

TEXT

Prayer *Jesus,*
for the *you welcomed people,*
Study *and you let them welcome you.*

Let me have the same hospitality to others,
and the same grace to accept what they give me.
Thank you for making the whole world welcome
in your Father's house.

Amen.

NOTES

LUKE 22:⁴⁷ While [*Jesus*] was still speaking, suddenly a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him; ⁴⁸ but Jesus said to him, “Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man?” ⁴⁹ When those who were around him saw what was coming, they asked, “Lord, should we strike with the sword?” ⁵⁰ Then one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. ⁵¹ But Jesus said, “No more of this!” And he touched his ear and healed him. ⁵² Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple police, and the elders who had come for him, “Have you come out with swords and clubs as if I were a bandit? ⁵³ When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness!” ⁵⁴ Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest’s house. But Peter was following at a distance. ⁵⁵ When they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. ⁵⁶ Then a servant-girl, seeing him in the firelight, stared at him and said, “This man also was with him.” ⁵⁷ But he denied it, saying, “Woman, I do not know him.” ⁵⁸ A little later someone else, on seeing him, said, “You also are one of them.” But Peter said, “Man, I am not!” ⁵⁹ Then about an hour later still another kept insisting, “Surely this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean.” ⁶⁰ But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about!” At that moment, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. ⁶¹ The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times.” ⁶² And he went out and wept bitterly. ⁶³ Now the men who were holding Jesus began to mock him and beat him; ⁶⁴ they also blindfolded him and kept asking him, “Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?” ⁶⁵ They kept heaping many other insults on him. ⁶⁶ When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, gathered together, and they brought him to their council. ⁶⁷ They said, “If you are the Messiah, tell us.” He replied, “If I tell you, you will not believe; ⁶⁸ and if I question you, you will not answer. ⁶⁹ But

from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God.”⁷⁰ All of them asked, “Are you, then, the Son of God?” He said to them, “You say that I am.”⁷¹ Then they said, “What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips!”

LUKE 23:¹ Then the assembly rose as a body and brought Jesus before Pilate. ² They began to accuse him, saying, “We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king.” ³ Then Pilate asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” He answered, “You say so.” ⁴ Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, “I find no basis for an accusation against this man.” ⁵ But they were insistent and said, “He stirs up the people by teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to this place.” ⁶ When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. ⁷ And when he learned that he was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him off to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. ⁸ When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had been wanting to see him for a long time, because he had heard about him and was hoping to see him perform some sign. ⁹ He questioned him at some length, but Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰ The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him. ¹¹ Even Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him; then he put an elegant robe on him, and sent him back to Pilate. ¹² That same day Herod and Pilate became friends with each other; before this they had been enemies. ¹³ Pilate then called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people, ¹⁴ and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was perverting the people; and here I have examined him in your presence and have not found this man guilty of any of your charges against him. ¹⁵ Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us. Indeed, he has done nothing to deserve death. ¹⁶ I will therefore have him flogged and release him.” ¹⁷ ¹⁸ Then they all shouted out together, “Away with this fellow! Release Barabbas for us!” ¹⁹ (This was a man who had been put in prison for an insurrection that had taken place in the city, and for murder.) ²⁰ Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again; ²¹ but they kept shouting, “Crucify, crucify him!” ²² A third time he said to them, “Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no ground for the sentence of death; I will therefore have him flogged and then release him.” ²³ But they kept urgently demanding with loud shouts that he should be crucified; and their voices prevailed. ²⁴ So Pilate gave his verdict that their demand should be granted. ²⁵ He released the man they asked for, the one who had been put in prison for insurrection and murder, and he handed Jesus over as they wished.

New Revised Standard Version

3-A

In Chapter 3, John the Baptist speaks contemptuously to the devout children

of Abraham and kindly to the tax collectors and the soldiers. *The heroes of these stories are outsiders on several counts.* They are either outside the 'normal' structures of solid, patriarchal or tribal life because they are childless, widowed or unmarried, or they are the sort of people who are not expected to be able to manage behaviour that is pleasing to God. Page 51

3-B

These are the people who are involved in God's activity – the 'poor', not in the sense simply of those who are economically deprived, but *those who have no expectations or at least low expectations, those from whom others look for little or nothing, those without a clear visible 'stake' in the larger world they occupy.* They are lifted up by a God who snubs and turns away the powerful. In what is happening to them a light is dawning that will change the perception of all people. The three great hymns of these chapters, the songs of Mary, Zechariah and Simeon, all turn on these themes: (1) God has honoured the promise once made to the chosen nation; (2) God has turned upside down the assumptions of the world; (3) God's light has dawned for Jew and Gentile alike in this great intervention. Page 51

3-C

What does it mean to be without the right to a hearing, without access to the currency of the prevailing market? It is to be without words, to be without the ways in which those around you tame and organize the world. Your own language does not count – whether literally, in the case of subject people whose language has no legal status, or more broadly, when the whole shape of the speech of those in power reminds you constantly that your perspective is not included. You cannot speak in a way that will actually make a difference; your coinage is rejected; nothing you say will 'come out right' will persuade or succeed. This is why, in Luke's account of the trial before the High Priest, the themes already explored in relation to Mark and Matthew are given a new colouring. In Luke 22:67, Jesus is asked by the council to tell them if he is the Messiah. "If I tell you" he replied, "you will not believe me, and if I question you, you will not answer." In other words: *I have nothing to say to you that you will be able to hear or to which you will be able to respond.* Luke's Jesus places himself with those whose language cannot be heard. Page 53f.

