

Teach Us To Pray

A BOOK OF PRAYERS FOR CLC GROUPS



Christian Life Community
Community. Spirituality. Mission.

The most important part of facilitating a CLC group is having a strong prayer life. Prayer can simply mean taking the time to reflect on one's own life and be attentive to 'seeing' and 'hearing' another 'voice' and seeking to respond to that unique call in one's life. We talk of the parts of a CLC group meeting including an opening prayer and closing prayer but what we really seek is to not have our prayer be an agenda item but to think of our whole meeting and our life as a prayer which means listening and sharing that allows for silence and openness to God in our midst and being willing to respond out of love.

This book hopes to introduce methods of prayer that help facilitate an experience of God. We have also included traditional prayers and poetry. It is our hope that some of the prayers will speak to you and nourish you on your faith journey as we seek to build community and habits that will be carried on after we leave BC and give you deep peace and knowledge of God's unconditional love for you. The prayers will also serve to strengthen us to be a part of Christ's Mission in the world.

~ Chris Cichello, Campus Minister

If, during prayer, you do nothing but bring your heart from distraction again and again into God's presence, though it went away every time you brought it back, your time would be very well spent.

--St. Francis de Sales



Words of wisdom from Brother Roger from Taizé Community, France:



“A very simple reality” “When we open the Gospel, each of us can say, “These words of Jesus are rather like a very ancient letter written in an unknown language. But since it is written to me by someone who loves me, I am going to try to understand its meaning, and to put into practice right away the little I have grasped.”... Extensive knowledge is not important at the outset. In time that will be of great value. But it is through the heart, in the depths of themselves, that human beings begin to grasp the Mystery of Faith. Everything is not granted at once. An inner life is developed step by step. Today, more than in the past, we enter into the faith by going forward in stages.

Right at the depth of the human condition, lies the longing for a presence, the silent desire for a communion.

Let us never forget that this simple desire for God is already the beginning of faith.

Moreover, no one is able to understand the entire Gospel in isolation from others. Each person has to say, “In this unique communion that is the Church, what I do not understand of the faith is understood by others who are living from it. I do not rely on my faith alone but on the faith of Christians of all times, those who have gone before us, from the time of Mary and the apostles to those of today. And day after day I prepare inwardly to put my trust in the Mystery of Faith.”

So it becomes clear that faith – trusting in God – is a very simple reality, so simple that everyone could receive it. It is like surging upwards again and again, a thousand times, throughout our life, and until our very last breath.”

Mother Theresa on Silence

“To make possible true inner silence, practice:

Silence of the eyes, by seeking always the beauty and goodness of God everywhere, and closing them to the faults of others and to all that is sinful and disturbing to the soul.

Silence of the ears, by listening always to the voice of God and to the cry of the poor and the needy, and closing them to all other voices that come from fallen human nature, such as gossip, tale bearing, and uncharitable words.

Silence of the tongue, by praising God and speaking the life-giving Word of God that is the truth, that enlightens and inspires, brings peace, hope, and joy; and by refraining from self-defense and every word that causes darkness, turmoil, pain, and death.

Silence of the mind, by opening it to the truth and knowledge of God in prayer and contemplation, like Mary who pondered the marvels of the Lord in her heart, and by closing it to all untruths, distractions, destructive thoughts, rash judgments, false suspicions of others, vengeful thoughts, and desires.

Silence of the heart, by loving God with our heart, soul, mind, and strength; loving one another as God loves; and avoiding all selfishness, hatred, envy, jealousy, and greed.”

Luke 11:2-4

Jesus said

“When you pray, say:

Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread.

And forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial.”

TAKE 5

The Ignatian Awareness Examen (2 minutes silence after each)

1. **Awareness** I am never alone. Invite God in. What do I desire?
2. **Gratitude** All things in this world are gifts from God. For what am I grateful?
3. **Review** Humbly review the day with particular attention to emotions and feelings. Where am I being challenged to grow?
4. **Forgiveness** I acknowledge sins and shortcomings. What choices have been inadequate responses to Your love?
5. **Hope and Renewal** I recognize that nothing is impossible with You. Which particular gift of the Holy Spirit do I desire now and in the future?



• THE FIRST PRINCIPLE AND FOUNDATION The Spiritual Exercises, #23

The goal of our life is to live with God forever. God, who loves us, gave us life. Our own response of love allows God's life to flow into us without limit. All the things in this world are gifts of God, presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily. As a result, we appreciate and use all these gifts of God insofar as they help us develop as loving persons. But if any of these gifts become the center of our lives, they displace God and so hinder our growth toward our goal. In everyday life, then, we must hold ourselves in balance before all of these created gifts insofar as we have a choice and are not bound by some obligation. We should not fix our desires on health or sickness, wealth or poverty, success or failure, a long life or short one. For everything has the potential of calling forth in us a deeper response to our life in God. Our only desire and our one choice should be this: I want and I choose what better leads to the deepening of God's life in me. St. Ignatius Loyola as paraphrased by David L. Fleming, SJ

Praying the Principle and Foundation.

Prayer of Love and Praise

Lord my God,
when Your love spilled over into creation
You thought of me.

I am
from love
of love
for love.

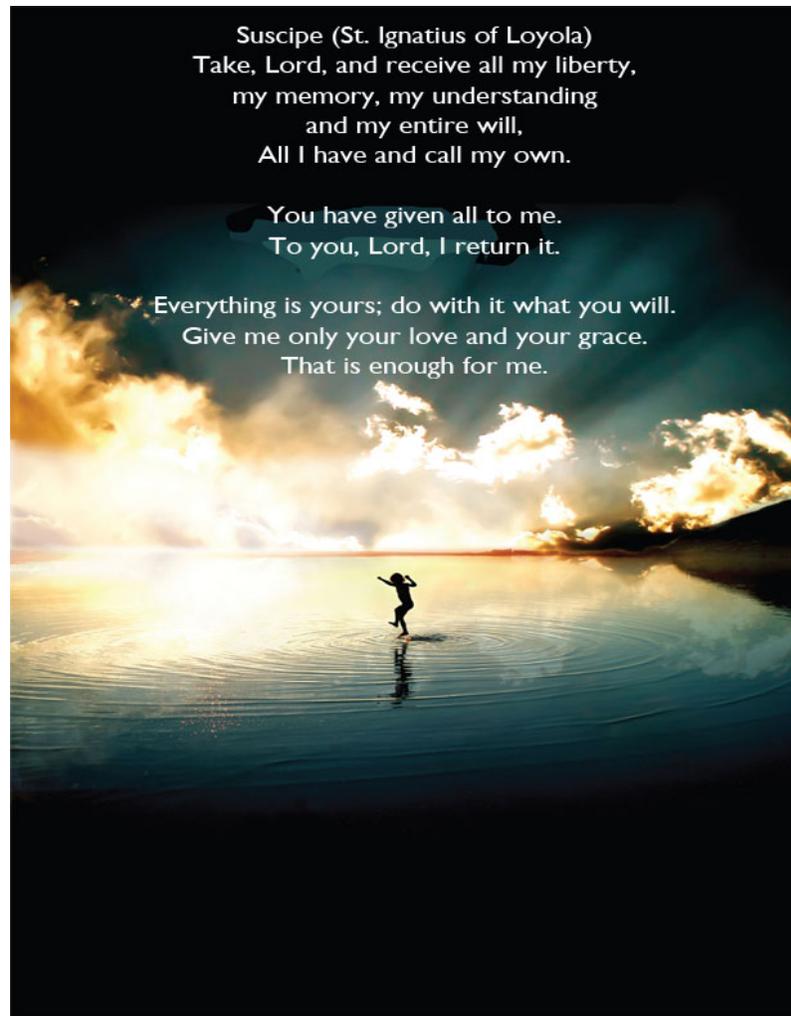
Let my heart, O God, always
recognize,
cherish,
and enjoy your goodness in all of creation.

Direct all that is me toward your praise;
Teach me reverence for every person, all things.
Energize me in your service

Lord God,
May nothing ever distract me from your love ...
Neither health nor sickness
wealth nor poverty
honor nor dishonor
long life nor short life.

May I never seek nor choose to be other
than You intend or wish.

Amen



A CLC Leader's Prayer

Triune God, Communion of Love,
Grant me reverence
for Your presence in those I serve.
Let me look with Your eyes,
to see as You see.
That I may regard those I serve
as your Beloved.

Grant me patient listening,
To respect Your work in people,
To await Your timing,
To trust Your wisdom,
To follow Your lead.

Help me to listen deeply,
Speak sparingly, affirm genuinely,
Challenge tenderly.

Just as you are a mystery,
This person before me is a mystery.
Let my relationship with him or her
Be a mystery to be lived out,
Rather than a puzzle to be worked out;
A hand to be held,
Rather than a mind to be fathomed;
As an adventure to be undertaken,
Rather than a problem to be solved.

