



Message by Rev. Michael Burke  
3rd Sunday of Advent



Welcome to “Brood of Vipers Sunday.” It is second only to “Poke Your Eye Out Sunday,” which, you might remember, we celebrated back during the summer.

For in today’s Gospel, we hear the rough-hewn John the Baptizer preaching in the wilderness:

*“You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance.”*

But as harsh as the words might sound to the modern ear, John’s message is actually one of Good News<sup>1</sup> - of change, forgiveness, and justice – a way home for a suffering people. John’s call is an echo of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, especially chapters 35 and 40. It is a word of hope to the Israelite people who are in exile in Babylon, far from home. Between them and Jerusalem lies a seemingly insurmountable desert wilderness.

But the Word of the Lord comes to Isaiah, that God will make a way in the wilderness... . a way home for God’s people, no matter the despair, home-sickness, and discouragement. No matter the weariness. No matter the physical separation or the distance. No matter the harsh winds and blinding sand. No matter the heights of the mountains, no matter the depths of the valleys. God will make a way there no way seems to be found.

For us, no matter the partisan politics of pandemic, the loneliness of isolation, the length of this present separation, the uncertainty of the future...

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<sup>1</sup> This passage is adapted from the Sacred Arts Guild materials for The Third Sunday of Advent, © Sanctified Arts Guild Close to Home Sermon Planning Guide, p8; See: <https://sanctifiedart.org/close-to-home-advent-bundle-year-c>

For the people of John's times, the barriers are no longer geographical, they are spiritual. The brokenness of the human condition – what the ancient language of faith calls “sin,”; the human tendency to fall back into old patterns of thinking and believing and acting and being that are no longer life-giving.

The word “repent” is a directional term – it means to change one's bearings, head off in a new and life-giving direction, toward the freedom and blessing that God provides. John asks those gathered on the banks of the river Jordan, those seemingly lost in the wilderness, to make true changes in their hearts and minds – not just surface changes for the sake of appearances or because it's “the thing to do” in the eyes of the crowd.

This is the call to “bear fruit *worthy* of repentance,”<sup>2</sup> the call not just for some one-time act of confession, but a “turning again” from that which is “soul-killing” to that which is “life-giving.”

It is a deep and abiding decision to seek the face of God in creation, in scripture, in the faithfulness of worship, certainly... ..but also in one another, in the stranger, in family, in friends and neighbors. In both those we agree with and ... and here is often the hard part... in those we disagree with, or those we think are most *un-like* ourselves.

Repentance is a state of the heart in which our lives are grounded in that great spiritual cycle: Grace, which begets Gratitude, Gratitude which begets Generosity, and Generosity which opens us yet again to the gift of God's Grace. The cycle is complete, and our souls dance around again.

Grace is an awareness of all that God has done, and is now doing for us in Christ. Forgiveness, healing, strength, blessing – none of which we ourselves have earned – it is a free gift of God, that is the point. We are loved just as we are. As shocking as it sounds, we can do nothing to earn the love of God – it is already given.

Sometimes when we look back upon our lives, and especially those times when we felt most alone and far from our home in God, lost in our own shame or brokenness, thinking we are somehow unworthy of God's love – it is then, in those desert and wilderness places, that God's grace comes to us, unearned and unmerited. I sometimes think the hardest step of faith is simply to know and understand that God loves us without question, just as we are. And to know this down deep in our bones, in our souls, not just intellectually or purely emotionally. Just as we have been created to be, in the image and likeness of God, as Scripture eloquently tell us. Sometimes... sometimes... way in the unswept back corners of our minds, we want to resist that wisdom, argue with that gift, insist that, while it might apply to others, it does not apply fully to us.

The Old Testament Book of Numbers tells us that the desert wilderness the Israelites travelled through

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<sup>2</sup> See: Luke 3:7-18; 16:10-13; Matthew 3:7-10;

on their way home to the promised land was called the “Wilderness of Sin.”<sup>3</sup> Isn't that poetic? The journey home goes through the wilderness of Sin, where God finds us and brings us home.

During that time of the Exodus, when the Israelite people journeyed from captivity, bondage, and slavery in Egypt to new life, freedom and liberation, they first felt directionless and despairing that there even was such a place as “home.” They scoffed, they argued amongst themselves, they argued *with themselves*, they felt aimless and lost, in search of home.