3-D

God's transcendence is in some sense present in and with those who do not have a voice, in and with those without power to affect their world, in and with those believed to have lost any right they might have had in the world. God is not with them because they are naturally virtuous, or because they are martyrs; he is simply there in the fact that they are 'left over' when the social and moral score is added up by the managers of social and moral behaviour. Or, to put it a bit differently, *God appears in and through the fact that our ways of arranging the world always leave someone's interest, welfare or reality out of account.* We cannot organize our world so as to leave everyone a possible place. *We are unavoidably bound to exclusion* as we try to give form to our social and moral life. Page 54

3-E

So what is Luke telling us through the way he positions God with the

outsider? In an important sense, *he is not saying anything about right and wrong*. If we thought that God was to be found in and with the outsider because God approved of them more than he approved of insiders, we should be falling back into just the mentality we are being urged to forget.

Page 55

3-F

One modern writer has said that God is in the connections we cannot make, and that tells us something of what is on view here. The person who is ‘left over’, whose place I cannot guarantee, whose welfare I cannot secure, who does not fit, is the person who *reminds me of my own limits*, and as I acknowledge the incomplete character of my world of reference and my understanding, I may at least see the seriousness of the question about the fate of those not catered for. *If in any sense I recognize a claim of care for such people, even if I have no idea how to effect it, I am at least some way towards perceiving how God lies in the connections I cannot make.*

Page 56

3-G

The stranger here is neither the failed or stupid native speaker, nor someone so terrifyingly alien that I cannot even entertain the thought of learning from them. *They represent the fact that I have growing to do, not necessarily into anything like an identity with them, but at least into a world where there may be more of a sense of its being a world we share.* Recognizing the other as other without the immediate impulse to make them the same *involves recognizing the incompleteness of the world I think I can manage and moving into the world which I may not be able to manage so well, but which has more depth of reality.* And that must be to move closer to God.

Page 62

3-H

Confusingly, this principle cuts across the conventional left-right divides in our ethical squabbles. Abortion is often seen as a ‘right wing’ concern, and – for example – homosexual rights as a ‘left wing’ one. But there are parallels, in that those who define themselves as homosexual represent yet again an ‘otherness’ that will not go away and cannot be readily accommodated into the world of the majority. If that is so, then God must be listened to here as well. Elizabeth Templeton has put it starkly, contrasting what she calls the ethics of earth and the ‘ethics or non-ethics’ of heaven: inevitably, we seek order, because order limits pain and fear for most of us, but we must beware of identifying this with the law of God without remainder. *‘We dare not identify God with these norms. For if there is one person on earth who is, by such ethics, devalued, dehumanized, demonized or disqualified from the conversation towards truth, whether that be on the grounds of sexual behaviour or any other, then I believe we lie, and possibly blaspheme.’*

Page 64f.

3-I

[I]n all the Gospel narratives of the trial, Jesus’ declaration of the gulf between his world and that of his judges provokes insult and abuse. He is beaten, flogged and crowned with thorns precisely *because* he is powerless: because he is powerless, because he does not compete for the same space that his judges and captors are defending, he is a deeper threat than any direct rival. He threatens because he does not compete (again raising the

question of what transcendence really is), and because it is that whole world of rivalry and defence which is in question. Luke adds one very specific irony to the story with his reference to the new alliance between Herod and Pilate which comes about as a result of the trial. The judges of Jesus have more in common with each other than with him; the competitors for space in this world are bound together in what has been called the 'mimetic' trap – *we imitate our enemies, we want what they want (and we want them not to have it when we do), and so human conflict is fought out in a hall of mirrors.*

Page 69

3-J

Luke takes us a step further and challenges us not only to stand with those left out and left over, but to find in *ourselves* the poverty and exclusion we fear and run away from in others – to find in ourselves the tax collector in the Temple, the woman in Simon's house, and both the sons in the parable of the prodigal, with their different kinds of exclusion, guilt or fear.

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Supplementary Material

The Outsider, by Albert Camus • from Part II, Chapter One – *The Lawyer*

TEXT

NOTES

Albert Camus, *The Outsider*

Part II, Chapter ONE – *The Lawyer*

Immediately after my arrest I was questioned several times. But it was only a matter of finding out who I was, which didn't take long. The first time, at the police station, nobody seemed very interested in my case. A week later though, the examining magistrate eyed me with curiosity. But to start with he simply asked me my name and address, my occupation and my date and place of birth. Then he wanted to know if I'd chosen a lawyer. I confessed that I hadn't and inquired as to whether it was absolutely necessary to have one. 'Why do you ask?' he said. I replied that I thought my case was very simple. He smiled and said, 'That's your opinion. But this is the law. If you don't choose a lawyer yourself, we'll appoint one for you automatically.' I thought it most convenient that the legal system should take care of such details. I told him so. He agreed and said it showed how well the law worked.