Let me cherish
Your mysterious presence in others.
And delight in them as You do.
Before them, before You,
I am on holy ground.

AMEN

From Donald Neary SJ's *Calm Beneath the Storm*

Sophomore Group Leaders

Bernadette Charland



Jessica Czachor



Julia DiGirolamo



Claire Feeney



Mike Flynn



Martin Hayes



Emma Jogerst



Amanda Judah



Abby Konkoly



Hannah McCarthy



Luke Murphy



Maddie Reynolds



Haley Walker



Elizabeth Waring



Molly Mullen



Christian Life Community Council 17-18

Perry Bowers 2018



Kathryn Lieder 2018



Liz Burke 2018



Brooke Hensley 2018



Phyllis Immitti 2018



Andy Lee 2018



Claire Lynch 2018



Jack O'Reilly 2018



Allison Wojciechowski 2019



Senior Group Leaders

George Chuias



Dan Cunningham



Nicole Bowen 2019



Addie Egan



Ashley Douglas



Jess Gillespie



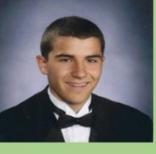
Claire Jasper



Meghan Hokr



Daniel Leisner



Tom Keenan



Leah Lombardi



Sammi Massoud



Liz McKernan



Xiomara Munoz



Molly Rafferty



Alex Ricciardelli



Matthew Thompson



Junior Group Leaders

Emily Acito



Liz Chester



Sarah early



Jess Garrigan



Sam Gray



Ted Katsaros



Amanda Lewis



Lucia Martinez



Kathleen Mikkelsen



Courtney Mulvaney



Haley O'Shea



Bianca Pissero



Lupe Sanchez



Bill Stone



Maddie Sullivan



Ben Twohig



Loving and Gracious God, You have called us to be people "with and for others."
We thank you for the gift of the CLC community, And for providing these students with a special place to
Grow in relationship with you, with others, and with the world.
Bless ✝ these students, their leaders, and the entire CLC community.
Guide them throughout the coming weeks and months
As they form faith-filled friendships and
Grow in awareness of your movement in their lives.
May we grow into a community that will build a kingdom of justice and peace
At BC, Boston, and around the world.

Hark

**As the morning breaks
Whisper in my ear
That I may forget not
How faithful
How constant
Is your love
For me.**

**As the busy day makes it's claim
Whisper in my ear
That I may forget not
How patient
How un jealous
Is your love
For me.**

**As the darkness overwhelms
Whisper in my ear
That I may forget not
How vigilant
How safe
Is your love
For me.**

Amen

-Fr. Tony Penna, Director of Campus Ministry



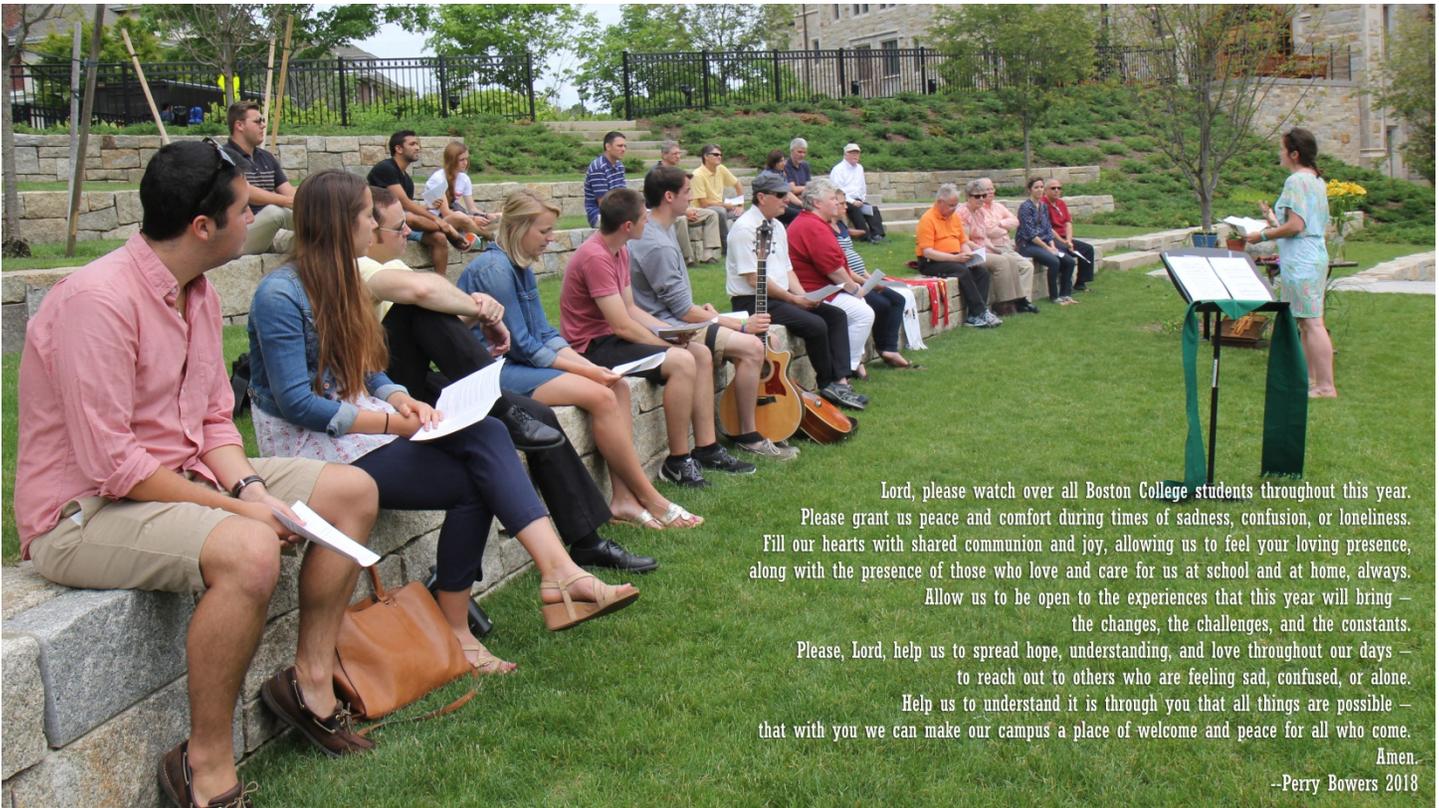
Teach Us to Listen
Teach us to listen, O God, to those nearest to us –
Our families, our co-workers, our friends.
Help us to be aware that, no matter what words we hear
The message is, “Accept the person I am. Listen to me.”

Teach us to listen, our caring God, to those far from us –
The whisper of the hopeless, the pleas of the forgotten,
The cry of the anguished.

Teach us to listen, O God our Mother, to ourselves.
Help us to be less afraid to trust the voice inside –
In that deepest part of ourselves.

Teach us to listen, Holy Spirit, for your voice –
In business and in boredom, in certainty and in doubt,
In noise and in silence.

Teach us, Lord, to listen.
- Jim Veltri, SJ



Lord, please watch over all Boston College students throughout this year.
Please grant us peace and comfort during times of sadness, confusion, or loneliness.
Fill our hearts with shared communion and joy, allowing us to feel your loving presence,
along with the presence of those who love and care for us at school and at home, always.
Allow us to be open to the experiences that this year will bring –
the changes, the challenges, and the constants.
Please, Lord, help us to spread hope, understanding, and love throughout our days –
to reach out to others who are feeling sad, confused, or alone.
Help us to understand it is through you that all things are possible –
that with you we can make our campus a place of welcome and peace for all who come.

Amen.

--Perry Bowers 2018

Prayer for Generosity

Lord, teach me to be generous.
Teach me to serve as you deserve;
To give and not to count the cost
To fight and not to heed the wounds;
To toil and not to seek for rest,
To labor and not to ask for reward,
Save that of knowing that I do your will.
- St. Ignatius of Loyola

"Requiem" by Eliza Gilkyson (Play youtube recording of this!)

Mother Mary, full of grace, awaken.
All our homes are gone, our loved ones taken,
taken by the sea.
Mother Mary, calm our fears, have mercy.
Drowning in a sea of tears, have mercy.
Hear our mournful plea.
Our world has been shaken.
We wander our homelands forsaken.
In the dark night of the soul
bring some comfort to us all.
Oh Mother Mary, come and carry us in your embrace,
that our sorrows may be faced.
Mary, fill the glass to overflowing,
illuminate the path where we are going.
Have mercy on us all,
in funeral fires burning,
each flame to your mystery returning.
In the dark night of the soul
your shattered dreamers, make them whole
oh Mother Mary find us where we've fallen out of grace.
Lead us to a higher place
In the dark night of the soul
our broken hearts you can make whole.
oh Mother Mary, come and carry us in your embrace.
Let us see your gentle face, Mary.





Iona Community Advent Prayer

**When the world was dark and the city was quiet,
you came.**

You crept in beside us. And no one knew.

