**Lamenting and Hoping**

**A resurrection song for Christ and the world**

Why, O Lord, do you seem far off?

Why are you hard to find in these times of trouble,

when the world is distorted, disrupted

and fragmenting around us,

when abuse, isolation and broken relationships

surround us,

and we find ourselves awash with tears

in the deserts of desolation?

How has it come to this,

when people rage and politicians thunder

as waves of pandemics crash down upon them,

and we are all drowning in sickness, poverty and war?

Save us, Lord!

The waters are up to our neck.

Where is your healing?

We walk past those suffering through pain or mistreatment

as people walked by your cross,

clothed in an indifference

that springs from disdain

or is rooted in despair.

We cannot admit where we have been wrong

nor allow others to do so.

We attribute blame before we can be blamed,

polarising,

alienating,

even demonising others

to avoid the pain of listening.

So when you speak words of peace and forgiveness,

how can we hear them,

and experience your grace,

allowing it to transform us and our ways?

We have heard of new life,

of new beginnings

and a return to a normal

reshaped from the past for the future.

We have heard the talk,

but how are we to walk it?

We are out of our minds with anxiety and fear,

not sure we want to meet again as your people.

Yet suddenly and unexpectedly

you come to be with us,

in our meetings and homes;

in our conversation on a journey;

and when we are striving to go back to what we did before,

trying to fish but catching

nothing.

Again and again

you come to us,

gathering us for meals,

strengthening us,

comforting our confusion,

prompting us to hear your voice

as we read the scriptures in heartening new ways;

miraculous banquets celebrating new life in the world,

foretastes in the present

of our past coming to us

reformed from the future:

a new heaven and earth but no longer the seas of chaos;

a new paradise garden now found in the city;

and a new people of God now including all peoples.

But as suddenly and unexpectedly as you come,

you vanish.

We cannot touch you.

We cannot hold on to you.

You are gone.

Why abandon us, O Lord?

Are you raising us up to forsake us again?

Or…

are you really just going ahead,

and if we share in your mission,

is it there we shall see you?

Remember, you say,

that heavenly banquet which we shared on that night,

celebrating the triumphs of God’s love

rooted in the Cross.

Did you see when I showed you my body

that it still had the holes from the nails

and the wound in my side,

raised to new life?

So, Lord,

are you gone from our table

to be with what the world belittled,

to create there your feast,

sharing food with the hungry and drink with the thirsty,

welcoming migrants and strangers,

providing cover for those with inadequate shelter or clothing,

caring for those who are sick,

and visiting those locked away?

Is it as we become one with you and with them

that they share with us

the bread of life

and the wine of mercy?

Is it when tears of gladness become tears of sadness

that tears of sorrow become tears of joy,

suffering, dying,

despairingly waiting,

rising and praising

commingled?

Is this the pain

that those who seem impaired

sometimes seem able to bear

and redeem?

Lord, help us become an openly broken people,

open to be raised to life with you,

raised with wounds still in hands and side.

As you wept over Lazarus with Martha and Mary,

and wept over the city, both institutions and people,

may we weep with those who weep

fresh tears of grace,

and discover in you the grace of tears.