At first I didn't take him seriously. I was shown into a curtained room, there was just one lamp on his desk which was shining on the chair where he made me sit while he himself remained in the shadow. I'd read similar descriptions in books before and it all seemed like a game. After our conversation though, I looked at him and saw a tall, fine-featured man with deep-set blue eyes, a long grey moustache and a mass of almost white hair. I found him very reasonable and on the whole quite pleasant, in spite of a few nervous twitches he had about the mouth. On my way out I was even going to shake his hand, but I remembered just in time that I'd killed a man.

The next day a lawyer came to see me at the prison. He was short and stout, quite young, with his hair carefully greased back. In spite of the heat (I was in my shirtsleeves), he was wearing a dark suit, a wing collar and a peculiar tie with broad black and white stripes. He put the briefcase which he had under his arm down on my bed, introduced himself and told me that he'd studied my file. My case was tricky, but he was confident of success, provided I had faith in him. I thanked him and he said, 'Let's get straight on with it.'

He sat down on the bed and explained that some investigations had been made into my private life. It had been discovered that my mother had died recently in a home. Enquiries had then been made at Marengo, and the magistrates had learned that I'd 'displayed a lack of emotion' on the day of mother's funeral. 'You will understand,' my lawyer said, 'that I feel rather embarrassed at having to ask you this. But it matters a great deal. And the prosecution will have a strong case if I can't find anything to reply.' He wanted me to help him. He asked me if I'd felt any grief on that day. This question really surprised me and I thought how embarrassed I'd have been if I'd had to ask it. I replied though that I'd rather got out of the habit of analysing myself and that I found it difficult to answer his question. I probably loved mother quite a lot, but that didn't mean anything. To a certain extent all normal people sometimes wished their loved ones were dead. Here the lawyer interrupted me, looking very flustered. He made me promise not to say that at the hearing, or in front of the examining

magistrate. But I explained to him that by nature my physical needs often distorted my feelings. On the day of mother's funeral I was very tired and sleepy. So I wasn't fully aware of what was going on. The only thing I could say for certain was that I'd rather mother hadn't died. But my lawyer didn't seem pleased. He said, 'That's not enough.'

He thought for a moment. Then he asked me if he could say that I'd controlled my natural feelings that day. I said, 'No, because it's not true.' He looked at me in a peculiar way, as if he found me slightly disgusting. He told me almost spitefully that whatever happened the warden and staff of the home would be called as witnesses and that this 'could make things very unpleasant for me'. I pointed out to him that none of this had anything to do with my case, but he merely replied that I had obviously never had anything to do with the law.

He left, looking angry. I'd have liked to have kept him back and explained to him that I wanted to be friends with him, not so that he'd defend me better, but, so to speak, in a natural way. The main thing was, I could tell that I made him feel uncomfortable. He didn't understand me and he rather held it against me. I wanted to assure him that I was just like everyone else, exactly like everyone else. But it was all really a bit pointless and I couldn't be bothered.

Soon after that, I was taken to see the examining magistrate again. It was two o'clock in the afternoon and this time there was only a net curtain to soften the light which was flooding into his office. It was very hot. He made me sit down and very politely informed me that, 'due to unforeseen circumstances', my lawyer had been unable to come. But I was entitled not to answer his questions and to wait until my lawyer could assist me. I said I could answer for myself. He pressed a button on the table. A young clerk came and sat down right behind me.

We both sat back in our chairs. The examination began. He told me first of all that people described me as being taciturn and withdrawn and he wanted to know what I thought of that. I answered, 'It's just that I never have much to say. So I keep quiet.' He smiled as before, remarked that that was the best reason and added, 'Anyway, it doesn't matter at all.' He stopped talking and looked at me, then sat up rather suddenly and said very quickly, 'What interests me is you.' I didn't quite understand what he meant by that and I didn't say anything. 'There are certain things,' he added, 'that puzzle me in what you did. I'm sure you'll help me to understand them.' I told him that it was all very simple. He urged me to go over the day again. I went over what I'd already told him about: Raymond, the beach, the swim, the fight, the beach again, the little spring, the sun and the five shots. After each sentence he'd say, 'Fine, fine.' When I came to the outstretched body, he nodded and said, 'Good.' But I was tired of repeating the same story over and over again and I felt as if I'd never talked so much in all my life.