**Only the few who dared to believe
that God might do something different.**

Will you do the same this Christmas, Lord?

Will you come into the darkness of tonight's world;

not the friendly darkness

as when sleep rescues us from tiredness,

but the fearful darkness,

in which people have stopped believing

that war will end

or that food will come

or that a government will change

or that the Church cares?

**Will you come into that darkness and do something different
to save your people from death and despair?**

Will you come into the quietness of this town,

not the friendly quietness as when lovers hold hands,

but the fearful silence when the phone has not rung

the letter has not come,

the friendly voice no longer speaks,

the doctor's face says it all?

Will you come into that darkness, and do something different,

not to distract, but to embrace your people?

And will you come into the dark corners and the quiet places of our lives?

We ask this not because we are guilt-ridden or want to be,

but because the fullness our lives long for

depends upon us being as open and vulnerable to you

as you were to us, when you came,

wearing no more than diapers, and trusting human hands to hold their maker.

Will you come into our lives, if we open them to you and do something different?

When the world was dark and the city was quiet

you came.

You crept in beside us.

Do the same this Christmas, Lord.

Do the same this Christmas. Amen.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

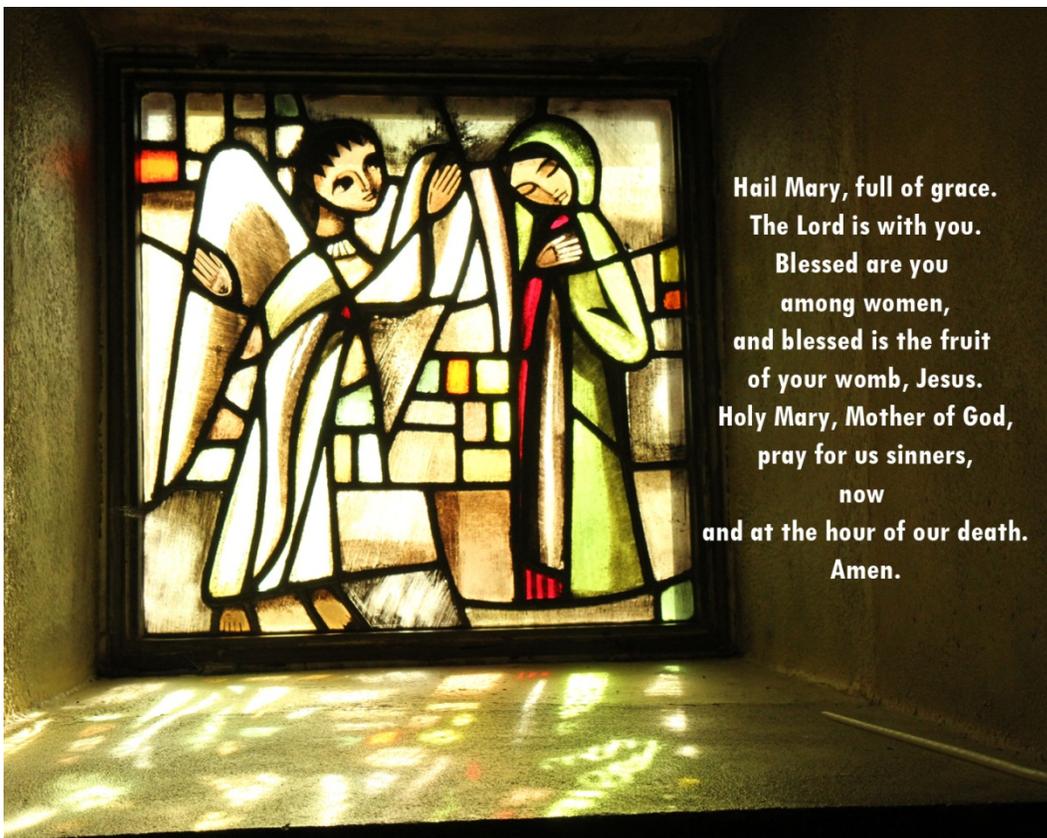
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children forever.

(Lk 1:46-55)





Hail Mary, full of grace.
The Lord is with you.
Blessed are you
among women,
and blessed is the fruit
of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now
and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

APOSTLES' CREED



I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic* church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.
*that is, the true Christian church of all times and all places

Prayer of the Person

The person across from you is the greatest miracle and the greatest mystery in this moment—a Testament of God's continuing creation and presence in the world.

The person across from you is an inexhaustible reservoir of possibility, with potentialities only partially realized.

The person across from you is a unique universe of experience— of possibility and necessity. laughter and tears, love and indifference, hopes and fears- all struggling for expression.

The person across from you believes in something— something precious; stands for something. lives for something. labors for something, waits for something, runs for something, runs towards something.

The person across from you is not perfect— often feels disappointed, is often undecided and disorganized and woefully close to chaos; but is endowed with a tremendous inner strength, and is capable of surviving great difficulties and persecutions.

The person across from you is a community of persons— persons met during a lifetime. Each carries with them a mother and father, student and teacher, brother and sister, enemy and friend.

The person across from you does some things like no one else in the world. There is something this one life on earth means and cares for— will that person dare speak of it to you?

The person across from you is more description than explanation. The person across from you is MYSTERY made in God's image, never to be fully understood.

Look before you, and within you— look around— for God is indeed among us!



I

Exam Prayer
Sean O'Rourke

I am a bit scared of what lies around the corner,
Afraid that it all won't work out.
Please, Lord, stand by me these next few weeks,
Help me to iron out the nooks and creeks in my understanding.
Guide me in my learning;
Help me to use that knowledge for Your Greater Glory,
And enjoy the process that's coming my way.
I know it won't be easy, but please do stand by me, O Lord.

Let me know you're there, that everything will be alright.
Enlighten me in my quest, let everything I do lead to You,
But please, calm me in the meantime.

They say I'll be 'grand', and not to worry; I hope they're right.
I know in the long run that this won't matter,
And I hope that I can come through.
Give me strength to cope, to fight, to strive, and thrive
With You once again when this hill is climbed.
I know a great valley awaits me at the top of this challenge –
To run down into it, I cannot wait.

I just need to unlock this gate in my way,
Right now,
Then we can grow together.

I just want this all to be over, and I know it will be soon.
When I finish on that glorious afternoon in May,
I'll turn to You and say, "*Thank You* for coming to my aid that day,
For watching over me, protecting me, and calming me,
Like You did to that storm."

I know I'll be in great form then, but right now,
Please just answer my prayer;
Give me a sign.
Show me how,
Let me know You're there.
Amen.



A Travel Prayer: Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the mountains;
from where shall come my help?
My help shall come from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.

He will keep your foot from stumbling.
Your guard will never slumber.
No, he sleeps not nor slumbers,
the guardian of Israel.

The LORD your guard, the LORD your shade
at your right hand.
By day the sun shall not smite you,
nor the moon in the night.

The LORD will guard you from evil;
he will guard your soul.
The LORD will guard your going and coming,
both now and forever.



Enough

Lord God,

Is it enough to hear, to listen?
To become no longer a “deaf hearer of the Gospel”?

Is it enough to act, to serve?
To become the hands and feet of a God made flesh among us?

Is it enough to announce, to denounce?
To become prophets – like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Dorothy, Ellacuria?

Is it enough to become like Jesus, to find Jesus?
To become a saint?

What is enough is not, nor ever has been, ours to measure or decide,
But lies hidden, tucked into the folds of Your Inexhaustible Mystery.
So help us to focus,
Not on what is enough,
But on discovering You anew,
the God from whom and toward whom
We listen, act, speak and are.
For it is in our simple attempts that Christ will work,
Creating the world anew.

Amen

May today there be peace within.
May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.
May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.
May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.
May you be confident knowing you are a child of God.
Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise, and love.
It is there for each and every one of us.
-Saint Teresa

Submitted by Rachel French:

"Help Me Live Your Kingdom":
Lord, give me the grace to labor with you
without seeking myself-
to live the Kingdom
in its full reality.

-John Futrell SJ

God of New Beginnings:

We come before you with open hearts and outstretched arms seeking guidance as we reach beyond ourselves to find your love in those we meet. We ask that our arms might embrace your Spirit and that our eyes continue to see You in others as we celebrate your love. We ask for the strength and patience to be people of peace and instruments of justice. By simplifying our lives, may we come to discover the simplicity of your message. Through your strength we open ourselves in a new way, committing ourselves to walk your path and share in your work. We thank you for the gift of one another that we experience oneness with you. Keep us close and never let us stray from you. As we begin our journey into the depths of your love, we are fearful yet certain of your powerful and gentle presence.
Amen.



I ARISE IN THE NEW YEAR

I arise with amazement at the presence of the Holy One.

I arise with gratitude for life.

I arise with hope that all shall be well.

I arise with courage to meet what will be difficult.

I arise with conviction to do what is life-giving.

I arise with eyes ever alert for beauty.

I arise with openness to greater truth.