Gratitude comes and finds us when we are in those places, in fact she whispers our name when we are depressed and fearful, she knocks at the door of our soul, believing we will awaken and let her in. Gratitude believes in us long before we believe in her.

And Generosity is, for us, a way of living and responding to what God has done in us. It recognizes that great spiritual insight that a gift can only reach completeness when it itself is given away.

It is the way God works through us, to reach those who have not yet fully heard this Good News. God works through a generosity of spirit, believing in the best that life has to offer. Believing in one another even when those around us have lost hope in themselves....

...Believing in the power of Almighty God working through us and in us: giving, sacrificing, serving, shining to the glory of God, praying for and with our neighbors in need, but also for those often-wounded places within ourselves still in need of healing, helping us to not just love God, not just love our neighbor, but helping us to love our whole selves... ...And to bring redemption to those places within that we are frightened of, ashamed of, or disconnected from.

This spiritual cycle of blessing: That of Grace, Gratitude, and Generosity, **\*IS\*** what we have called, during this season Advent, “**Home-making.**”

Next week, the music and liturgy of the worship service, along with the Holy Scriptures and Rev. Dawn's sermon will all speak to us of seeking sanctuary and shelter, as Mary retreats to Elizabeth and Zechariah's home to settle in her calling. She receives a safe home, and her heart swells with praise of God.

So too, God calls *us* to find Sanctuary in God's own self and being, but also to both find and create sanctuary as the indwelling of God's spirit within us and within community. In such a way we both become and create sanctuary for one another, a building not built with hands, a place where all are truly **welcome...** ... **all are truly welcome** and find healing, blessing, and renewal.

Such is the mystery of the Gift - Love incarnate.  
Rejoice! The homecoming of Christmas is now closer than ever.

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<sup>3</sup> [Numbers 13:3](#), [Numbers 13:26](#)

# Scriptures for Today



## The Collect

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

## Hebrew Scriptures

### Zephaniah 3:14-20

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;  
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,  
O daughter Jerusalem!

The Lord has taken away the judgments against  
you,  
he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;  
you shall fear disaster no more.

On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:

Do not fear, O Zion;  
do not let your hands grow weak.

The Lord, your God, is in your midst,  
a warrior who gives victory;

he will rejoice over you with gladness,  
he will renew you in his love;

he will exult over you with loud singing  
as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you,  
so that you will not bear reproach for it.

I will deal with all your oppressors  
at that time.

And I will save the lame  
and gather the outcast,

and I will change their shame into praise  
and renown in all the earth.

At that time I will bring you home,  
at the time when I gather you;

for I will make you renowned and praised  
among all the peoples of the earth,

when I restore your fortunes  
before your eyes, says the Lord.

**Isaiah 35:1-10**

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;

like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,  
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the Lord,  
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands,  
and make firm the feeble knees.

Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
"Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.  
He will come with vengeance,

with terrible recompense.  
He will come and save you."

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert;

the burning sand shall become a pool,  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;

the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

**A highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Holy Way;**

**the unclean shall not travel on it,  
but it shall be for God's people;  
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.**

No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;

they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,  
and come to Zion with singing;

everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain joy and gladness,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

**Isaiah 40: 1-4**

Comfort, O comfort my people,  
says your God.

<sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her  
that she has served her term,  
that her penalty is paid,  
that she has received from the Lord's hand  
double for all her sins.

<sup>3</sup> A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare  
the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert  
a highway for our God.

<sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.

<sup>5</sup> Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

## The Response    Canticle 9    Page 86, BCP    The First Song of Isaiah    *Isaiah 12:2-6*

Surely, it is God who saves me; \*  
I will trust in him and not be afraid.

For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, \*  
and he will be my Savior.

Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing \*  
from the springs of salvation.

And on that day you shall say, \*  
Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name;

Make his deeds known among the peoples; \*  
see that they remember that his Name is exalted.

Sing the praises of the Lord, for he has done great things, \*  
and this is known in all the world.

Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy, \*  
for the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of Israel.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: \*  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.



