

## SESSION 2: “ THE LORD RISES UPON YOU”

Jerusalem sleeps, her streets empty and silent, just as the streets of our own towns and cities are empty in lockdown. Everything feels grey, empty of sunlight and laughter and people. There is a feeling of grief and desolation.

Suddenly, the text floods with hope and promise, foretold in Isaiah 59:19:-

“Those in the west shall fear the Lord, and from the rising of the sun they will revere His glory. For He will come like a pent-up stream that the breath of the Lord drives along.”

This is the beginning of the dawn, which Isaiah sees as a visible manifestation of God to the world. Just as the sun rises quickly in the East, so the glory of the Lord shines out, and Jerusalem is called to respond:- “Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.” (60:1)

There is a forceful contrast here between the blanket of darkness, and the sudden flooding of light as dawn appears. The dawn carries a message: God is with us. He rises like the sun after a long night. Jerusalem believed that God had vanished from them, but He is not dead; He is alive. God is not a prisoner of circumstances. God is not overcome by the Covid-19 virus that is ravaging the world and destroying so many lives. No. God is with us, and His presence is our source of security, goodness and vitality.

The coming of the dawn is a sign that God is faithful and that there is hope for the future. In many heroic acts of care and goodness during the pandemic, in the courageous commitment of doctors, nurses, paramedics and support staff in the NHS, in the extraordinary skill and creativity of the scientists who have produced vaccines in record time, and in the steadfast endurance of ordinary people, we have seen signs of light in the midst of darkness, the breaking in of dawn after a long and weary night.

**R**eflect on the things that have been “signs of dawn breaking” for you during the darkness of the past twelve months. What have you learnt about the gift of patience, and the importance of waiting?

### **P**RAYER

*Lord, at the dawn of each morning, hope rises with the sun. Sweet songs flow from skies emerging in the hazy glow. Help me this day to allow your hope to rise up within me, that I may carry this new dawn to my family and friends, my work and my dreams.*

*Amen*

### **M**MUSIC FOR MEDITATION

**Lead me, Lord - Wesley**

Members of St Mary's Choristers



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### PRACTICAL ACTIVITY 2

*Creating the second page of your journal to express the idea of light breaking through the darkness.*

1. Use anything you can find - paper, card, fabric - about the same size as page one. Stain your page with ink, paint, food colouring etc. Black and greys would be ideal.
2. Try bleach, toilet cleaner or dishwasher liquid in one area of the page. It should take out any colour you have applied. Dry the page then work over with pen, biro or stitches. You could add words, patterns or a variety of marks.
3. Alternatives: Burn areas of the page with a soldering iron or distress page with scissors, knife, needle. Or drip some white wax from a candle on the page. Paint over with ink or dye then iron out the wax by placing paper between the wax and the iron. (Please protect your ironing board cover with paper too)
4. Fix your first and second pages together loosely with string, ribbon or tape.

