular in shape like the Host at Mass. I knew it was my task to take the single drop of moisture from the bucket and water the seed. It was, of course, the seed of prayer one must water daily. My pen began to sketch slender tendrils growing out from the seed, climbing up through the dark earth towards the light, massing together to form first the roots, then the trunk and, finally, the branches of a mighty tree stretching up into the sky, standing beside the well-head where the friar was lowering the bucket containing the drop of moisture. Inside the roots, trunk and branches I drew many faces which are the spirits of all creation – women, men and children – forming the living Tree of Christ.

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LIVE
the WORDSUSTAINING YOU
THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by
Caroline Hodgson
and
Heather Smith

Sixth week after Trinity

Monday 20 July to
Saturday 25 July
2020

WEEK

MONDAY
27 JULY
Jeremiah 13:1-11
Psalm 82 or
Deuteronomy
32:18-21
Matthew 13:31-35

TUESDAY
28 JULY
Jeremiah 14:17-end
Psalm 79:8-end
Matthew 13:36-43

WEDNESDAY
29 JULY
Jeremiah 15:10.
16-end
Psalm 59:1-4. 18-end
Matthew 13:44-46

THURSDAY
30 JULY
Jeremiah 18:1-6
Psalm 146:1-5
Matthew 13:47-53

FRIDAY
31 JULY
Jeremiah 26:1-9
Psalm 69:4-10
Matthew 13:54-end

SATURDAY
1 AUGUST
Jeremiah
26:11-16. 24
Psalm 69:14-20
Matthew 14:1-12

REFLECTION

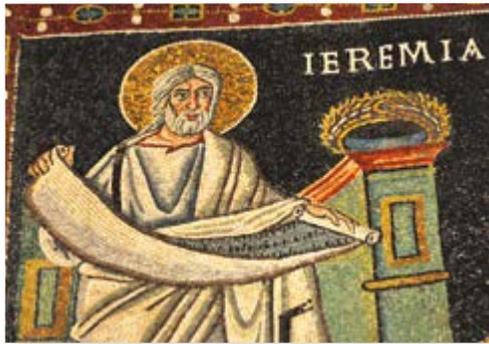
There is significant danger in speaking against the current easy opinion, and Jeremiah experiences it in this week's readings. The readings from the Hebrew scriptures (or the Old Testament) this week move between God's lament at the faithlessness of the people of Judah and Jeremiah's lament at the danger he is in for trying to speak prophetic words from God.

That double lament is important in a time when many people are lamenting the loss of species and habitat and are warning of the huge risk of climate change, and yet those prophets in our midst – including some very young women – are ridiculed and in some places openly persecuted.

Jeremiah gives a public sermon calling for change, or else destruction will come, but the religious authorities and the ordinary people can't bear to hear it and want to put him to death. The loincloth is meant to cling to the body as Judah is meant to cling to God, but it is "ruined... good for nothing" because the people refuse to hear God, stubbornly following their own will and going after other gods to serve and worship.

PRAYER

God of those who cry out in warning,
 help us to put aside our fears
 and listen for your voice in their words.
 Bless those who see with clarity how we must change
 to become your faithful people once again.



Jeremiah holding one of his scrolls, in the Byzantine basilica of St Vitale in Ravenna, Italy

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THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

PART XXIV – JEREMIAH – A BOOK ABOUT DESPAIR AND CONSOLATION

Richard Greatrex continues our book-by-book series about the Bible.

Born out of a national tragedy so devastating that it resonates throughout the rest of scripture – Jerusalem fallen, the first Temple destroyed, the Davidic monarchy crushed and a majority of Judah exiled – the prophecies of Jeremiah swirl with both despair over a people who have abandoned their God and hope that the one God will remain faithful and will, in time, draw them out of the abyss.

Jeremiah's prophetic life covers forty momentous years in ancient Middle Eastern history, beginning in 626 BC, during the reign of Josiah, and continuing until shortly after the destruction of the Temple in 587 BC. His book is a sprawling compilation, the second longest in the Hebrew Bible, swinging back and forth through the fall of the Assyrian empire, the rise of Babylon under a Chaldean dynasty and the God-defying misrule of a succession of ever weaker Davidic kings that eventually results in Judah losing its political independence, its ruling family, its elites and its artisans to become a petty Babylonian province.

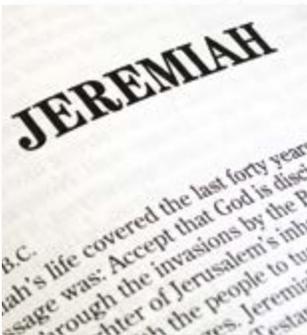
As Judah piles apostasy upon apostasy, rejects God's message and persecutes Jeremiah, God's messenger, so Jeremiah prophesies ever more trenchantly, not only that they will face humiliating punishment at the hands of God's agent, Nebuchadrezzar, but that the covenant is being torn up and the nation's dearest possessions, the Temple and the Davidic monarchy, will be sundered. Yet chapters thirty to thirty-three, at the book's heart, detailing Judah's blackest hours, are also known as the "oracles of consolation", offering continual strands of hope: God will not abandon the chosen people; this present, shattering, punishment is not final.

The Hebrew text of Jeremiah is substantially longer than, and in a different order from the Greek edition found in the Septuagint, indicating that compiling the prophet's pronouncements, along with details of his life, was slow and complex. However, despite its aura of intricacy and despair, Jeremiah's fearsome fidelity to God's message shines through. God will not abandon the chosen ones; redemption is always possible.

LIVE the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by Caroline Hodgson and Heather Smith



Seventh week after Trinity

Monday 27 July to Saturday 1 August 2020

WEEK