*Rejoice in the Lord always;  
again I will say, Rejoice.*

## The New Testament

### Philippians 4:4-7

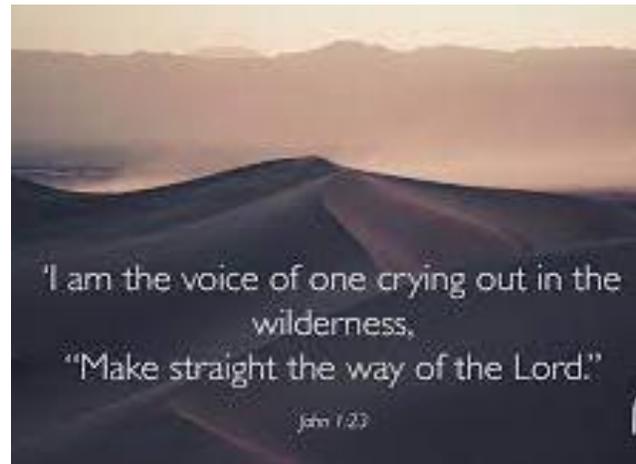
Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

## The Holy Gospel

## Luke 3:1-18

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:  
 "Prepare the way of the Lord,  
 make his paths straight.  
 Every valley shall be filled,  
 and every mountain and hill shall be made low,  
 and the crooked shall be made straight,  
 and the rough ways made smooth;  
 and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"



John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.'

And the crowds asked him, 'What then should we do?' In reply he said to them, 'Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.' Even tax-collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, 'Teacher, what should we do?' He said to them, 'Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.' Soldiers also asked him, 'And we, what should we do?' He said to them, 'Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.'

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.



## An Advent Story

"The story concerns a monastery that had fallen upon hard times. Once a great order, as a result of waves of antimonastic persecution in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the rise of secularism in the nineteenth, all its branch houses were lost and it had become decimated to the extent that there were only five monks left in

the decaying mother house: the abbot and four others, all over seventy in age. Clearly it was a dying order.

In the deep woods surrounding the monastery there was a little hut that a rabbi from a nearby town occasionally used for a hermitage. Through their many years of prayer and contemplation the old monks had become [pretty intuitive], so they could always sense when the rabbi was in his hermitage. "The rabbi is in the woods, the rabbi is in the woods again " they would whisper to each other. As he agonized over the imminent death of his order, it occurred to the abbot at one such time to visit the hermitage and ask the rabbi if by some possible chance he could offer any advice that might save the monastery.

The rabbi welcomed the abbot at his hut. But when the abbot explained the purpose of his visit, the rabbi could only commiserate with him. "I know how it is," he exclaimed. "The spirit has gone out of the people. It is the same in my town. Almost no one comes to the synagogue anymore." So the old abbot and the old rabbi wept together. Then they read parts of the Torah and quietly spoke of deep things. The time came when the abbot had to leave. They embraced each other. "It has been a wonderful thing that we should meet after all these years," the abbot said, "but I have still failed in my purpose for coming here. Is there nothing you can tell me, no piece of advice you can give me that would help me save my dying order?"

"No, I am sorry," the rabbi responded. "I have no advice to give. The only thing I can tell you is that the Messiah is one of you."

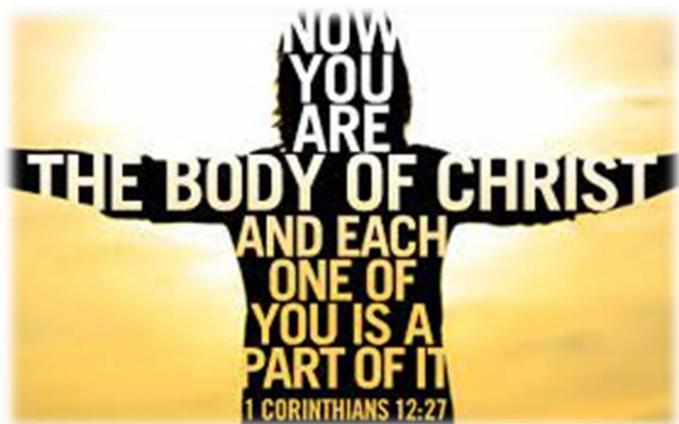
When the abbot returned to the monastery his fellow monks gathered around him to ask, "Well what did the rabbi say?" "He couldn't help," the abbot answered. "We just wept and read the Torah together. The only thing he did say, just as I was leaving --it was something cryptic-- was that the Messiah is one of us. I don't know what he meant."