I arise with desire for continued transformation.

I arise with compassion for the hurting ones in the cosmos.

I arise with grief still settled in my spirit.

I arise with a sense of kinship with all whom I love.

I arise with determination to make good choices in using my time.

I arise with willingness to help those who will need my care.

I arise with hesitation as I think about the pain that may come.

I arise with longing for ever greater inner freedom.

I arise with happiness, knowing that I am invited to live life more fully.

I arise with love for the Holy One, my Intimate Companion.

Compassionate God and faithful Friend, thank you for the opportunity to walk into another year of life. Help me to be faithful, to be generous, to be yours.

A Prayer for My Friends

I ask you, dear God, to bless my friends;

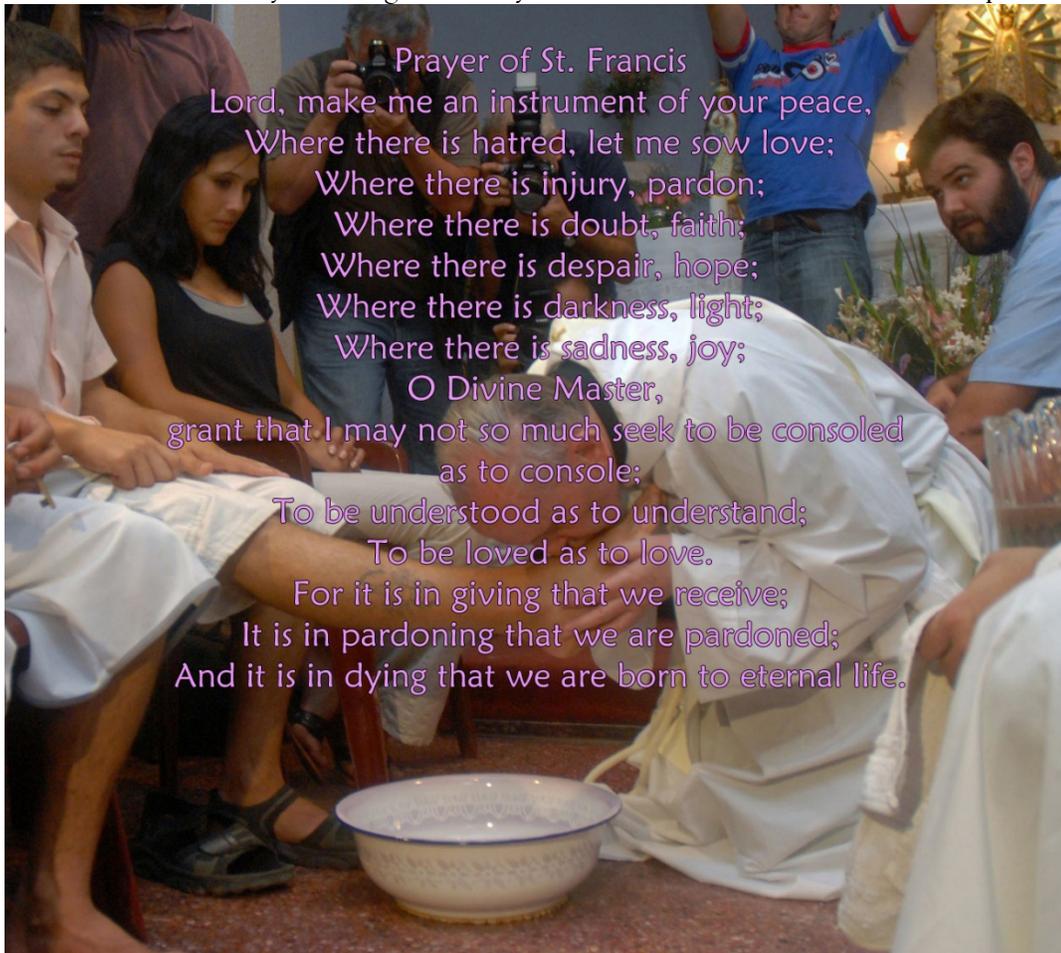
Where there is pain, heal them with your mercy,

Where there is sorrow, give them cause to rejoice.

Let them know that you are forever near,

Always ready to be our friend, especially in our hour of greatest need. Bless them with patience, strength, wisdom,

confidence and faith in you. And guide us in your love, the true source of all friendship here on earth and in Heaven. Amen.



Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light;

Where there is sadness, joy;

O Divine Master,

grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled

as to console;

To be understood as to understand;

To be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

The Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.

Come, Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love.

V. Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created.

R. And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray.

O God, Who didst instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise, and ever to rejoice in His consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen. –submitted by Phyllis Immitti

**A prayer for Wisdom and Understanding with respect to race, class, gender and religion.
Chiamaka Okorie, 2017**

Let us Pray.

Luke 10:29

But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

The parable of the Good Samaritan teaches that the love God has given to us must be extended to others through our actions, beyond all human-made boundaries. Too often, however, we hesitate and ask, "Who is my neighbor?". The good Samaritan did not doubt the presence of God in the man on the road. He did not hesitate to care for someone he knew was his brother under God, despite their differences. With every person we meet, God calls us to love like the Samaritan, above class, gender, religion, sexuality, or race. We ask that God strengthens our hearts with a love so strong that we share it indiscriminately.

Father, give us the wisdom to understand the way your grace extends to all of us. Teach us to always be guided by Your love and exude compassion

I Give You Thanks My God – Bernard Dadie

I GIVE YOU THANKS MY GOD

**I give you thanks my God for having created me black
For having made of me
The total of all sorrows,
and set upon my head the World.**

**I wear the livery of the Centaur
And I carry the World since the first morning.**

**White is a colour improvised for an occasion Black,
the colour of all days**

And I carry the World since the first night.

**I am happy with the shape of my head fashioned to carry the World,
satisfied with the shape of my nose,**

**Which should breathe all the air of the World,
happy with the form of my legs prepared to run through all the stages of the World.**

**I give you thanks my God, for having created me black,
for having made of me the total of all sorrows.**

Thirty-six swords have pierced my heart.

**Thirty-six brands have burned my body,
And my blood on all the cavalries has reddened the snow**

And my blood from all the east has reddened nature.

**And yet I am Happy to carry the World,
Content with my short arms, with my long legs, with the thickness of my lips.**

**I give you thanks my God, for having created me black,
White is a colour for an occasion, Black the colour of all days**

And I carry the World since the morning of time.

And my laughter in the night brought forth day over the World.

I give you thanks my God for having created me black.



Loving God,
Let us cherish your mysterious presence in others.
And delight in them as you do.
Let us look with your eyes, to see as you see.
Let us feel with your heart, to love as you love.
Grant us patient listening,
With tenderness and compassion,
With deep affirmation
and gentle challenge.
We thank you for the opportunity
to listen to your Word
Spoken through our voices as we shared,
Through our partner as we listened
Please help us to take the risk
to give of ourselves
In honest conversations
with one another. Amen.



TOUCH By Donald Neary, SJ

I'm thankful, Lord, for the touch of a friend's hand,

For the hug of sympathy and friendly warmth,

For the embrace of love and care.

I'm thankful for the people whose lives touch mine with friendship.

I recall, Lord, the touch of the hands that helped

Me grow from childhood to this day:

The touch of parents and friends that meant security and love; The touch of a friend whose presence cheered me when I was sad; The touch of encouragement when I was afraid;

The touch of sympathy when I was unhappy.

I thank you, Lord, for this gift;

You have touched me many times with your own presence Through the goodness of others.

I remember the touches that wounded me,

That still smart in my memory;

Help me to forgive the lasting sting of hurt, insult, or rejection.

Help me, Lord, to use this gift in your service,

To nurture your love among us.

