

Oecumenische viering in de Christus Triumfatorkerk

Zondag 1 maart 2020, thema: Woestijn

Herdenking van het bombardement op het Bezuidenhout op 3 maart 1945

Voorgangers: Diaken Henk van Zoelen, parochie Maria Sterre der Zee

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Met medewerking van: St. Liduinakoor o.l.v. Ed Catijn

Choir of St. John & St. Philip o.l.v. Christina Edelen

Organist: Roelfien Folkersma

KOMEN

- Woord van welkom door de ouderling van dienst
- Aanvangslied: Koor en gemeente zingen 'Morning has Broken' (Lied 216)
- Groet en Bemoediging, drempelgebed
- Zingen 'Licht dat ons aanstoot in de morgen' (Liedboek 601: 1,2 en 3)
- De 'herdenkingskaars' wordt aangestoken en toegelicht door de voorzitter van de Stichting 3 maart '45, Lia van den Broek
- Gedicht van Anneflood Janssen (scholier van het Zandvliet): Samen

*We zijn nu samen
En we denken terug
aan 75 jaar geleden.*

*We denken terug
aan die verschrikkelijke dag.*

*We denken terug
aan onze dierbaren die toen stierven.*

*We denken terug
aan het bombardement op 3 maart 1945.*

*Gelukkig is het allemaal voorbij
en de hoop is niet verloren
Want we blijven geloven.*

*Geloven in de vrede.
Geloven in de liefde.
Geloven in een mooie toekomst met elkaar.
Geloven in acceptatie van elkaars verschillen.*

*Want geloven in elkaar
dat doen we samen.*

- De Litany wordt gezongen door de koren
All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.
The hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class,
Father, Forgive.
The covetous desires of people and nations to possess what is not their own,
Father, Forgive.
The greed which exploits the work of human hands and lays waste the earth,
Father, Forgive.
Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others,
Father, Forgive.

Our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the refugee,
Father, Forgive.

The lust which dishonours the bodies of men, women and children,
Father, Forgive.

The pride which leads us to trust in ourselves and not in God,
Father, Forgive. Amen

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

WOORD

- Zondagsgebed
- Met de kinderen
- Koor: "Thou Knowest, Lord" – Henry Purcell
- Lezing uit het Oude Testament: Exodus 3, 1-6 (in het Engels)
- Lied 'Een mens te zijn op aarde' (Lied 538: 1, 2 en 4)
- Vers voor het Evangelie (*Gezangen voor Liturgie* 254)
- Beurtspraak
- Evangelielezing Matteüs 4, 1-11
- Zingen Acclamatie (*Gezangen voor Liturgie* 254)
- Overdenking (Rev. Andrew Taylor)

I bring you the greetings of the people and chaplaincy of St John and St Philip this morning. Many of our members are here for this Service, of course, but even those who are not are aware of the significance of this day in our common memory. They would wish you to know that they are also present in spirit.

Today is the first Sunday of Lent. It is tradition for churches that follow the common lectionary to reflect, on this Sunday, upon Jesus' temptations in the Wilderness. But we have a double purpose today, because we are also gathered in commemoration of an event 75 years ago this month that has ever since bound our three church communities together. The bombing of the Bezuidenhout area of this city created another, quite literal, wilderness. It was not, however, a wilderness that had anything good about it. It was a wilderness of chaos and death. It was also a wilderness that took many years to overcome as this area of the city was rebuilt; in time also the church buildings that we all worship in today.

The common bond that this wilderness has created between our three churches is symbolised by the Cross of Nails that each community in turn holds in trust for the other two. And through this Cross of Nails we are joined with all cities throughout the world that have in their time been turned into wilderness places. We are part of a special worldwide fellowship of such places, even if the reasons for why we are bound together have their origin in tragedy.

And today, on this first Sunday in Lent, we have just begun that season in the Church Year when, in preparation for the joy of Easter, we are asked to take special care to reflect upon ourselves and our life together. Our focus is on two biblical wildernesses and what happens there for Moses and Jesus. What happens there is the beginning of a "journey". In the case of Moses it will be a literal journey that will take him and the People of Israel 40 years to complete. In the case of Jesus it will be 40 days of reflection that will see him journey in time to Jerusalem and the events of Holy Week and Easter.

It is for both, also, a journey that begins a vocation. It has a particular purpose and shape. Moses' vocation is to hear the voice of God in the burning bush of Mount Horeb. Jesus' vocation begins with the leading of the Spirit into the wilderness. This is one of those little details in the biblical story that can often get passed over. What it suggests is that everything that subsequently happens to him over that 40 days, every little temptation that the devil throws his way, is as God would will it.