In the days and weeks and months that followed, the old monks pondered this and wondered whether there was any possible significance to the rabbi's words. The Messiah is one of us? Could he possibly have meant one of us monks here at the monastery? If that's the case, which one? Do you suppose he meant the abbot? Yes, if he meant anyone, he probably meant Father Abbot. He has been our leader for more than a generation.

On the other hand, he might have meant Brother Thomas. Certainly Brother Thomas is a holy man. Everyone knows that Thomas is a man of light. Certainly he could not have meant Brother Elred! Elred gets crotchety at times. But come to think of it, even though he is a thorn in people's sides, when you look back on it, Elred is virtually always right. Often very right. Maybe the rabbi did mean Brother Elred. But surely not Brother Phillip. Phillip is so passive, a real nobody. But then, almost mysteriously, he has a gift for somehow always being there when you need him. He just magically appears by your side. Maybe Phillip is the Messiah. Of course the rabbi didn't mean me. He couldn't possibly have meant me. I'm just an ordinary person. Yet supposing he did? Suppose I am the Messiah? O God, not me. I couldn't be that much for You, could I?

**As they contemplated in this manner, the old monks began to treat each other with extraordinary respect on the off chance that one among them might be the Messiah.**

**And on the off off chance that each monk himself might be the Messiah, they began to treat themselves with extraordinary respect.**



Because the forest in which it was situated was beautiful, it so happened that people still occasionally came to visit the monastery to picnic on its tiny lawn, to wander along some of its paths, even now and then to go into the dilapidated chapel to meditate. As they did so, without even being conscious of it, they sensed the aura of extraordinary respect that now began to surround the five old monks and seemed to radiate out from them and permeate the atmosphere of the place. There was something strangely attractive, even compelling, about it. Hardly knowing why, they began to come back to the monastery more frequently to picnic, to play, to pray. They began to bring their friends to show them this special place. And their friends brought their friends.

Then it happened that some of the younger men who came to visit the monastery started to talk more and more with the old monks. After a while one asked if he could join them. Then another. And another. So within a few years the monastery had once again become a thriving order and, thanks to the rabbi's gift, a vibrant center of light and spirituality in the realm."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> This version of the story came from *The Different Drum*, by M. Scott Peck, M.D. It is a very old story, often attributed to the rabbis. The author is unknown.

## Playlist:

### Breakdown (A Long Way from Home)

Words and music by [Kris Kristofferson](#)

The clubs are all closed and the ladies are leaving,  
There's nobody nobody knows on the street;  
A few stranded souls standing cold at the station,  
An nowhere to go but to bed and to sleep.

Lord, would you look at you  
Now that you're here, ain't you  
Proud of your peers  
And the long way you've come'  
All alone, all the way  
On your own, who's to say  
That you've thrown it away for a song'  
Boy, you've sure come a long way from home.

So it's so long to so many so far behind you,  
Fair-weather friends that you no longer know;  
You've still got the same lonely songs to remind you  
Of someone you seemed to be so long ago.

Lord, would you look at you  
Now that you're here, ain't you  
Proud of your peers  
And the long way you've come'  
All alone, all the way  
On you own, who's to say  
That you've thrown it away for a song'  
Boy, you've sure come a long way from home

*Songwriters: Kris Kristofferson*

*Breakdown (A Long Way from Home) lyrics © Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC*

### The Pilgrim (Chapter 33)

Words and music by Kris Kristofferson

See him wasted on the sidewalk in his jacket and his jeans,  
 Wearin' yesterday's misfortunes like a smile  
 Once he had a future full of money, love, and dreams,  
 Which he spent like they was goin' outta style  
 And he keeps right on a'changin' for the better or the worse,  
 Searchin' for a shrine he's never found  
 Never knowin' if believin' is a blessin' or a curse,  
 Or if the goin' up was worth the comin' down

He's a poet, he's a picker  
 He's a prophet, he's a pusher  
 He's a pilgrim and a preacher, and a problem when he's stoned  
 He's a walkin' contradiction, partly truth and partly fiction,  
 Takin' ev'ry wrong direction on his lonely way back home.