After a short silence, he stood up and told me that he wanted to help me, that I interested him and that with God's help he would do something for me. But first, he wanted to ask me a few more questions. In the same breath, he asked me if I loved mother. I said, 'Yes, like everyone else,' and the clerk, who until now had been tapping away regularly at his typewriter, must have hit the wrong key, because he got in a muddle and had to go back. Still without any apparent logic, the magistrate then asked me if I'd fired all five shots at once. I thought it over and specified that I'd only fired

once to start with and then, a few seconds later, the other four shots. 'Why did you pause between the first and the second shot?' he said. Once again I saw the red beach in front of me and felt the burning sun on my forehead. But this time I didn't answer. Throughout the silence which followed, the magistrate looked flustered. He sat down, ran his fingers through his hair, put his elbows on his desk and leaned slightly towards me with a strange expression on his face. 'Why, why did you fire at a dead body?' Once again I didn't know what to answer. The magistrate wiped his hands across his forehead and repeated his question in a slightly broken voice, 'Why? You must tell me. Why?' I still didn't say anything.

Suddenly he stood up, strode over to a far corner of his office and opened a drawer in a filing cabinet. He took out a silver crucifix and came back towards me brandishing it. And in an altogether different, almost trembling voice, he exclaimed, 'Do you know who this is?' I said, 'Yes, naturally.' Then he spoke very quickly and passionately, telling me that he believed in God, that he was convinced that no man was so guilty that God wouldn't pardon him, but that he must first repent and so become like a child whose soul is empty and ready to embrace everything. He was leaning right across the table, waving his crucifix almost directly over me. To tell the truth, I hadn't followed his argument at all well, firstly because I was hot and his office was full of huge flies which kept landing on my face, and also because he frightened me a bit. I realized at the same time that this was ridiculous because, after all, I was the criminal. But he carried on. I vaguely understood that as far as he was concerned there was only one part of my confession that didn't make sense, the fact that I'd paused before firing my second shot. The rest was all right, but this he just couldn't understand.

I was about to tell him that he was wrong to insist on this last point: it didn't really matter that much. But he interrupted me and pleaded with me one last time, drawing himself up to his full height and asking me if I believed in God. I said no. He sat down indignantly. He told me that it was impossible, that all men believed in God, even those who wouldn't face up to Him. That was his belief, and if he should ever doubt it, his life would become meaningless. 'Do you want my life to be meaningless?' he cried. As far as I was concerned, it had nothing to do with me and I told him so. But across the table, he was already thrusting the crucifix under my nose and exclaiming quite unreasonably, 'I am a Christian. I ask Him to forgive your sins. How can you not believe that He suffered for your sake?' I noticed that he was calling me by my first name, but I'd had enough. It was getting hotter and hotter. As I always do when I want to get rid of someone I'm not really listening to, I gave the impression that I was agreeing with him. To my surprise he was exultant. 'You see, you see,' he was saying, 'you do believe and you will put your trust in Him, won't you?' I obviously said no again. He sank back into his chair.

He looked very tired. For a moment he said nothing while the typewriter, which had followed the entire conversation, caught up with the last few sentences. Then he looked at me intently and rather sadly. He murmured, 'I have never seen a soul as hardened as yours. The criminals who have come to me before have always wept at the sight of this symbol of suffering.' I was about to reply that that was precisely because they were criminals. But I realized that I was like them too. It was an idea I just couldn't get used to. Then the magistrate stood up, as if to indicate that the examination was over. Only he asked me in the same rather weary manner

whether I regretted what I'd done. I thought it over and said that, rather than true regret, I felt a kind of annoyance. I had the impression that he didn't understand me. But on that occasion that was as far as things went.

From then on I often went to see the examining magistrate. Only I was accompanied by my lawyer every time. I would simply be asked to clarify certain details of my previous statements. Or else the magistrate would discuss the charges with my lawyer. But actually they never took any notice of me on these occasions. Anyway, the tone of the examinations gradually changed. It seemed as if the magistrate had lost interest in me and had somehow classified my case. He didn't talk to me about God any more and I never saw him again in such a frenzy as on that first day. The result was that our discussions became more friendly. A few questions, a short conversation with my lawyer and the examinations would be over. My case was taking its course, to use the magistrate's own phrase. And sometimes, when the conversation was of a general nature, I would be included too. I began to breathe again. No one was unkind to me on these occasions. Everything was so natural, so well organized and so calmly acted out that I had the ridiculous impression of 'being one of the family'. And by the end of the eleven months which this investigation lasted, I must say I was almost surprised that I'd ever enjoyed anything other than those rare moments when the magistrate would escort me to the door of his study, slap me on the shoulder and say in a friendly voice, 'That's all for today, Mr Antichrist.' I would then be put back in the hands of the police.

