**Morning Prayer**

**Opening Versicle**

*Officiant* O God, let our mouth proclaim your praise.

***All***  **And your glory all the day long.**

**Doxology**

***All* Praise to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God:
 as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

**Song: Night Has Passed / Morning Has Broken - The Brilliance**

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOMF2slp090**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOMF2slp090)

**Lesson - Acts 4:13-21**

When the rulers and elders and scribes saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they were amazed and recognized them as companions of Jesus. When they saw the man who had been cured standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. So they ordered them to leave the council while they discussed the matter with one another. They said, "What will we do with them? For it is obvious to all who live in Jerusalem that a notable sign has been done through them; we cannot deny it. But to keep it from spreading further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name." So they called them and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in God's sight to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard." After threatening them again, they let them go, finding no way to punish them because of the people, for all of them praised God for what had happened.

***Silence may be kept.***

**A Song of Christ’s Goodness**

*Anselm of Canterbury*

Jesus, as a mother you gather your people to you; \*

 you are gentle with us as a mother with her children.

Often you weep over our sins and our pride, \*

 tenderly you draw us from hatred and judgment.

You comfort us in sorrow and bind up our wounds, \*

 in sickness you nurse us and with pure milk you feed us.

Jesus, by your dying, we are born to new life; \*

 by your anguish and labor we come forth in joy.

Despair turns to hope through your sweet goodness; \*

 through your gentleness, we find comfort in fear.

Your warmth gives life to the dead, \*

 your touch makes sinners righteous.

Lord Jesus, in your mercy, heal us; \*

 in your love and tenderness, remake us.

In your compassion, bring grace and forgiveness, \*

 for the beauty of heaven, may your love prepare us.

**Meditation**

As a general rule, I would say that institutional religion tends to think of people as very simple, and therefore the law must be very complex to protect them in every situation. Jesus does the opposite: He treats people as very complex—different in religion, lifestyle, virtue, temperament, and success—and keeps the law very simple in order to bring them to God:

A legal expert put him to the test: “Teacher, which commandment in the Law is the greatest?” He replied to him, “’You are to love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind.’ This is the first and foremost, and the second is like it: ‘You are to love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hangs everything in the Law and in the Prophets” (Matthew 22:35-40).

If I were to say this apart from Jesus’ authority, you would rightly accuse me of being simplistic, naïve, and reductionistic. Yet Jesus’ approach takes the risk of allowing people the freedom to be themselves and to love God according to the shape of their own heart, soul, body, and mind! Religion developed for the sake of social control, but Jesus does not give us much grist for the social control mill. For Jesus, it is all about union—union with God, others, and what is, however it presents itself. Do not let the labels trip you up—woman, man, transgender, cisgender, straight, bisexual, gay, queer. We all belong, but how cleverly our moral pretenses prevent us from struggling with what is right in front of us! How ingeniously our ego protects itself from compassion and understanding.

Jesus, like the cosmos itself, constantly affirms two parallel drives toward diversity and toward communion. The whole of creation cannot be lying. - Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM

***Silence may be kept.***

**A Song of Our True Nature** *Julian of Norwich*

Christ revealed our frailty and our falling, \*
 our trespasses and our humiliations.

Christ also revealed his blessed power, \*

 his blessed wisdom and love.

He protects us as tenderly and as sweetly when we are in greatest need; \*

 he raises us in spirit

 and turns everything to glory and joy without ending.

God is the ground and the substance, the very essence of nature; \*

 God is the true father and mother of natures.

We are all bound to God by nature, \*

 and we are all bound to God by grace.

And this grace is for all the world, \*

 because it is our precious mother, Christ.

For this fair nature was prepared by Christ

for the honor and nobility of all, \*
and for the joy and bliss of salvation.

**Song: Can We Ever Rise? – The Brilliance**

[***https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-2YvCwCnz0***](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-2YvCwCnz0)