He has tasted good and evil in your bedrooms and your bars,  
 And he's traded in tomorrow for today  
 Runnin' from his devils, lord, and reachin' for the stars,  
 And losin' all he's loved along the way  
 But if this world keeps right on turnin' for the better or the worse,  
 And all he ever gets is older and around  
 from the rockin' of the cradle to the rollin' of the hearse,  
 The goin' up was worth the comin' down

He's a poet, he's a picker  
 He's a prophet, he's a pusher  
 He's a pilgrim and a preacher, and a problem when he's stoned  
 He's a walkin' contradiction, partly truth and partly fiction,  
 Takin' ev'ry wrong direction on his lonely way back home.  
 There's a lotta wrong directions on that lonely way back home.

*Songwriters: Kris Kristofferson*

*The Pilgrim, Chapter 33 lyrics © Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC*

**Crossing to Jerusalem**Written By [Rosanne Cash](#) & [John Leventhal](#)

This is our great migration  
 Our mountain and our stone  
 Turning ourselves inside-out  
 To find we're already home

This is our deal with the sinners and saints  
 The law and up above  
 We'll be crossing to Jerusalem  
 With nothing but our love

Birthdays and the babies  
 Bourbon and the tears  
 Roaring like the hurricane  
 Tearing up the years

Who we are is who we were  
 And all of you were there  
 We're crossing to Jerusalem  
 It's nothing we can't bear

The towns through tiny windows  
 The rooms that look the same  
 We lost the hands we didn't play  
 But somehow won the game  
 Look how the curtain rises  
 It courses through our blood

We'll be crossing to Jerusalem  
 With nothing but our love  
 We'll be crossing to Jerusalem  
 With nothing but our love...

**Closer To Home**

Bill Mallonee

Looking for You out on the highways  
 Looking for You on those dusty back roads  
 In every face of a beat down race  
 To bring me closer to home

Looking for you in a pawn shop guitar  
 Or inside a pedal steel's moan  
 In that 6-string drag through an old tweed amp  
 To bring me closer to home

Whatever hope you pull from these sad rituals  
 Remember to try and forget  
 If you make a deal with the devil  
 from time to time  
 Well, always hedge your bet

Searching for You out in the desert  
 That is where i heard You roam  
 Inside everything that can't be measured  
 To bring me closer to home  
 To bring me closer to home  
 To bring me closer to home

*Lyrics by Bill Mallonee, Album: Dolorosa;  
 Available on Bandcamp.*

<https://billmalloneemusic.bandcamp.com/album/dolorosa-2>

## Cities of Ruin (On your Way Back Home)

*Words and music by Bill Mallonee*

Hit the highway at day break  
Roll out for San Antone  
Everything is up for grabs  
And you're the last to know

And your heart?  
She is a shooting star  
Wandering out there on its own  
Drifting through the cities of ruin  
On your way back home

You can it a rite of passage  
Call it something strong and true  
All those Appalachian deep sighs  
And the sunlight sifting through

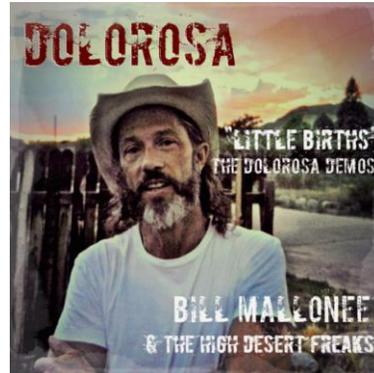
They say "in heaven, you'll get your real name  
carved into a precious stone"  
Drifting through these cities of ruin  
On your way back home

May your steps be full of wonder  
May the neon light your path  
And may you have some tears to spread around  
When others' dreams collapse

and the desert? She'll hold your secrets  
When your thoughts are all dust-blown  
Drifting through these cities of ruin  
On your way back home

Hit the highway at midnight  
Another time zone to get through  
songs drifting over the canyon  
stars they hang there like jewels

And the heart is like a shooting star  
Always blazing through the cold  
Bumming through these cities of ruin  
On your way back home.



