

KMarie Tejada: Good morning.

Congregation: Good morning.

KMarie Tejada: Welcome to morning prayers. If you please stand as you are able, and join me in a responsive reading, which this morning is Psalm 90, found on your Appleton Psalter book on page 45.

KMarie Tejada: Lord, you have been a refuge from one generation to another.

Congregation: Before the mountains were brought forth and the land and the earth were born, from age to age, you are God.

KMarie Tejada: You turn us back to the dust and say, "Go back, O child of Earth."

Congregation: For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past and like a watch in the night.

KMarie Tejada: You sweep us away like a dream. We fade away suddenly like the grass.

Congregation: In the morning, it is green and flourishes. In the evening, it is dried up and withered.

KMarie Tejada: When you are angry, all our days are gone. We bring our years to an end like a sigh.

Congregation: The time of our life is 70 years, perhaps in strength, even 80. Yet the sum of them is but labor and sorrow for they pass away quickly and we are gone.

KMarie Tejada: Who regards the power of your breath? Who rightly fears your indignation?

Congregation: So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

Choir: (Singing)

Brother John: Good Morning. My text today is taken from the Acts of the apostles, the well known text in chapter two verses 42 to 47 describing the life of the early Christians. The first believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship. To the breaking of bread and the prayers. All came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common. They would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all as any had need. Day by day as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

- Brother John: Why in 1940 would a 25 year old Theology student leave his native Switzerland and go into war-torn France? Purchasing, a house in the half abandoned village of Taizé, hiding Jews fleeing from the Nazi occupation and the envisaging, the creation of an ecumenical monastic community. And why would a young Harvard graduate class of 1972, yours truly, in Europe on a Sheldon fellowship be attracted to that community and eventually make it his life vocation?
- Brother John: The question is specifically that of the relevance of a monastic community in the age of the internet and the global village, but more generally any radical choice for Christ today. Most believers obviously are not called to live as monks or nuns, but from the numbers of people, our community attracts something like 100,000 each year, mostly between the ages of 17 and 30 there is arguably still something that fascinates and attracts in such a life.
- Brother John: Brother Roger, our founder, did not see the community he dreamt of as merely or primarily for the persons who would make it up as a way of living a more carefree existence, detach from the problems of the world around them. As his welcome of refugees demonstrated, he was always concerned with being there for others, particularly those most in need. Already as a student, Brother Roger was struck by the fact that although in Europe everyone knew about God, about Christ and the gospel. These realities were no longer transforming the hearts of men and women and the world in which they lived. His conclusion, people needed not just words, although proclaiming the message is essential, but concrete signs. And turning to the new Testament as shown in the text we've just heard, he saw that the clearest sign of the gospel was a community of persons who prayed together, shared materially and spiritually, and we're open to all those around him.
- Brother John: That is what wedded his interest in the monastic tradition of Christianity. Although he came from a reformed background in which monks were taboo. In short, he was interested in the sign value of what we call today an intentional community. Brother Roger formulated his intuition and an expression he used while writing the "Rule of Taizé" for the community he founded. He said, "We are called to live a parable of community".
- Brother John: To get his message across. Jesus told stories. Parables are not meant to be taken, literally still less to be imitated. They want to open our minds and hearts to the unexpected and mysterious ways in which God becomes present concretely in our everyday world. If Christianity is first of all a life to be lived and not a reflection on life that comes later, then people need beyond explanations and analysis, concrete signs of that life.
- Brother John: A community such as the one I belong to is a relatively explicit and public sign, but there should be as many signs as there are believers. Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, I am in their midst says Jesus. Could we not translate this as I am present through them as the one who is risen and still alive. At Taizé, we often speak of signs of hope. When we prepare gatherings of

young adults throughout the world, we ask local churches to look for these signs, women and men who are committed to living an alternative lifestyle focused on spiritual values, solidarity with others, and care for the planet, bringing together people in different ways beyond their divisions. And the surprise is that in an age where we are inundated by bad news and where pessimism is the rule, when people open their eyes, they find a host of such signs of hope, often small, but having an impact far beyond their size.

Brother John: As Christians, could we not call these signs of hope, signs of resurrection? The resurrection of Jesus is not merely something that happened one Easter morning, 2000 years ago, nor is it something to be encountered in an indefinite future. For example, at our physical death, the resurrection is the good news that Jesus' victory over death is accessible to us today. That hatred and destruction never have the last word in spite of often contradictory appearances. Is not our calling as followers of Christ, to be attentive to these signs of resurrection, to discover them, to lift them up, and finally to allow ourselves to be such signs, and we do this, the text we have read this morning tells us because of Christ, we've come together in our differences live, lives centered on the mystery of God, on material and spiritual sharing and on hospitality to all. In this way, seeds of new life spring up in the midst of a spiritual wasteland and give hope and joy to many.

Brother John: I would like to close with a prayer by our founder, Brother Roger of Taizé

Brother John: Christ Jesus, even if your resurrection kindles within us a flame that may often seem quite weak. It enables us to live in communion with you. And by your gospel, we realize that you came to earth not just for part of humankind, but for every human being, even if they are unaware of your presence alongside them. So we praise you for the multitudes of women, men, young people, and even children who across the earth are striving to be witnesses to peace, reconciliation, and communion.

KMarie Tejeda: Please stand as you are able and join together in singing. Give us the wings of faith to rise. It's found on your black Appleton Hymnal, hymn number 84.

Congregation: (Singing)

KMarie Tejeda: May the Lord of hope fill you with joy and peace as you trust him today. In Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

Congregation: Amen.