Let me not exploit the loneliness and vulnerability of others;

Let my touch be a touch of care, compassion and kindness;

Let it be a touch of joy and freedom;

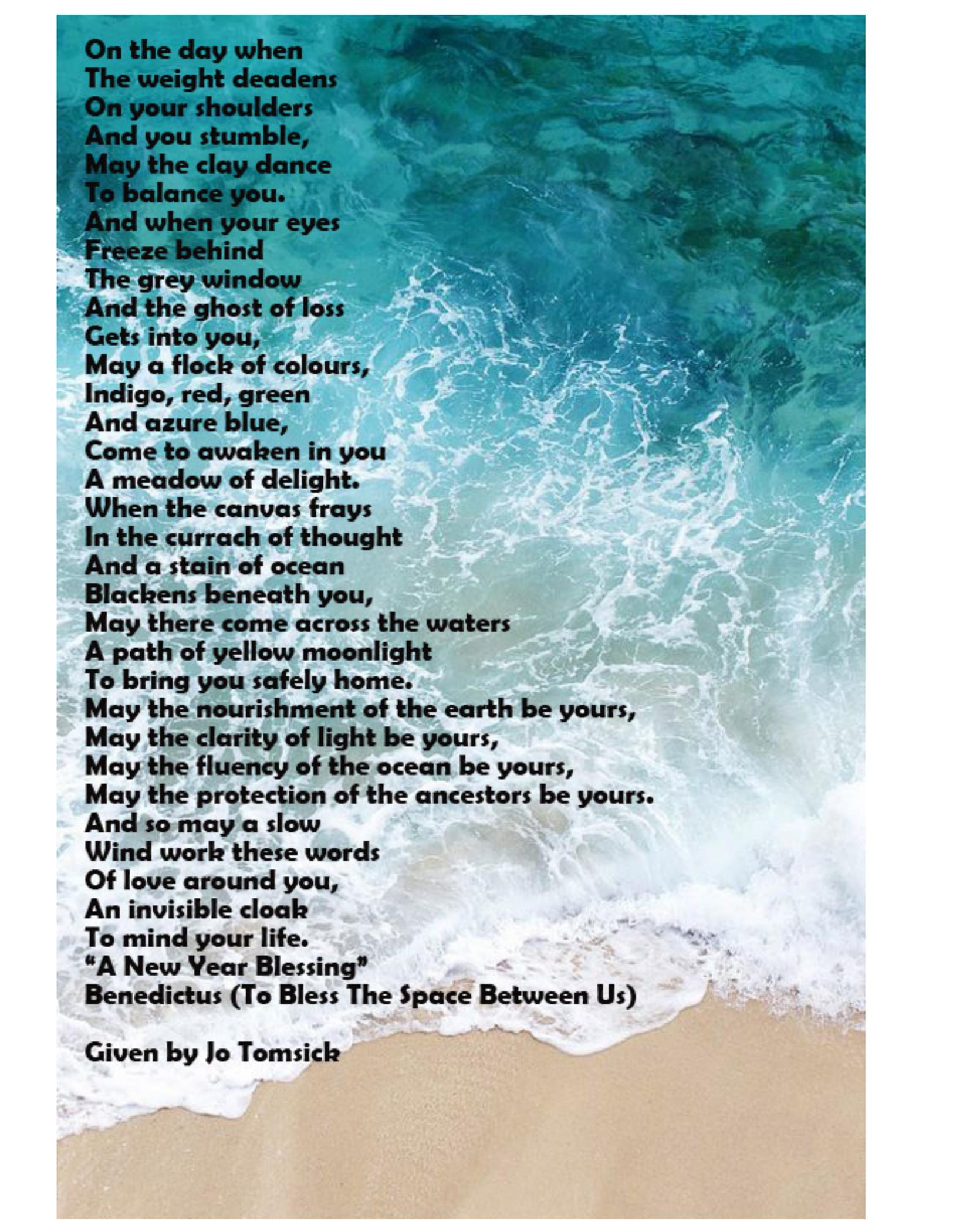
And in all the touches, embraces and precious moments of warmth, Let me remember that I am meeting one made from love,

In the image and likeness of a loving God.

Thank you, Lord, for the gift of touch.

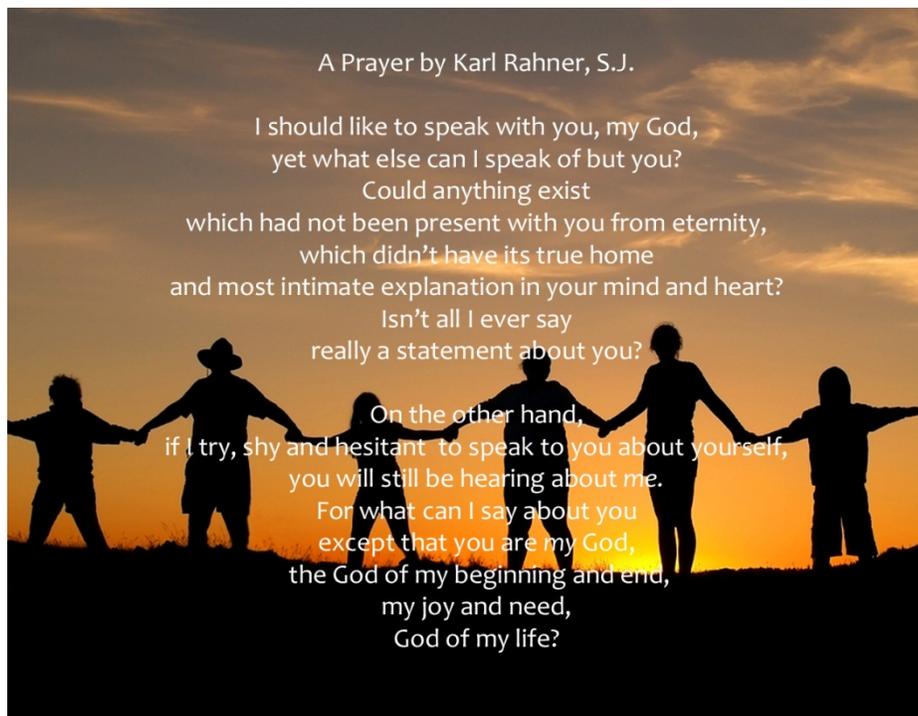
Compassion is not a relationship between the healer and the wounded. It's a relationship between equals. Only when we know our own darkness well can we be present with the darkness of others. Compassion becomes real when we recognize our shared humanity.

Pema Chodron

A photograph of a beach with turquoise waves crashing onto the sand. The water is a vibrant blue-green color, and the sand is a light tan. The waves are breaking in the foreground, creating white foam. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

**On the day when
The weight deadens
On your shoulders
And you stumble,
May the clay dance
To balance you.
And when your eyes
Freeze behind
The grey window
And the ghost of loss
Gets into you,
May a flock of colours,
Indigo, red, green
And azure blue,
Come to awaken in you
A meadow of delight.
When the canvas frays
In the currach of thought
And a stain of ocean
Blackens beneath you,
May there come across the waters
A path of yellow moonlight
To bring you safely home.
May the nourishment of the earth be yours,
May the clarity of light be yours,
May the fluency of the ocean be yours,
May the protection of the ancestors be yours.
And so may a slow
Wind work these words
Of love around you,
An invisible cloak
To mind your life.
"A New Year Blessing"
Benedictus (To Bless The Space Between Us)**

Given by Jo Tomsick



A Prayer by Karl Rahner, S.J.

I should like to speak with you, my God,
yet what else can I speak of but you?
Could anything exist
which had not been present with you from eternity,
which didn't have its true home
and most intimate explanation in your mind and heart?
Isn't all I ever say
really a statement about you?

On the other hand,
if I try, shy and hesitant to speak to you about yourself,
you will still be hearing about me.
For what can I say about you
except that you are my God,
the God of my beginning and end,
my joy and need,
God of my life?



“MY LORD GOD, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me.

*I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and
the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that
I am actually doing so.*

But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.

And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.

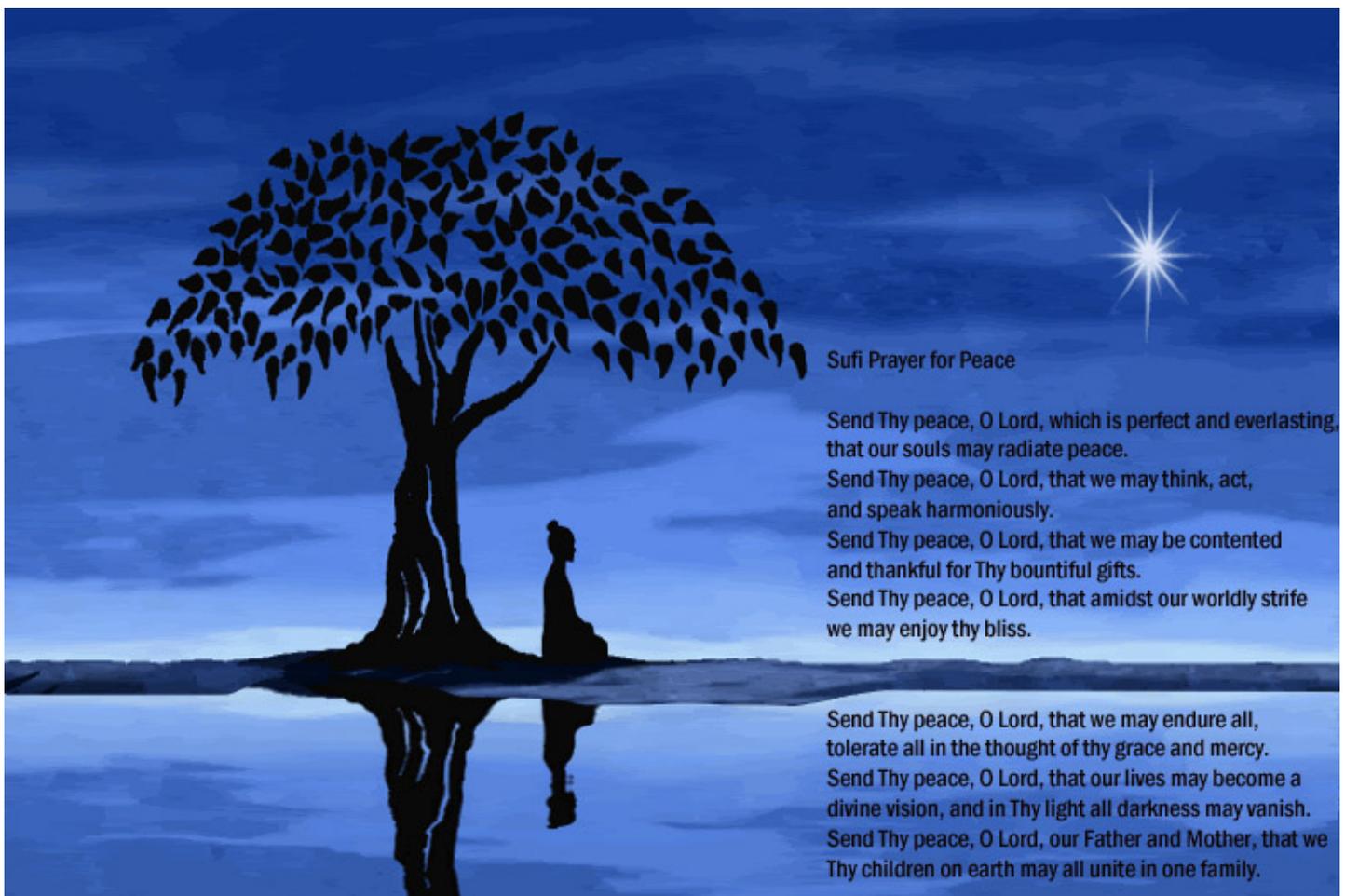
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