As you will know, and as we would discover if we read further in Chapter 3 of Exodus, Moses presents to God most every excuse known to humankind to "get out" of his vocation. He is a reluctant convert to the cause. Jesus, on the other hand, appears to embrace his vocation with equanimity and in full awareness of what it will look like. It will be a vocation that will never rely

on miracle working simply for the purpose of show. It will be a vocation that will never claim spectacular feats in order to show what God can do. And it will be a vocation that lays aside any temptation to political power for its own sake.

Regardless of how the call comes to Moses and to Jesus, and regardless of whether or not it is embraced reluctantly or in full compliance, it has the same shape. The vocation is for the sake of service. It is a service that stands in direct contrast to every political power or system, every individual or organisation, which aims solely at its own survival. Because of one thing we can be sure; that any person or group that aims purely at its own promotion usually means that someone else, somewhere else, will suffer somehow.

So, what about us? What about we three Christian communities here in The Hague who by an accident of history share this story? We are bound together by something that happened to us all 75 years ago. It was something that we could wish had never happened, of course. It was a tragedy that, like all the tragedies of that particular war, created a suffering that we can never fully understand. There are witnesses to that tragedy still alive and among us, of course, and we know that we do well to listen to their first hand story. We can only imagine it for ourselves.

That, however, is a good starting point. Year by year we are called together in this place to imagine, once again, what happened then. To feel, as best we can, its power. To understand, as best we can, its tragedy. The city that we see around us today is not the city that existed then. By accident and design, that city is new and different, as are our church buildings. We have "moved on", and we are no longer the people that we were in 1945. The legacy that they left us then is one that we honour and will continue to remember year by year.

But we have a different task given to us. We have our own vocation, our own unique call from God, even if sometimes we are not quite able to see what it is yet. We are three communities of Christians united by a single cross of nails. And when we display that cross in each of our churches for a year, it is a visible symbol of the life that joins us together. If we remember it well, it reminds us of our Christian brothers and sisters elsewhere in this city who share this particular story. And, if we have enough imagination, it can lift our eyes and hearts to remember those other places who have their own story of tragedy and new beginnings to tell.

In finishing, let me return to where we began. Which is that theme of finding ourselves back in the wilderness for a short time. Wilderness places, as we know, don't have to be deserts, as important as they have been in religious thought. Any place that provides a release from unnecessary distraction, even if only for a short time, can serve that purpose. Lent is meant to be that kind of place for us, for a period of 40 days and no more. We are being invited to "imagine" ourselves again differently, both as individual people and as communities of Christians. What comes out of this time of imagination only we and God need to understand. Who we are under God is something that does not need to be shared if we choose not to share it. Our personal vocation is for us alone to discern, and may be particular to us. Lent has always been about personal transformation under God. But there is another vocation that we do share, as I have already said. It is a story created by and in a wilderness, and it is one that we continue to tell. Why else are we here today? This story still matters.

And it is a story shaped by the cross of Jesus Christ. The Cross reminds us that not everything we do will result in success. We only have to think about the story of Moses and Jesus to understand that! What begins for Moses at the burning bush on Mount Sinai is a journey of little victories and great setbacks before it reaches its conclusion. What begins for Jesus, led by the Spirit into the wilderness, is also a story of victory and setback as the journey to Jerusalem begins. No one ever said that vocation was easy. The history of our own three communities will probably remind us of how true that is. The question that we all face, either as individuals or as church today, is how we confront and face up to those inevitable challenges and failures on the road when they come to us.

But the story, we know already doesn't end there. Holy Week is not finally a story of failure and tragedy. It is also a story of resurrection. Of course we don't have to hurry on to the end of the story quite so quickly! Easter Day can wait a little while yet. But, while it can, it is also true that who we are and what we represent today, in this place and for this memorial, is a sign of God's resurrection of his people. We might well wish that the story that has brought us to this place,

the story of March 3rd 1945, were different. It is not, of course. We are still called to spend a little time in the wilderness to rediscover ourselves and our vocation under God. But what we are doing here today, together, is also a reminder of where the journey ends; that, in the words of St Augustine, “we are an Easter People, and Hallelujah is our song”

- Koormuziek ‘Like as the hart’ - Herbert Howells

ANTWOORD

- Dankgebed en voorbeden
Na een Nederlandse voorbede wordt gezegd: ‘Laat ons bidden’ en zingen wij O Heer, hoor mij aan. Na een Engelse voorbede wordt gezegd: ‘Let us pray’ en zingen wij in het Engels: O Lord, hear my prayer
- Onze Vader (Oecumenische versie)
- Collecte, onder de collecte zingen we: ‘Christ be our light’ (Lied 1005: 1, 2 en 5 – Engels)
- Overdracht Cross of Nails van de Anglican Church naar de Christus Triumfatorkerk

GAAN

- Gebed om vrede en Vredewens, tijdens de vredegroet zingen de koren: ‘Verleih uns Frieden’
- Slotzang: ‘Amazing Grace’
- Zending en Zegen door alle drie de voorgangers
- Orgelspel