

## SEASON AFTER PENTECOST: PROPER 11

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**Lectionary Year:** Year B

**Scripture Text:** Romans 8:22-27

8:22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; 8:23 and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. 8:24 For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? 8:25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. 8:26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. 8:27 And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

### Prayer

Thank you Lord Jesus that you move in the miraculous  
That where there is oppression, you bring freedom  
That where there is a closed door, you offer another path or solution  
When I am distressed or anguished you bring me hope and you encourage me  
I pray that I am transformed each day in your image  
And that I stand not in my own strength, but with the power and anointing of  
your Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Reflection:** Paul writes that as all creation groans, including both human and non-human creatures, that the Spirit intercedes for the saints. As advocates for creation, we tend to focus our attention on the groaning of all creatures and our environment. We recognise the suffering, we see the bondage, and in most cases, we can identify the problem.

The groaning and the creaturely cries for help aren't difficult for us to detect, yet, what most advocates find challenging is the realization of change. We tend to commence with yearnings for change, we progress to declaring the need for change, we strive daily to become part of the change and many times, we are disillusioned with promises of change. However, as we stand as people united in faith, we look to our greatest advocate, the Holy Spirit, who fuels our desire for Shalom.

In this passage, Paul tells us that the Spirit calls us to hope and to persevere as we wait. Hope can otherwise be defined as 'confident expectation.' It's where the righteous, who have this trustful hope in God, have a general confidence in God's protection and help. This protection and help can be extended to the creatures in which we steward, where the Spirit intercedes our cries of justice, love, freedom and flourishing which flows over to our fellow creatures.

Let us be encouraged that as we groan together with our fellow creatures, that our confidence and trust is placed in God's good and righteous plan for all of creation. While we wait in confidence for the right doors to open, the right laws to be implemented, the right technology to make a difference, the right attitudes to sustain the change, the right protections to be put in place- we wait... and we stand in solidarity with the Spirit, the right and perfect advocate, to break chains and set the captives free.

**Call to Action:** Paul writes that as all creation groans, including human and non-human creatures, that the Spirit intercedes for the saints. As Christians who are concerned about animals and who are motivated to bring peace to a violent world, frustration and grief can impact us when we are presented with injustices and suffering that we cannot remedy. In these moments, let us trust that the Spirit (who intercedes for us, the animals and all of creation) will open doors, break chains, free the captives and bring hope and restoration through Christ, to the world.

Commit to reading a good news story about:

- policy or law that benefits non-human creatures
- animal rescue and recovery or
- how animals impact the lives of people living with disability or those who suffer with mental health issues.

Be encouraged that there are people in communities who are committed to animal flourishing and that the Spirit is interceding through all of us who are crying out for change.