*From Dolorosa, released January 24, 2014.  
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Available on Bandcamp:*

<https://billmalloneemusic.bandcamp.com/album/dolorosa-2>



### "Wherever You Are"

Song written & produced by the group Barnaby Bright (Nathan & Becky Bliss)

To view the video on Facebook:

[barnabybright.com/https://www.facebook.com/sanctifiedart/videos/605080010615172/?t=42](https://www.facebook.com/sanctifiedart/videos/605080010615172/?t=42)



*The Gift*  
*Keeps moving --*  
*Never know*  
*Where it's going to land.*

*You must stand*  
*Back and let it*  
*Keep on changing hands...*

## The Gift

Bruce Cockburn

These shoes have walked some strange streets  
 Stranger still to come --  
 Sometimes the prayers of strangers  
 Are all that keeps them from  
 Trying to stay static  
 Something even death can't do  
 Everything is motion --  
 To the motion be true

In this cold commodity culture  
 Where you lay your money down  
 It's hard to even notice  
 That all this earth is hallowed ground --  
 Harder still to feel it  
 Basic as a breath --  
 Love is stronger than darkness  
 Love is stronger than death

The gift  
 Keeps moving --  
 Never know  
 Where it's going to land.  
 You must stand  
 Back and let it  
 Keep on changing hands

Hackles rise in anger  
 Heat waves rise in sex  
 The gift moves on regardless  
 Tying this world to the next  
 May you never tire of waiting  
 Never feel that life is cheap  
 May your life be filled with light  
 Except for when you're trying to sleep

The gift  
 Keeps moving --  
 Never know  
 Where it's going to land  
 You must stand  
 Back and let it  
 Keep on changing hands





## Already Home

[Marc Cohn](#),

I can see the sunshine  
 Coming through my room  
 Breaking down the winter of my discontent  
 Looking out my window  
 At the people passing by  
 I keep wondering where my old companion went

On the steps of the museum  
 I wrote a line or two  
 But it took a while to find my way  
 Back to something true like

This is where I lay my hat  
 This is where they know my name  
 This is where they show me that  
 A man's not so alone  
 Maybe I'm already home  
 (Sometimes you've got to go back)  
 Maybe I'm already home  
 (Sometimes you don't know why)

Rolling down the window  
 Burning up the daze  
 Cutting through the veil that keeps on blinding  
 me  
 I was only sleeping  
 Waiting here for you  
 Waiting for your touch that keeps reminding me

Well I've seen the world of wonders  
 Been underneath it too  
 But it took a while just to find my way  
 Back to something true like

This is where I lay my hat  
 This is where they know my name  
 This is where they show me that  
 A man's not so alone  
 Maybe I'm already home  
 (Sometimes you've got to go back)  
 Maybe I'm already home  
 (Sometimes you don't know why)

Why it had to take me so long  
 Just to find a place that really feels  
 This must be where I belong  
 Thinking about it  
 All I had to do was click my heels

This is where I lay my hat  
 This is where they know my name  
 This is where they show me that  
 A man's not so alone  
 Maybe I'm already home  
 (Sometimes you've got to go back)  
 Maybe I'm already home  
 (Sometimes you don't know why)

*Words and music by [John Leventhal](#) & [Marc Cohn](#)  
 Release Date 1998, from the album [Burning the Daze](#)*

## Looking Ahead to Next Week

in our never-ending playlist:

*Next week, both the Holy Scriptures and Rev. Dawn will speak to us of seeking sanctuary and shelter, as Mary retreats to Elizabeth and Zechariah's home to settle in her calling. She receives a safe home, and her heart swells with praise of God.*

*So too, God call us to find Sanctuary in God's own being and self, but also to both find and create sanctuary as the indwelling of God's spirit within us and within community. In such a way we both become and create sanctuary for one another, a place where all are truly welcome and find healing, blessing, and renewal.*

*Such is the mystery of Love incarnate.*

*The homecoming of Christmas is now closer than ever.*

### Sanctuary

Words and music by Carrie Newcomer

Will you be my refuge  
 My haven in the storm  
 Will you keep the embers warm  
 When my fire's all but gone?  
 Will you remember  
 And bring me sprigs of rosemary  
 Be my sanctuary  
 'Til I can carry on  
 Carry on  
 Carry on