*And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it.*

*Therefore I will trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are
ever with me, and*

you will never leave me to face my perils alone.”

– [Thomas Merton](#), “Thoughts in Solitude”



Sufi Prayer for Peace

Send Thy peace, O Lord, which is perfect and everlasting,
that our souls may radiate peace.

Send Thy peace, O Lord, that we may think, act,
and speak harmoniously.

Send Thy peace, O Lord, that we may be contented
and thankful for Thy bountiful gifts.

Send Thy peace, O Lord, that amidst our worldly strife
we may enjoy thy bliss.

Send Thy peace, O Lord, that we may endure all,
tolerate all in the thought of thy grace and mercy.

Send Thy peace, O Lord, that our lives may become a
divine vision, and in Thy light all darkness may vanish.

Send Thy peace, O Lord, our Father and Mother, that we
Thy children on earth may all unite in one family.

Prayer for End of School Year

O God of all beginnings and endings,
We praise and thank you for the gift of this school year.
It has been a time filled with grace and blessings,
With challenges and opportunities, joys and sorrows.

The days have passed quickly, O Lord.
The weeks, the months, the seasons, the holidays and holy days,
The exams, vacations, breaks, and traveling
All have come forth from your hand.

While we trust that your purposes have always been at work each day,
Sometimes it has seemed difficult to understand and appreciate
Just what you have been up to in our school.

Give us the rest and refreshment we need this summer.
Let our efforts of this past year bear fruit.
Bring all of our plans to a joyful conclusion,
And bless us, according to your will,

With the fulfillment of our summer hopes and dreams.
Watch over us in the weeks of rest ahead,
And guide each day as you have done this past year.
Help us return to school with a new spirit and a new energy.

May we continue to grow
In age, wisdom, knowledge and grace
All the days of our lives. Amen.

PSALM 71

In You, O my Beloved, do I take refuge;
Let me never feel separated from You!
In your compassion come and refresh me;
listen to my cry,
answer my plea!
Be to me a rock, a tower of strength,
a strong arm to uphold me,
as I abandon myself into your hands.
Be a very Presence to me as fear grips me.
For You, O Friend, are my hope,
my strength, since I was but a child.
Upon you have I trusted from my birth,
You, whom I knew before my mother's womb.
I continually sing praises to you.
I have been a burden to many;
In you alone will I trust.
I am filled with gratitude and
sing your praises all the day.
Do not abandon me in my old age;
desert me not when my strength is
spent, or
when my mind plays tricks with me.
For fears rise up to confuse me,
doubts and forgetfulness
band together,
And say, "the Beloved no longer dwells with you;
there is no one to stand by you."
O Friend be not far from me;
O Beloved come and enfold me
in your Presence!
Help me to release my fears.
Hear my prayer that they may be transformed,
O You, who are my Counsellor.
As I surrender myself into your hands,
I praise you more and more.
I tell others of your goodness
of your compassion and grace all the day;
for your glory is beyond my understanding.
As I grow in inner peace and serenity,
I sing songs of praise,
to You my Friend!
You who have done wondrous things.
O Beloved, who is like You?
You who have seen me through many fears,
strengthen me again:
From the depth of despair
You renew my spirit,
You increase my trust, and You comfort me.
Blessed be the Beloved, who dwells in all hearts!

PRAYER OF GRADUATING SENIORS

Seniors stand and recite together:

Dear God, we gather today with our families and friends to share the joy of this occasion. Realizing that we have been richly blessed, we ask you to continually bless all those who have stood by us and provided for us.

Throughout our years here you have truly been with us, in the joy of learning and in the search for truth. You have given us the experience of warm and loving friendships, along with moments and memories we will forever cherish. For these we thank you.

We have been blessed with the privilege of education, a privilege most of the world does not know. We ask you to keep us mindful that this privilege carries with it the responsibility to use it wisely and share it with others.

As we prepare to leave Boston College today, we ask you for the faith to be constantly seeking the light of Truth, especially when the world around us may seem shrouded in darkness.

Loving God, give us the courage to stand up for what we believe is right, even when we may be in the minority. Help us to be sensitive to the needs of the world around us, and generous enough to share what we have been given.

We pray with your prophet that we may always act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with you, our God.

Daniel P. Leahy, '82

The present form of the world passes away, and there remains only the joy of having used this world to establish God's rule here. All pomp, all triumphs, all selfish capitalism, all the false successes of life will pass with the world's form. All of that passes away. What does not pass away is love. When one has turned money, property, work in one's calling into service of others, then the joy of sharing and feeling that all are one's family does not pass away. In the evening of life you will be judged on love.

- Archbishop Romero, Sermon 1/21/79

Christ Has No Body

Christ has no body but yours, No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which He looks compassion on this world.

- Saint Teresa of Avila

More and more the desire grows in me simply to walk around, greet people, enter their homes, sit on their doorsteps, play ball, throw water, and be known as someone who wants to live with them. It is a privilege to have the time and the freedom to practice this simple ministry of presence. Still, it is not as simple as it seems. My own desire to be useful, to do something significant, or to be part of some impressive project is so strong that soon my own time is taken up by meetings, conferences, study groups, and workshops that prevent me from walking the streets. It is difficult not to have plans . . . not to feel that you are working directly for social change. But I wonder more and more if the first thing shouldn't be to know people by name, to eat and drink with them, to listen to their stories and to tell them your own, and to let them know with words, handshakes, and hugs that you do not simply like them, but truly love them.

Henri Nouwen, Gracias



Have patience with everything that remains unsolved in your heart. Try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books written in a foreign language. Do not now look for the answers. They cannot now be given to you because you could not live them. It is a question of experiencing everything. At present you need to live the question. Perhaps you will gradually, without even noticing it, find yourself experiencing the answer, some distant day. –Rainer Maria Rilke

The Avowal

As swimmers dare
To lie face to the sky
And water bears them,
As hawks rest upon air
And air sustains them,
So would I learn to attain
Free-fall, and float
Into Creator Spirit's deep embrace,
Knowing no effort earns
That all-surrounding grace.

Denise Levertov

The Guest House

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.
Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.
~ Rumi ~

I Know the Way You Can Get

I know the way you can get when you have not had a drink of Love:
Your face hardens, your sweet muscles cramp.
Children become concerned about a strange look that appears in your eyes
Which even begins to worry your own mirror and nose.
Squirrels and birds sense your sadness and call an important conference in a tall tree.
They decide which secret code to chant to help your mind and soul.
Even angels fear that brand of madness that arrays itself against the world
And throws sharp stones and spears into the innocent
And into one's self.
O I know the way you can get
If you have not been drinking Love:
You might rip apart every sentence your friends and teachers say,
Looking for hidden clauses.
You might weigh every word on a scale like a dead fish.
You might pull out a ruler to measure
From every angle in your darkness
The beautiful dimensions of a heart you once trusted.
I know the way you can get
If you have not had a drink from Love's
Hands.
That is why all the Great Ones speak of the vital need to keep remembering God,
So you will come to know and see Him
As being so Playful
And Wanting,
Just Wanting to help.

That is why Hafiz says:

Bring your cup near me.

For all I care about

Is quenching your thirst for freedom!