Supplementary Material

The Outsider, by Albert Camus • from Part II, Chapter Five – *The Priest*

TEXT

NOTES

For the third time, I've refused to see the chaplain. I've got nothing to say to him, I don't feel like talking and I'll be seeing him soon enough as it is. What interests me at the moment is trying to escape from the mechanism, trying to find if there's any way out of the inevitable. I've been moved to another cell. From this one, when I'm lying down, I can see the sky and nothing else. I spend all day watching its complexion darken as day turns to night. I lie here with my hands under my head and wait. I don't know how many times I've wondered whether there have ever been instances of condemned prisoners escaping from the implacable machinery, disappearing before the execution or breaking through the police cordon. I'd reproach myself every time for not having paid enough attention to stories of executions. You should always take an interest in these things. You never know what might happen. Like everyone else I'd read newspaper reports. But there must have been special books which I'd never been curious enough to refer to. That was where I might have found stories of people who'd escaped. I might have discovered that there'd been at least one occasion when the wheel had stopped, that amongst so much that was inexorable and premeditated, chance or luck had just once managed to change something. Once! In a way, I think that would have been enough. My heart would have done the rest. The papers often talked about a debt being owed to society. According to them, it had to be paid. But that hardly appeals to the imagination. The vital thing was that there be a chance of escaping, of breaking out of this implacable ritual, of making a mad dash for it which would admit every possible hope. Naturally, that hope was of being shot down at a street corner, in full flight, and by a bullet from nowhere. But when I really thought about it, there was nothing to permit me such a luxury, everything was set against it, and I was caught in the mechanism again.

Willing as I was, I just couldn't accept such an absolute certainty. Because after all, the actual sentence which had established it was ridiculously out of proportion with its unshakeable persistence ever since the moment when that sentence had been passed. The fact that the sentence had been read out at eight o'clock rather than at five o'clock, and the fact that it might have been completely different, and that it had been decided upon by men who change their underwear, and that it had been credited to so vague an entity as the French (or German, or Chinese) people, all these things really seemed to detract considerably from the seriousness of such a decision. And yet I had to admit that from the very second it was taken, its consequences became just as certain, just as serious, as the fact that I was lying there flat against that wall.

At times like this I remembered a story that mother used to tell me about my father. I never met him. Perhaps the only thing I really knew about the man was this story that mother used to tell me: he'd gone to watch a murderer being executed. He'd felt ill at the thought of going. He had though and when he'd got back he'd been sick half the morning. My father disgusted me a bit at the time. But now I understood, it was completely natural. I don't know how I hadn't realized before that nothing was more important than executions and that, in actual fact, they were the

only thing a man could really be interested in! If I ever got out of this prison, I'd go and watch all the executions there were. But I think I was wrong even to consider the possibility. For at the thought of being a free man standing there early in the morning behind a police cordon, on the other side as it were, and of being one of the spectators who come and watch and can be sick afterwards, my heart would suddenly be poisoned by a great flood of joy. But it was irrational. I was wrong to let myself make these suppositions because the next second I'd feel so dreadfully cold that it would make me curl up inside my blanket. My teeth would be chattering uncontrollably.

But naturally, you can't always be rational. At other times, for example, I'd work out new legal policies. I'd reform the punishment system. I'd realized that the essential thing was to give the condemned man a chance. Even one in a thousand was quite enough to sort things out. For instance, I imagined that they could find some chemical compound for the patient to take (I thought of him as the patient) which would kill him nine times out of ten. He would know this, that was the condition. Because when I really thought about it and considered things calmly, I could see that what was wrong with the guillotine was that you had no chance at all, absolutely none. In fact it had been decided once and for all that the patient would die. It was a classified fact, a firmly fixed arrangement, a definite agreement which there was no question of going back on. In the unlikely event of something going wrong, they just started again. Consequently, the annoying thing was that the condemned man had to hope that the machine worked properly. I say this is what's wrong with the system. That's true in a way. But in another way, I had to admit that it also possessed the whole secret of good organization. After all, the condemned man was obliged to lend moral support. It was in his interest that everything should go off without a hitch.

I was also made to realize that up until then I'd had mistaken ideas about these things. I've always thought – I don't know why – that to get to the guillotine you had to climb onto a scaffold, up some steps. I think it was because of the 1789 Revolution, I mean because of everything I'd been shown or taught about these things. But one morning I remembered seeing a photograph which had appeared in the papers at the time of a famous execution. In actual fact, the machine stood flat on the ground, as ordinary as anything. And it was much narrower than I'd thought. It was funny that it hadn't occurred to me before. The machine in this picture had struck me because it looked so immaculate and gleaming, like a precision instrument. You always get exaggerated ideas of things you know nothing about. I was made to realize that on the contrary everything was quite simple: the machine is on the same level as the man who's walking towards it. He goes up to it just as you would go to meet another person. That was annoying too. Climbing up into the sky to mount the scaffold was something the imagination could hang on to. Whereas, once again, the mechanism demolished everything: they killed you discreetly and rather shamefacedly but extremely accurately.

There were two other things I was always thinking about: the dawn and my appeal. I'd try to be rational though and not think about them any more. I'd stretch out and look at the sky and force myself to take an interest in it. It would turn green and I'd know it was evening. I'd make another effort to divert my thoughts. I'd listen to my heart. I couldn't imagine that this noise which had been with me for so long could ever stop. I've never really had

much imagination. And yet I'd try to envisage a particular moment when the beating of my heart would no longer be going on inside my head. But in vain. Either the dawn or my appeal would still be there. And I'd end up telling myself that the most rational thing was not to hold myself back.

