

Lament Psalm Thirty-One

Adapted from the poem by Anne Weems

How long will you watch, O God,
As your people live huddled in death?
The whole world is dressed in tears,
And I have joined the procession of the bereaved
Who walk daily in the death places.
We are judged in the courtrooms.
We are victims of crime.
We are homeless and hungry.
Is this not enough?

We are tormented by mental illness.
We are abandoned by loved ones.
We wait in unemployment lines.
We grow up on the streets.
We live with disabilities.
We are injured in accidents.
We are plagued by family problems.
We fight drug and alcohol abuse.
Have you not heard enough, O God?
We watch our loved ones endure pain.
We are falsely accused.
We encounter prejudice and hate.
We are humiliated and abused.
We contend with unbearable stress and anxiety.
We weep by the grave.

We are your people, O Creator God!
We are the work of your hands.
Is there no more grace from your troubled ones?
Will we continue our unholy procession
Around the pit of living death?

There is no sun, no moon, no star.
We cannot see our way.
Have pity on your world, O God,
Have pity on your weeping world!

We remember all the times you lavished your grace
Upon our heads and into our hearts.
You gave us the gift of light,
And we walked with our heads up in the procession of life.
Restore us, O God, to your sanctuary.
Look upon us and let your heart be moved
To break the bonds of the bereaved.
In this hope is our joy.
In that day we will run
To join the procession of life and we will sing hymns of praise
Forever and ever and ever and ever!¹

¹ The original version of this theological poem of lament can be found in Ann Weems, *Psalms of Lament* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 65-67. The text has been slightly adapted here in the hope that Native worshippers present for the lament service will be able to identify more strongly with the author's lament as a lament of their own over the current conditions they endure on reserve and in Canadian society more generally.