

Worship - "I am making all things new"

A Liturgy of Readings and Reflections on Power and Transformation

Rosie Venner

This liturgy may be used to acknowledge and confess the power held by many of us; whether that is because we live in the West or global North, because we are part of a majority or because we enjoy freedom, peace and opportunities denied to others. It gives space to reflect on the unsettling challenges of the gospels to our privileged way of life, while reminding us of Jesus' call to participate fully in the work of the kingdom, and to be transformed.

The words in bold are to be said or sung by everyone. Leave plenty of space between the prayers, readings and meditations and don't be afraid of silence. The Taize chants can be found at www.taize.fr.

Opening Prayer:

Come all who are weary
of wealth, of poverty, of power, of struggle, of division
Come all who are heavy-laden
with too much, with too little, with anxiety, with fear, with anger
Come all who have hope
for liberation, for peace, for freedom, for the kingdom
Hear these words
"See, I am making all things new".

Taize chant: **See I am here, says the Lord, see I make all things new**

A reading from Luke 1: 46-55:

Voice 1: And Mary said

Voice 2: 'My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.

Voice 1: Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

Voice 2: His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

Voice 1: He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.

Voice 2: He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever’.

Meditation:

A revolutionary prayer
the rich are sent away empty
the poor are lifted up
this is her God

A God who looks with favour on the lowest
who brings down the high and mighty
who takes the rulers from their thrones
and prepares a feast for the hungry
this is her God

A holy, powerful God
fragile within her womb.

Silence

Prayer:

Forgive us Lord when we cling to privilege and the trappings of Empire
When we hoard our possessions and enjoy riches at the expense of others
When we take for granted our position in society and in the world
When we do not share power and decision making with others
Unsettle us from seats of power and the confines of luxury
Challenge us with scripture and the stories of others
Liberate us from the grasp of consumerism and complacency
Transform us in the pattern of your kingdom
that breaks into this world, to resist, to restore, to rebalance, to renew.

***All say: For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever,
Amen***

A reading from Luke 6: 20-21:

Then he looked up at his disciples and said:

‘Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.

‘Blessed are you who are hungry now,
for you will be filled.

‘Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.

Taize chant: **Beati voi poveri (How blessed the poor in heart)**

(Singers or musicians could carry on quietly with this chant while the meditation is read over the top. If you do this you may want to continue with the chant several times after the meditation as well, before entering into silence)

Meditation:

When you say blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God
do your eyes rest on me in the crowd and see how weighed down I am with
possessions?

When you say blessed are you who are hungry, for you will be filled
do you place your hand in mine and know the feasts I have eaten?

When you say blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh
do you anoint my head with oil and sense that I have laughed long and hard?

Then bless me again Lord, take my riches, my fullness, my laughter
all that I have in excess

and let it rise up in the poor, the hungry and those who weep.

That together we may delight in good things

share bread and wine together

open our hearts in joy and sorrow

knowing that together we seek your kingdom

as one body.

Silence

Song: Come now O God of peace (O-so-so)

**All: May grace and peace be ours in abundance, in the knowledge of God and
of Jesus our Lord.**

**May we be thankful for simple things, for friendship, for health, for daily bread,
for good news.**

**May we rise above the corruption of power and become participants in the
divine nature.**

May we go from this place to pursue goodness, wisdom, holiness and love.

God the Creator, call us to the work of the kingdom

God the Redeemer, keep us from stumbling

God the Sustainer, transform and inspire us.

Amen

*Rosie Venner works for the British SCM, a dream job, which involves travelling around
visiting fantastic SCM people, organising events and creating resources for the
movement. She studied African Studies and English Literature at the University of
Birmingham. She has just discovered how satisfying it is to bake bread and will bake
some for you if you ask nicely.*