

Lent 3 – 7 – 13 March 2021.
'Disorientation'

Psalm 19

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. (*verse 14, NRSV*)

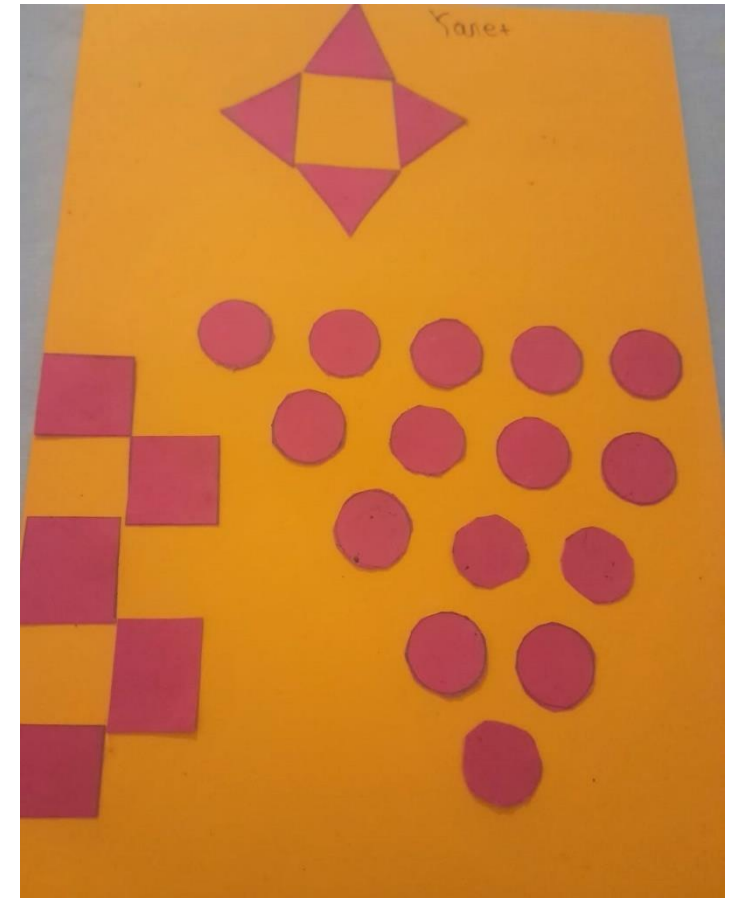
In our despair, in the joys of love, in places of anger and distrust and in the happiness of life, the psalms mirror our human experience: the rhythmical refrain of life. The theologian Walter Brueggemann, in his book *Spirituality of the Psalms*, traced the human experience of the Israelites within these poems and songs to God, presenting them as times where we may find ourselves in life. In the forms of orientation, where we are safe and everything is known; disorientation, the strange and unknown; and finally new orientation, a different place to where we started. This experience has not changed throughout time and we are ever conscious of this movement in Jesus' life as we move through Lent to the cross and finally to the tomb at Easter.

This life story, prayer or poem (overpage) from a refugee helped by ARC mirrors this pattern, with disorientation perhaps dominating. It is a reminder of the movement of life, that for some is so turbulent and tumultuous - a journey both literal and metaphorical from the forced

leaving of family, country and home; through the harshness of a new and threatening present; to the hope, connection and love found in a new country, a new place and situation.

So, I invite you to sit awhile with these words.

Where are **you** in this movement of life? And where is your rock?



This week's pictures are from the African Refugee Community (ARC) in London

I was born from a good family but was forced to leave my country for speaking out openly about the human right abuses that women face in my country, the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Confusion and uncertainties during this time - remembering my journey of uncertainties where my future was in the hands of others, the agents and smugglers... forcing me to do things that I did not want to do but I had no choice - arriving in a country feeling completely disorientated, anxious, with layer of fears when talking to strangers - but I had to do in order to find peace and stability - fear of surviving during the lock down as a result of Covid-19 outbreak - panic around my entourage - adapting to the reality reminded me of my journey to safety - living with no plans making me feeling bad and unsafe - crying in silence in my native language making me reconnecting to my past - feeling alone, suffering in isolation but with hope to see the light one day.

I enjoyed taking a walk and seeing trees to slow the pressure of life - engaging with online activities and receiving support from agencies make me feel connected and loved. I am not the only one facing all this - we are all uncertain but can only hope for the better one day - the sun will shine again.

Do not give up, carry on fighting and thinking positively - Amen

Written by a service user of the [African Refugee Community \(ARC\)](#) which helps French-speaking refugees from Africa and is one of the projects we supported in 2020

Contemplation

Take a few moments out of the busyness of your day and find somewhere quiet, even if this includes using earphones or headphones; and listen to a piece of music which makes you feel calm and safe and makes your heart sing.

Action for the week

Get creative! Be inspired by ARC's artwork or cooking (see pictures) and make something today! Then share it with a friend or neighbour (socially distanced, of course...)

Perhaps think of a recipe or arrange flowers or objects which remind you of family, of a time when you felt rooted. Do they bring to mind a specific time or place? Was it a special occasion? Can you share the story as well as the food?

Prayer

As we move through the disorientation of Lent and our wilderness moments, may we forever remember the love of God, by the presence of Jesus in our lives, keeping us rooted in love and giving us hope in the resurrection to come.

Amen.



This week's material written by Revd Roxane Liddell, LCRF Trustee. Photos by ARC and its service users – see more pictures at www.lcrf.org.uk/lent-3