

Litany of Lament on the Puget Sound

We are among the lucky few able to benefit this year from the Washington islands paradise you created. Even in prime time summer, the San Juan Islands are noticeably empty. Fuel costs are through the roof and groceries just as bad, housing costs unimaginable....the everyday things people need to live their day to day. Paradise on earth and the healing nature provides us, that we all sorely need, can indeed be elusive.

C: Lord Creator and Healer

R: Hear my lament

Yet, I sense it's not the price of travel alone that's responsible for fewer people. In my day to day I've observed a lethargy and numbness setting in; where too much energy is required to fight, to challenge....to make a difference.

Sometimes too there's a reserve and sense of unsaid things in the air. I also notice people previously outraged by relatively small things in the prior administration, aren't saying a word about the current chaos we find our country in, which is unprecedented in my lifetime. All this to say, massive uncertainty can produce a fear to venture out – leading to “hunker in the bunker” and “hold down the fort” mentalities.

C: Lord Creator and Healer

R: Hear my lament

Regardless, we must continually, with your help and by our side, engage in daily life.

We ventured forth from our boat slip in Port Orchard, day one destination Port Townsend, with granddaughter Elli and friend Ella onboard Narwhal with us. Both 16 years old, we want them to experience the beauty of the islands and time away from devices. For their part, they are eager to do so.

Not halfway to Port Townsend an engine panel light indicator alerts Ben that we may have a problem. We stop the engine, floating out on Puget Sound, to find a gasket has loosened on our engine cooling system. Cool, raw salt water is filling our bilge at a very steady rate whenever the engine is running. Furthermore, the bilge pump has failed, not functioning at all.

We begin an hourly “stop and bail out the bilge by hand” until we reach Port Townsend. Ben is bent down deep in the bilge handing up buckets of cold salt water to me in the cabin, I pass up to Ella stationed on the stairs to the deck, she passes to Elli up on deck to toss overboard. Buckets return, passed back down the stairs. We work as a team to mitigate our problem temporarily. It's good to be able to use our

collective bodies to do so. But will we be able to get timely repairs done in Port Townsend so we can proceed on with the girls?

C: Lord Healer and Protector

R: Hear my lament

Hallelujah, thank you Jesus! Ben is able to solve and repair the gasket issue and an electrician comes onboard first thing in the morning to repair a connection to the head (toilet)! By late morning we are happily underway!

Just as we pass the Port Townsend Light and begin entering the Strait of Juan de Fuca, nearing the end of cell phone range, my phone rings. The name is that of a long time friend we haven't heard from these last few years so I quickly answer. This friend is one of the Lost Boys of Sudan. He was brought over and resettled here in the early 2000's. He has worked hard and survived against amazing odds. We find out his first born son, born here in America, just graduated from High School, is in the Pierce County Jail. The allegations are serious. Can we help? Do we know an attorney?

C: Lord Healer and Protector

R: Hear my lament

This son of our friend was Joseph in the Sunday School Christmas Program the same year our granddaughter was Mary. Granddaughter Audrey enters PLU next week. Our friend's son sits in jail with a high bail. I scurry to make any calls I can think of as the boat proceeds into the strait. I call my son, a police officer, for perspective and advice. I leave a message on the church line. I leave a message on church friend Sally's phone knowing she has many connections in our community. We soon pass out of cell range. The friend already assured me that anything we could do was appreciated, including our prayers.

C: Lord Healer and Protector

R: Hear my lament

Five days later we are in Friday Harbor on San Jaun Island to put Elli and Ella on the ferry bound for Anacortes to return home. Ben and I will continue on in the islands. Our son's family is coming aboard for the Labor Day Weekend. After that we venture into Canada.

Back in cell phone range at Friday Harbor, we learn that friend Sally was able to hook up our friends with IBJ (The Institute for Black Justice). They received good advice from the attorney who founded the organization. She helped them better understand and navigate the criminal justice system. The accusations are very serious, someone died, three boys were arrested. We all pray justice will be served in a fair manner.

C: Lord Healer and Protector
R: Hear my Lament

Meanwhile IN THE NEWS whenever the trip afforded us cell phone connections:

/ Colleges are struggling with lost government grants towards scholarships and operating funds by an administration where learning is not valued but seen as a threat

/ AI is championed, not deemed necessary to regulate, not deemed a threat

/ The Department of Homeland Security is attempting to build barriers and roads through the protected Big Bend National Park on the Texas/Mexico border. We kayaked on the Rio Grand in Big Bend last year, the river is literally the border. It's a place of beauty. DHS has averaged 12 miles of barriers per week during President Trump's second term.

/ Trump Administration looks to give a piece of Yosemite National Park to a developer.

/ Alligator Alcatraz shuts down. (so hard to believe it actually existed upwards of a year with the demeaning name, inhumane practices, without proper permits, and on land it had no right to be developed on).

/ The President of The United States is at a republican convention openly asking his constituents to lie and cheat at elections. Is this the twilight zone?

As the massive "chainsaw cuts" take their toll on our country, it is lacking regulation and accountability. As TRUTH is continually under attack and distortion I ponder, "How much deep seated damage has been done by the lies and carelessness?"

Will we still manage an election with any kind of integrity after the deliberate assaults on our system of government? Will it stand?

C: Lord Healer and Protector
R: Hear my lament

Ongoing vessel glitches continue to occur as we move about San Juan, Stuart, Jones, Sucia and Orcas Islands. Another water in the bilge adventure! This time our 200 gallon fresh water tank ends up in the bilge. Very low moment. This time only Ben and Lisa to bail it out!

We head home a week early and never make it into the lovely Canadian Gulf Islands as planned. I remember how unbelievably gracious Canadians were to us last year. I felt embarrassed and ashamed of our country. All the senseless poking

and prodding antagonism towards our closest neighbors seems incredibly juvenile, selfish and damaging.

With a plethora of real problems in our world which are hard to combat, it is draining and disheartening to have problems created unnecessarily.

C: Lord Healer and Protector

R: Hear my lament

A quarter mile from our home dock in Port Orchard we stop at a Pump Out to empty our waste tanks. As we move to depart, the engine won't start, won't start, still won't start. It's 7:00 pm and we've motored 10 1/2 hours from Orcas Island under favorable currents to get home. Oy vey.

Our salty journey is a bit of paradox abundant in breathtaking beauty, time with kids and grands, the calmness of water, good food, great weather, winding trails along rocky shores and through deep mossy fern-laden woods, stunning views of water passages and islets, fresh cleansing air, time away, solace, peace.

It is also held in the tension of unseen problems lurking under the floor boards; the wiring not readily seen, the water leaking out of a tube or pipe that can't contain it. There are cries of help from friends and untimely deaths of people connected to us through church and family. With some disappointment, definitely some weariness, we are called home, grateful for connection.

C: Lord Healer and Creator

R: Hear my lament