They came at dawn, I knew that. In fact I spent every night just waiting for the dawn to come. I've never liked being surprised. When something's happening to me, I'd rather be around. That's why I ended up only sleeping for a bit during the day, while all through the night I waited patiently for the dawn to break above the skylight. The most difficult part was that in-between time when I knew they usually operated. Once it was past midnight, I'd be waiting, listening. Never before had my cars picked up so many noises or detected such tiny sounds. I must say though that in a way I was lucky throughout that period in that I never once heard footsteps. Mother often used to say that you're never altogether unhappy. And lying there in my prison when the sky turned red and a new day slid into my cell, I'd agree with her. Because I could just as easily have heard footsteps and my heart could have burst. For even though the faintest rustle would send me flying to the door and even though, with my ear pressed to the wood, I'd wait there frantically until I could hear my own breathing and be terrified to find it so hoarse, like a dog's death-rattle, my heart wouldn't burst after all and I'd have gained another twenty-four hours.

All through the day there was my appeal. I think I made the most of that idea. I'd calculate my assets so as to get the best return on my thoughts. I'd always assume the worst: my appeal had been dismissed. 'Well, then I'll die.' Sooner than other people, obviously. But everybody knows that life isn't worth living. And when it came down to it, I wasn't unaware of the fact that it doesn't matter very much whether you die at thirty or at seventy since, in either case, other men and women will naturally go on living, for thousands of years even. Nothing was plainer, in fact. It was still only me who was dying, whether it was now or in twenty years' time. At that point the thing that would rather upset my reasoning was that I'd feel my heart give this terrifying leap at the thought of having another twenty years to live. But I just had to stifle it by imagining what I'd be thinking in twenty years' time when I'd have to face the same situation anyway. Given that you've got to die, it obviously doesn't matter exactly how or when. Therefore (and the difficult thing was not to lose track of all the reasoning which that 'therefore' implied), therefore, I had to accept that my appeal had been dismissed.

At that point, and only at that point, I'd as it were have the right, I'd so to speak give myself permission to consider the alternative hypothesis: I was pardoned. The annoying thing was that somehow I'd have to control that burning rush of blood which would make my eyes smart and my whole body delirious with joy. I'd have to do my best to restrain this outburst, to be rational about it. I'd have to remain calm even about this hypothesis, in order to make my resignation to the first one more plausible. When I'd managed it, I'd have gained an hour's respite. That was something anyway.

It was at one such moment that I refused yet again to see the chaplain. I was lying down and I could tell from a slight glow in the summer sky that evening was approaching. I'd just dismissed my appeal and I could feel the regular pulse of my blood circulating inside me. I had no need to see the chaplain. For the first time in ages I thought of Marie. She hadn't written to me for days on end. That evening I thought it over and I told myself that

she'd probably got tired of being a condemned man's mistress. It also crossed my mind that she might have been ill or dead. It was in the natural order of things. And how would I have known when, now that we were physically separated, there was nothing left to keep us together or to remind us of each other. Anyway, from that point on, Marie's memory would have meant nothing to me. I wasn't interested in her any more if she was dead. I found that quite normal just as I could quite well understand that people would forget about me once I was dead. They had nothing more to do with me. I couldn't even say that this was hard to accept.

It was at that precise moment that the chaplain walked in. A slight shiver went through me when I saw him. He noticed it and told me not to be afraid. I replied that he usually came at a different time. He told me that it was just a friendly visit and had nothing to do with my appeal which he knew nothing about. He sat down on my bunk and invited me to sit next to him. I refused. All the same, I found him quite pleasant.

He sat there for a moment, with his forearms on his knees, looking down. at his hands. They were slim and muscular and they looked like a pair of nimble animals. He rubbed them slowly together. Then he sat like that, still looking down, for so long that for a second I thought I'd forgotten he was there.

But suddenly he raised his head and looked me in the face. 'Why do you refuse to see me?' he said. I replied that I didn't believe in God. He wanted to know whether I was quite sure about that and I said I had no reason for asking myself that question: it didn't seem to matter. He then leant back against the wall, with his hands flat on his thighs. Almost as if he were talking to himself, he remarked that sometimes you think you're sure when really you're not. I didn't say anything. He looked at me and asked, 'What do you think?' I replied that it was possible. In any case, I may not have been sure what really interested me, but I was absolutely sure what didn't interest me. And what he was talking about was one of the very things that didn't interest me.

He looked away and, still without changing position, asked me if I weren't talking like that out of utter despair.

I explained to him that I wasn't in despair. I was simply afraid, which was only natural. 'In that case, God would help you,' he said. 'Every man that I've known in your position has turned towards Him.' I remarked that that was up to them. It also proved that they could spare the time. As for me, I didn't want anyone to help me and time was the very thing I didn't have for taking an interest in what didn't interest me.

