



The Lord is my chosen portion and cup; you hold my lot.  
The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage.  
I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.  
I keep the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.  
Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure.  
For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit.  
You show me the path of life.  
In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.

***Psalm 16.5-11***

**Chapels on the byways** – In lockdown forays mostly by bike I've come across remote churches including the Methodist chapels at Crewe-by-Farndon, Churton and Poole. Crewe has a lively worshipping community where they say there'll be a welcome for walkers and cyclists at their Sunday afternoon service. Churton is now a private home, where the lady and her son were stacking logs in the porch one day we were passing. I commented on the great text over the door (Mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people) and she was pleased to think it was being noticed; she'd be refreshing the paint before long. At Poole near Wettenhall they've established a Quiet Garden and Labyrinth.

**Quotations from "Laboratories of the Spirit" by R.S. Thomas**

***from The Chapel***

A little aside from the main road  
becalmed in a last-century greyness,  
there is a chapel, ugly, without the appeal  
to the tourist to stop his car

and visit it. The traffic goes by,  
and the river goes by, and quick shadows  
of clouds, too, and the chapel settles  
a little deeper into the grass.

*from Llananno*

I often call there.  
There are no poems in it  
for me. But as a gesture  
of independence of the speeding  
traffic I am a part  
of, I stop the car,  
turn down the narrow path  
to the river, and enter  
the church with its clear reflection  
beside it.

*from The Moon in Lleyn*

In cities that  
have outgrown their promise people  
are becoming pilgrims  
again, if not to this place,  
then to the recreation of it  
in their own spirits.

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The Wesley congregation listed 100 churches when asked during the Week of Prayer for  
Christian Unity which churches had been an influence in their lives – places we continue to  
recreate in our spirits.

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In the Bible we read of such places – we remember Isaiah in the temple. **Isaiah 6.1-8**

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Jacob's ladder - a place of encounter becomes Bethel, the House of God. **Genesis 28.10-22**

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The Psalmist knows we are not alone anywhere. Kathy Galloway meditates on **Psalm 139**.

When I ascend to the mountaintop and gaze with joy on the other side,  
or when I must travel to the places of death;

cherish my delight, and contain my horror, for you have been there, and there, before me,  
O Jesus of the Way.

And when my journey takes me far across the world  
and I must encounter new tongues, new ideas, new ways,  
hold my heart and mind open, for you are there too, waiting to welcome me,  
O Jesus of the Way.

And when my path is black and unlit,  
and I can see nothing in front but dark and fearful shapes,  
still my panic enough to know that one of them is your shape,  
O Jesus of the Way.

*For where shall I go from your spirit?  
Your presence is there, and there, and there...*

***from Kathy Galloway "Talking to the Bones"***