



A LAMENT

The Anglican Church of Australia acknowledges and laments the violence suffered by our members and repents of the collusion, wilful ignorance and enabling of contexts, places and actions in which violence among our communities went unacknowledged and unaddressed. Each year in May, we reflect on the prevalence, acceptance and horror of domestic and family violence in our own families and in every community, workplace and Church. We remember how we have all been affected by this scourge; and, we lament with our sisters and brothers at the wounding, brokenness, anger, shame and despair that comes from such violent actions, behaviours and beliefs for generations past, present and yet to be born. Our voices cry with grief, we lament O Lord, we lament:

I am poured out like water,
my tears overflow unendingly;
I am invisible and like one already dead.
All my bones are out of joint; from the beatings and the threats,
the coercion and isolation:
my mind is without form or will,
my heart within my breast is like melting wax, I have no shape left but yours.
I have become what you, my oppressor has made me to be;
my mouth is dried up and I am now empty,
my tongue clings to my gums and I am now voiceless:
I am without friends and relationships which have all been stolen...
.... except with you God, and even that feels broken and abused.
My hands and feet are withered, without strength or purpose.
I cannot flee, I am now unsafe.
And you lay me in the dust of death.
Lean wolves raven around me.
I am undone.

Where do I go from here, there is nowhere to flee,
a beaten scapegoat in our world,
driven, shamed and broken into the wilderness,
the haunt of jackals and wolves.
There is no light, no shadow of a way to guide my footsteps
no safety or promises.

Nothing.

Yet you have promised me safety even on the altar, O my mother,
my Creator, my peace,
mothering a place where I can rest
far from the sneaking explosions of violence,
the twisted lies of perpetrators, betrayers and deniers.

In you is life, in which there is no darkness at all,
promised, forgiven, restored and my wounds a cry of triumph in the silence of peace;
and in you, a place where I can lay me down to die to this!
No more tears, no more fear, no more despair.
Only hope and the transparency of grace
as I am empty of everything else but You.

Hijacking and Rewriting Psalm 22:14-16