At that point he made an irritated gesture, but then he sat up and straightened the folds of his gown. When he'd finished, he spoke to me, addressing me as 'my friend': it wasn't because I was condemned to death that he was talking to me like that; in his opinion, we were all condemned to death. But I interrupted him by saying that it wasn't the same thing and that anyway, this could never be any consolation. 'Admittedly,' he agreed. 'But if you don't die now, you'll die later. And the same problem will arise. How are you going to face up to that terrifying ordeal?' I replied that I'd face up to it exactly as I was facing up to it now.

He stood up when I said that and looked me straight in the eye. It was a game I knew well. I often used to play it with Emmanuel or Celeste and generally they'd look away. The chaplain knew the game well too, I could tell immediately: his gaze never faltered. His voice didn't falter either when

he said, 'Have you really no hope at all and do you live in the belief that you are to die outright?' 'Yes,' I said.

He then lowered his head and sat down again. He told me that he pitied me. He thought it was more than a man could bear. All I knew was that he was beginning to annoy me. I turned away as well and went and stood under the skylight. I was leaning my shoulder against the wall. Without really following what he was saying, I heard him start asking me questions again. He was talking in an anxious and insistent voice. I realized that he was getting emotional and I listened more carefully.

He was expressing his certainty that my appeal would be allowed, but I was burdened with a sin from which I must free myself. According to him, human justice was nothing and divine justice was everything. I pointed out that it was the former which had condemned me. He replied that it hadn't washed away my sin for all that. I told him I didn't know what a sin was. I'd simply been told that I was guilty. I was guilty and I was paying for it and there was nothing more that could be asked of me. At that point he stood up again and I realized that in such a narrow cell, if he wanted to move, he didn't have much choice. He either had to stand up or sit down.

I was staring at the ground. He took a step towards me and stopped, as if he didn't dare come any closer. He was looking up at the sky through the bars. 'You're mistaken, my son,' he said, 'there is more that could be asked of you. And it may well be asked of you.' 'And what's that?' 'You could be asked to see.' 'To see what?'

The priest looked all around him and replied in a voice which suddenly sounded extremely weary, 'I know how the suffering oozes from these stones. I've never looked at them without a feeling of anguish. But deep in my heart I know that even the most wretched among you have looked at them and seen a divine face emerging from the darkness. It is that face which you are being asked to see.'

I woke up a bit. I told him that I'd been looking at these walls for months. There wasn't anything or anyone in the world I knew better. Maybe, a long time ago, I had looked for a face in them. But that face was the colour of the sun and burning with desire: it was Marie's face. I'd looked for it in vain. Now it was all over. And in any case, I'd never seen anything emerging from any oozing stones.

The chaplain looked at me almost sadly. By now I had my back right up against the wall and my forehead was bathed in light. He said a few words which I didn't hear and then asked me very quickly if I'd let him kiss me. 'No,' I said. He turned and walked over to the wall and ran his hand slowly across it. 'Do you really love this earth as much as that?' he murmured. I didn't answer.

He stayed facing the wall for quite a long time. I found his presence tiresome and aggravating. I was about to tell him to go away and leave me alone when suddenly he had a sort of outburst and turned towards me exclaiming, 'No, I can't believe you. You must surely at some time have wished for another life.' I replied that naturally I had, but that it meant nothing more than wishing I was rich or could swim fast or had a better-shaped mouth. It was the same kind of thing. But he stopped me because he wanted to know how I imagined this other life. So I shouted at him, 'One which would remind me of this life,' and in the same breath I told him that I'd had enough. He started talking to me about God again, but I went up to him and made one last attempt to explain to him that I didn't

have much time left. I didn't want to waste it on God. He tried to change the subject by asking me why I wasn't calling him 'father'. That irritated me and I told him that he wasn't my father: he was on the same side as the others.

'No, my son,' he said, placing his hand on my shoulder.

'I'm on your side. But you can't see that because your heart is blind. I shall pray for you.'