All a Sane man can ever care about is giving Love!

From: "I Heard God Laughing: Renderings of Hafiz: by Daniel Ladinsky



A poem by Mark Nepo

Having loved enough and lost enough, I'm no longer searching, just opening,

no longer trying to make sense of pain but trying to be a soft and sturdy home
in which real things can land.

These are the irritations that rub into a pearl.

So we can talk for a while but then we must listen,
the way rocks listen to the sea.

And we can churn at all that goes wrong but then we must lay all distractions
down and water every living seed.

And yes, on nights like tonight I too feel alone. But seldom do I face it squarely enough
to see that it's a door into the endless breath
that has no breather,
into the surf that human
shells call God.

I hope you come to find that which gives life a deep meaning for you. Something worth living for – maybe even worth dying for, something that energizes you, enthuses you, enables you to keep moving ahead. I can't tell you what it might be – that's for you to find, to choose, to love. I can just encourage you to start looking and support you in the search.

—Ita Ford, MM

People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered. Forgive them anyway.
If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.
If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies.
Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you. Be honest and sincere anyway.
What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight. Create anyway.
If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous. Be happy anyway.
The good you do today will often be forgotten. Do good anyway.
Give the best you have, and it will never be enough. Give your best anyway.

-Mother Teresa

Wild Geese, by Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good.

You do not have to walk on your knees for a hundred miles the desert, repenting.

You only have to let the soft animal of your body love what it loves.

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.

Meanwhile the world goes on.

Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain are moving across the landscapes, over the prairies and the deep trees, the mountains and the rivers.

Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air, are heading home again.

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely, the world offers itself to your imagination, calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting—over and over announcing your place in the family of things.

Above all, trust in the slow work of God. We are quite naturally impatient in everything, to reach the end without delay. We should like to skip the intermediate stages. We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new. And yet it is the law of all progress that it is made by passing through some stages of instability – and that it may take a very long time.

And so I think it is with you. Your ideas mature gradually – let them grow. Let them shape themselves, without undue haste. Do not try to force them on, as though you could be today what time (that is to say, grace and circumstances acting on your own goodwill) will make of you tomorrow.

Only God could say what this new spirit gradually forming within you will be. Give our lord the benefit of believing that his hand is leading you, and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.

-Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ



Fall in Love

Attributed to Fr. Pedro Arrupe, SJ (1907–1991)

Nothing is more practical than
finding God, than
falling in Love
in a quite absolute, final way.
What you are in love with,
what seizes your imagination, will affect everything.
It will decide
what will get you out of bed in the morning,
what you do with your evenings,
how you spend your weekends,
what you read, whom you know,
what breaks your heart,
and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.
Fall in Love, stay in love,
and it will decide everything.

God is bread when you're hungry,
Water when you're thirsty,
A harbor from the storm.
God's a father to the fatherless,
A mother to the motherless.
God is my sister, my brother, my leader, my guide,
My teacher, my comforter,
My friend,
God's my all, in all, my everything.
Sister Thea Bowman

It Helps, Now And Then, To Step Back And Take A Long View

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.

The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,
it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction
of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.
Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying
that the kingdom always lies beyond us.
No statement says all that could be said.
No prayer fully expresses our faith.
No confession brings perfection.
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.
No program accomplishes the church's mission.
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.
We plant the seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted,
knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation
in realizing that. This enables us to do something,
and to do it very well. It may be incomplete,
but it is a beginning, a step along the way,
an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference
between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets of a future not our own.
Amen.

Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw from Archbishop Oscar Romero. The Archbishop served the people of El Salvador and was assassinated in 1980 while he was saying mass in San Salvador.



PASCHALTIDE

Pack nothing.

Bring only your determination to serve and your willingness to be free.

Don't wait for the bread to rise.

Take nourishment for the journey, but eat standing, be ready to move at a moment's notice.

Do not hesitate to leave your old ways behind—fear, silence, submission.

Only surrender to the need of the time—to love tenderly, act justly, and walk humbly with your God.

Do not take time to explain to the neighbors.

Tell only a few trusted friends and family members.

Then begin quickly, before you have time to sink back into old slavery.

Set out in the dark.

I will send fire to warm and encourage you.

I will be with you in the fire and I will be with you in the cloud.

You will learn to eat new food and find refuge in new places.

I will give you dreams in the desert to guide you safely home to that place you have not yet seen.

The stories you tell one another around the fires in the dark will make you strong and wise.

Outsiders will attack you, and some will follow you, and at times you will get weary and turn on each other with fear and fatigue and blind forgetfulness.

You have been preparing for this for hundreds of years.

I am sending you into the wilderness to make a new way and to learn my ways more deeply.

Some of you will be so changed by weathers and wanderings that even your closest friends will have to learn your features as though for the first time.

Some of you will not change at all.

Some will be abandoned by your dearest loves and misunderstood by those who have known you since birth and feel abandoned by you.

Some will find new friendships in unlikely faces, and old friends as faithful and true as the pillar of God's flame.

Sing songs as you go, and hold close together. You may at times grow confused and lose your way.

Continue to call each other by the names I have given you, to help remember who you are.

Touch each other and keep telling the stories.

Make maps as you go, remembering the way back from before you were born.

So you will be only the first of many waves of deliverance on these desert seas.

It is the first of many beginnings..

Remain true to this mystery.

Pass on the whole story. Do not go back.

I am with you now and I am waiting for you.

- Alla Renee Bozarth, in "Passover Remembered"



Gracias a La Vida

Violeta Parra

Gracias a la vida, que me ha dado tanto.
Me dió dos luceros, que cuando los abro
Perfecto distingo lo negro del blanco
Y en el alto cielo su fondo estrellado,
Y en las multitudes
el hombre que yo amo.



Thank you to Life
(Play youtube video of song)
Translation by William Morin

Thank you to life, which has given me so much.
It gave me two beams of light, that when opened,
Can perfectly distinguish black from white
And in the sky above, her starry backdrop,
And from within the multitude
The one that I love.

Gracias a la vida, que me ha dado tanto.
Me ha dado el oído que en todo su ancho
Graba noche y día grillos y canarios
Martillos, turbinas, ladrillos, chubascos
Y la voz tan tierna de mi bien amado.

Thank you to life, which has given me so much.
It gave me an ear that, in all of its width
Records— night and day—crickets and canaries,
Hammers and turbines and bricks and storms,
And the tender voice of my beloved.

Gracias a la vida, que me ha dado tanto.
Me ha dado el sonido y el abecedario.
Con él las palabras que pienso y declaro,
“Madre,” “amigo,” “hermano,” y luz alumbrando
La ruta del alma del que estoy amando.

Thank you to life, which has given me so much.
It gave me sound and the alphabet.
With them the words that I think and declare:
“Mother,” “Friend,” “Brother” and the light shining.
The route of the soul from which comes love.

Gracias a la vida, que me ha dado tanto.
Me ha dado la marcha de mis pies cansados.
Con ellos anduve ciudades y charcos,
Valles y desiertos, montañas y llanos,
Y la casa tuya, tu calle y tu patio.

Thank you to life, which has given me so much.
It gave me the ability to walk with my tired feet.
With them I have traversed cities and puddles
Valleys and deserts, mountains and plains.
And your house, your street and your patio.

Gracias a la vida, que me ha dado tanto.
Me dió el corazón, que agita su marco.
Cuando miro el fruto del cerebro humano,
Cuando miro al bueno tan lejos del malo.
Cuando miro el fondo de tus ojos claros.

Thank you to life, which has given me so much.
It gave me a heart, that causes my frame to shudder,
When I see the fruit of the human brain,
When I see good so far from bad,
When I see within the clarity of your eyes...

Gracias a la vida, que me ha dado tanto.
Me ha dado la risa, me ha dado el llanto.
Así yo distingo dicha de quebranto,
Los dos materiales que forman mi canto,
Y el canto de ustedes que es el mismo canto.
Y el canto de todos que es mi propio canto

Thank you to life, which has given me so much.
It gave me laughter and it gave me longing.
With them I distinguish happiness and pain—
The two materials from which my songs are formed,
And your song, as well, which is the same song.
And everyone’s song, which is my very song.

THE INVITATION

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living.

I want to know what you ache for, and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.

It doesn't interest me how old you are.

I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool for love, for your dreams, for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your moon.

I want to know if you have touched the center of your own sorrow,

if you have been opened by life's betrayals or have become shriveled and closed from fear of further pain!

I want to know if you can sit with pain, mine or your own, without moving to hide it or fade it, or fix it.

I want to know if you can be with joy, mine or your own,

if you can dance with wildness and let the ecstasy fill you to the tips of your fingers and toes

without cautioning us to be careful, to be realistic, to remember the limitations of being human.

It doesn't interest me if the story you are telling me is true.

I want to know if you can disappoint another to be true to yourself;

if you can bear the accusation of betrayal and not betray your own soul;

If you can be faithless and therefore trustworthy.