This one knocked me to the ground  
 This one dropped me to my knees  
 I should have seen it coming  
 But it surprised me

Will you be my refuge  
 My haven in the storm  
 Will you keep the embers warm  
 When my fire's all but gone?  
 Will you remember  
 And bring me sprigs of rosemary  
 Be my sanctuary  
 'Til I can carry on  
 Carry on  
 Carry on  
 In a state of true believers  
 On streets called us and them  
 Its gonna take some time  
 'Til the world feels safe again

Will you be my refuge  
 My haven in the storm  
 Will you keep the embers warm  
 When my fire's all but gone?  
 Will you remember  
 And bring me sprigs of rosemary  
 Be my sanctuary  
 'Til I can carry on  
 Carry on  
 Carry on

You can rest here in Brown Chapel  
 Or with a circle of friends  
 Or quiet grove of trees  
 Or between two bookends

Will you be my refuge  
 My haven in the storm  
 Will you keep the embers warm  
 When my fire's all but gone?  
 Will you remember  
 And bring me sprigs of rosemary  
 Be my sanctuary  
 'Til I can carry on  
 Carry on  
 Carry on

**Shelter**

Performed by Lone Justice

Well alright, you gave it all up for a dream  
Fate proved unkind, to lock the door  
and leave no key  
You're unsure, well baby I'm scared too  
When the world crushes you

Let me be your shelter, shelter  
From a storm outside  
Let me be your shelter, shelter  
From the endless night

Disillusion has an edge so sharp  
It tears at your soul and leaves a stain  
upon your heart  
I need you, to wash mine clean  
You've felt it too, and you need me  
Let me be your shelter, shelter  
From a storm outside  
Let me be your shelter, shelter  
From the endless night

Your struggle with darkness has left you blind  
I'll light the fire in your eyes  
Your struggle with darkness has left you blind  
I'll light the fire in your eyes

Let me be your shelter, shelter  
From a storm outside  
Let me be your shelter, shelter  
From the endless night  
Let me be your shelter, shelter...

*Songwriters: Van Zandt Steven / Mc Kee Maria  
Luisa; Shelter lyrics © Blue Midnight Music*

## All Are Welcome

Words and music by Marty Haugen

Let us build a house  
where love can dwell  
and all can safely live,  
a place where saints and children tell  
how hearts learn to forgive.

Built of hopes and dreams and visions,  
rock of faith and vault of grace;  
here the love of Christ  
shall end divisions.  
All are welcome, all are welcome,  
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house  
where prophets speak,  
and words are strong and true,  
where all God's children dare to seek  
to dream God's reign anew.

Here the cross shall stand as witness  
and as symbol of God's grace;  
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus.

All are welcome, all are welcome,  
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where love is found  
in water, wine and wheat:  
a banquet hall on holy ground  
where peace and justice meet.

Here the love of God, through Jesus,  
is revealed in time and space;  
as we share in Christ  
the feast that frees us.

All are welcome, all are welcome,  
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house  
where hands will reach  
beyond the wood and stone  
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,  
and live the Word they've known.

Here the outcast and the stranger  
bear the image of God's face;  
let us bring an end to fear and danger.

All are welcome, all are welcome,  
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house  
where all are named,  
their songs and visions heard  
and loved and treasured,  
taught and claimed  
as words within the Word.

Built of tears and cries and laughter,  
prayers of faith and songs of grace,  
let this house proclaim  
from floor to rafter.

All are welcome, all are welcome,  
all are welcome in this place.

***Marty Haugen** (b. 1950), is a prolific liturgical composer with many songs included in hymnals across the liturgical spectrum of North American hymnals and beyond, with many songs translated into different languages. He was raised in the American Lutheran Church, received a BA in psychology from Luther College, yet found his first position as a church musician in a Roman Catholic parish at a time when the Roman Catholic Church was undergoing profound liturgical and musical changes after Vatican II. Finding a vocation in that parish to provide accessible songs for worship, he continued to compose and to study. More than 400 of his compositions are currently available from several publishers.*