Then, for some reason, something exploded inside me. I started shouting at the top of my voice and I insulted him and told him not to pray for me. I'd grabbed him by the collar of his cassock. I was pouring everything out at him from the bottom of my heart in a paroxysm of joy and anger. He seemed so certain of everything, didn't he? And yet none of his certainties was worth one hair of a woman's head. He couldn't even be sure he was alive because he was living like a dead man. I might seem to be empty-handed. But I was sure of myself, sure of everything, surer than he was, sure of my life and sure of the death that was coming to me. Yes, that was all I had. But at least it was a truth which I had hold of just as it had hold of me. I'd been right, I was still right, I was always right. I'd lived in a certain way and I could just as well have lived in a different way. I'd done this and I hadn't done that. I hadn't done one thing whereas I had done another. So what? It was as if I'd been waiting all along for this very moment and for the early dawn when I'd be justified. Nothing, nothing mattered and I knew very well why. He too knew why. From the depths of my future, throughout the whole of this absurd life I'd been leading, I'd felt a vague breath drifting towards me across all the years that were still to come, and on its way this breath had evened out everything that was then being proposed to me in the equally unreal years I was living through. What did other people's deaths or a mother's love matter to me, what did his God or the lives people chose or the destinies they selected matter to me, when one and the same destiny was to select me and thousands of millions of other privileged people who, like him, called themselves my brothers. Didn't he understand? Everyone was privileged. There were only privileged people. The others too would be condemned one day. He too would be condemned. What did it matter if he was accused of murder and then executed for not crying at his mother's funeral? Salamano's dog was worth just as much as his wife. The little automatic woman was just as guilty as the Parisian woman Masson had married or as Marie who wanted me to marry her. What did it matter that Raymond was just as much my mate as Celeste who was worth more than him? What did it matter that Marie now had a new Meursault to kiss? Didn't he understand that he was condemned and that from the depths of my future ... I was choking with all this shouting. But already the chaplain was being wrested from me and the warders were threatening me. He calmed them though and looked at me for a moment in silence. His eyes were full of tears. Then he turned away and disappeared.

Once he was gone, I felt calm again. I was exhausted and I threw myself onto my bunk. I think I must have fallen asleep because I woke up with stars shining on my face. Sounds of the countryside were wafting in. The night air was cooling my temples with the smell of earth and salt. The wondrous peace of this sleeping summer flooded into me. At that point, on the verge of daybreak, there was a scream of sirens. They were announcing a departure to a world towards which I would now be forever indifferent. For the first time in a very long time I thought of mother. I felt that I

understood why at the end of her life she'd taken a 'fiance' and why she'd pretended to start again. There at the home, where lives faded away, there too the evenings were a kind of melancholy truce. So close to death, mother must have felt liberated and ready to live her life again. No one, no one at all had any right to cry over her. And I too felt ready to live my life again. As if this great outburst of anger had purged all my ills, killed all my hopes, I looked up at the mass of signs and stars in the night sky and laid myself open for the first time to the benign indifference of the world. And finding it so much like myself, in fact so fraternal, I realized that I'd been happy, and that I was still happy. For the final consummation and for me to feel less lonely, my last wish was that there should be a crowd of spectators at my execution and that they should greet me with cries of hatred.

From the Afterword

So one wouldn't be far wrong in seeing *The Outsider* as *the story of a man who, without any heroic pretensions, agrees to die for the truth*. I also once said, and again paradoxically, that *I tried to make my character represent the only Christ that we deserve*. It will be understood, after these explanations, that I said it without any intention of blasphemy but simply with the somewhat ironic affection that an artist has a right to feel towards the characters he has created.

Albert Camus, 8 January 1955

Albert Camus, *The Outsider*
Penguin Books
Translation copyright © Joseph Laredo, 1982

Supplementary Material

TEXT

NOTES

NO USE KNOCKING ON THE WINDOW

No use knocking on the window,
There is nothing we can do, sir.
All the beds are booked already,
There is nothing left for you, sir.

*Standing in the rain,
Knocking on the window,
Knocking on the window,
On a Christmas Day.
There he is again
Knocking on the window,
Knocking on the window
In the same old way.*

No use knocking on the window,
Some are lucky, some are not, sir.
We are Christian men and women,
But we're keeping what we've got, sir.

No, we haven't got a manger,
No we haven't got a stable,
We are Christian men and women,
Ever willing, ever able.

Christ the Lord has gone to heaven,
One day He'll be coming back, sir.
In this house He will be welcome,
But we hope he won't be back, sir.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas,
We will now go back to bed, sir.
'Til you woke us with your knocking
We were sleeping like the dead, sir.

Sydney Carter • Tune: STANDING IN THE RAIN also by Sydney Carter
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Supplementary Material

TEXT

NOTES

DRAW THE CIRCLE WIDE

*Draw the circle wide.
Draw it wider still.
Let this be our song,
no one stands alone,
standing side by side,
draw the circle wide.*

God the still-point of the circle,
'round whom all creation turns;
nothing lost, but held forever,
in God's gracious arms.
Refrain

Let our hearts touch far horizons,
so encompass great and small;
let our loving know no borders,
faithful to God's call.
Refrain

Let the dreams we dream be larger,
than we've ever dreamed before;
let the dream of Christ be in us,
open every door.
Refrain

Text: Gordon Light
Common Praise – 418 • Tune: BROWNING

GORDON LIGHT WAS ELECTED BISHOP IN THE CHURCH OF GOD
WITH EPISCOPAL OVERSIGHT TO THE PARISHES OF THE INTERIOR OF BRITISH COLUMBIA,
FORMERLY THE DIOCESE OF CARIBOO IN JANUARY 2004

To be a castaway is to be a point perpetually at the centre of a circle. However much things may appear to change – the sea may shift from whisper to rage, the sky might go from fresh blue to blinding white to darkest black – the geometry never changes. Your gaze is always a radius.
– Pi in *A Life of Pi*, page 239