I want to know if you can see beauty even when it's not pretty, every day,

and if you can source your own life from its presence.

I want to know if you can live with failure, yours and mine,

and still stand on the edge of the lake and shout to the silver of the full moon, "Yes!"

It doesn't interest me to know where you live or how much money you have.

I want to know if you can get up, after a night of grief and despair,

wearily and bruised to the bone, and do what needs to be done to feed the children.

It doesn't interest me who you know or how you came to be here.

I want to know if you will stand in the center of the fire with me and not shrink back.

It doesn't interest me where or what or with whom you have studied.

I want to know what sustains you, from the inside, when all else falls away.

I want to know if you can be alone with yourself and if you truly like the company you keep in the empty moments.

SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS

There are some things that can be learned only by sin. The history of sainthood is a history of sin: Teresa of Avila, Ignatius of Loyola, Charles de Foucauld all struggled their way to God as we do. Only when, like them, we discover the depths of our own neediness can we begin to discover our strengths and God's mercy.

Paperwork, cleaning the home, cooking the meals, dealing with innumerable visitors who come all through the day, answering the phone, keeping patience and acting intelligently, which is to find some meaning in all those encounters – these things too are the works of peace, and often seem like a very little way.

- Dorothy Day

I am there

James Dillet Freeman

You cannot see Me, yet I am the light you see by.
You cannot hear Me, yet I speak through your voice.
You cannot feel Me, yet I am the power at work in your hands.

I am at work, though you do not understand My ways.
I am at work, though you do not understand My works.
I am not strange visions. I am not mysteries.

Only in absolute stillness, beyond self, can you know Me as I AM, and then but as a feeling and a faith.

Yet I am here. Yet I hear. Yet I answer.
When you need ME, I am there.
Even if you deny Me, I am there.
Even when you feel most alone, I am there.
Even in your fears, I am there.
Even in your pain, I am there.

I am there when you pray and when you do not pray.
I am in you, and you are in Me.
Only in your mind can you feel separate from Me, for
only in your mind are the mists of "yours" and "mine".
Yet only with your mind can you know Me and experience Me.

Empty your heart of empty fears.
When you get yourself out of the way, I am there.
You can of yourself do nothing, but I can do all.
And I AM in all.
Though you may not see the good, good is there, for
I am there. I am there because I have to be, because I AM.

Only in Me does the world have meaning; only out of Me does the world take form; only because of ME does the world go forward.
I am the law on which the movement of the stars and the growth of living cells are founded.

I am the love that is the law's fulfilling. I am assurance.
I am peace. I am oneness. I am the law that you can live by.
I am the love that you can cling to. I am your assurance.
I am your peace. I am ONE with you. I am.

Though you fail to find ME, I do not fail you.
Though your faith in Me is unsure, My faith in you never wavers, because I know you, because I love you.

In the Evening We Shall Be Examined on Love

St. John of the Cross

And it won't be multiple choice,
Though some of us would prefer it that way.
Neither will it be essay, which tempts us to run on
When we should be sticking to the point, if not together.
In the evening, there shall be implications
Our fear will change to complications. "No cheating,"
We'll be told, and we'll try to figure the cost of being true
To ourselves. In the evening, when the sky has turned
That certain blue, the blue of exam books, books of no more
Daily evasion, we shall climb the hill as the light empties
And park our tired bodies on a bench above the city
And try to fill in the blanks. And we won't be tested
Like defendants on trial, cross-examined
Till one of us breaks down, guilty as charged. No,
In the evening, after the day has refused to testify,
We shall be examined on love like students
Who don't even recall signing up for the course
And now must take their orals, forced to speak for once
From the heart and not off the top of their heads.
And when the evening is over and it's late
The student body asleep, even the great teachers
Retired for the night, we shall stay up
And run back over the questions, each in our own way:
What's true and what's false, what unknown quantity
Will balance the equation, what it would mean years from now
To look back and know
We did not fail.
~Thomas Centolella

A Prayer for Discerning One's Vocation

O most loving God, we praise You, Glorify You for this desire and thirst to be closer to You to serve You and others. In discerning what job I might take or who I might journey with, help me find a faith community wherever I go, a life's work that connects the world's need with where I can best serve You and live as Your Beloved, always faithful to Your Mission in the world. AMEN

Keeping Watch

In the morning
When I began to wake
It happened again-

That feeling
That you, Beloved,
Had stood over me all night
Keeping watch,

That feeling
That as soon as I began to stir

You put your lips on my forehead
And lit a Holy Lamp
Inside my Heart.

-Hafiz

Into the Eye of God By Macrina Wiederkehr

For your prayer your journey into God,
may you be given a small storm
a little hurricane named after you,
persistent enough to get your attention
violent enough to awaken you to new depths
strong enough to shake you at the roots
majestic enough to remind you of your origin:
made of earth yet steeped in eternity
frail human dust yet soaked in infinity.

You begin your storm under the Eye of God
A watchful, caring eye gazes in your direction
as you wrestle with the life force within

In the midst of these holy winds
In the midst of this divine wrestling
your storm journey like all hurricanes
leads you into the Eye of God

where all is calm and quiet.
A stillness beyond imaging!
Into the Eye of God
after the storm.
Into the silent, beautiful darkness.
Into the Eye of God.

I Will Not Die an Unlived Life - Dawna Markova

I will not die an unlived life
I will not live in fear
Of falling or catching fire.

I choose to inhabit my days,
To allow my living to open me,
To make me less afraid,
More accessible,
To loosen my heart
Until it becomes a wing,
A torch, a promise.

I choose to risk my significance;
To live so that which came to me as seed
Goes to the next as blossom
And that which came to me as blossom,
Goes on as fruit.

What Happens?

What happens when your soul
begins to awaken
your eyes
and your heart
and the cells of your body
to the great Journey of Love?

First there is wonderful laughter
and probably precious tears

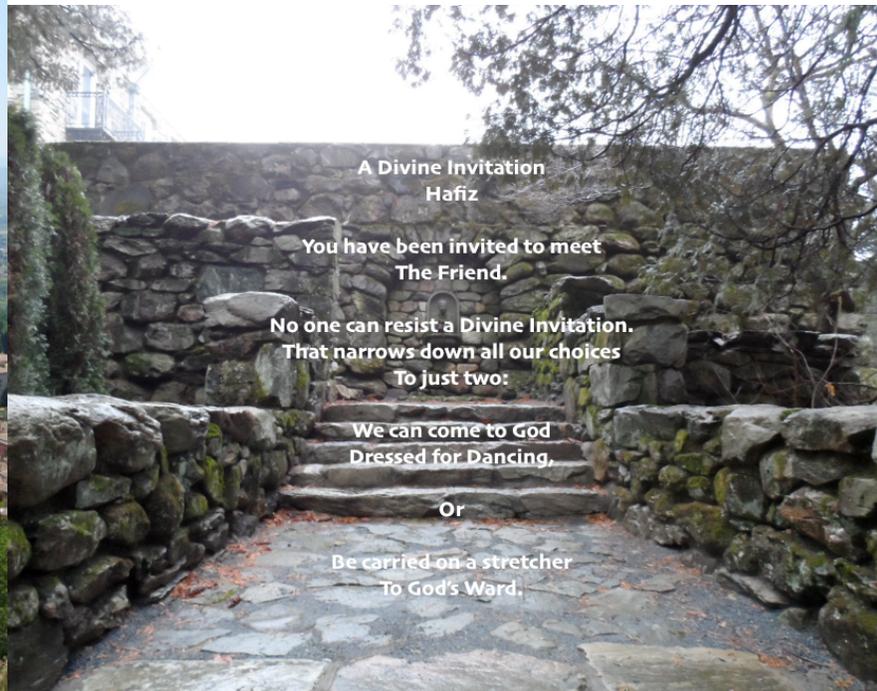
and a hundred sweet promises
and those heroic vows
no one can ever keep.

But still God is delighted and amused
you once tried to be a saint.

What happens when your soul
begins to awake in this world

To our deep need to love
and serve the Friend?

O the Beloved
Will send you
One of His wonderful, wild companions ~
like Hafiz.



A Divine Invitation Hafiz

You have been invited to meet
The Friend.

No one can resist a Divine Invitation.
That narrows down all our choices
To just two:

We can come to God
Dressed for Dancing,

Or

Be carried on a stretcher
To God's Ward.

As Kingfishers Catch Fire BY GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

As kingfishers catch fire,
dragonflies draw flame;
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
Stones ring;
like each tucked string tells,
each hung bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves — goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,
Crying What I dó is me: for that I came.

I say móre: the just man justices;
Keeps grace: that keeps all his goings graces;
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is —
Christ — for Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
To the Father through the features of men's faces.





- **The Summer Day**

- *Mary Oliver*

- **Who made the world?**

Who made the swan, and the black bear?

Who made the grasshopper?

This grasshopper, I mean-

the one who has flung herself out of the grass,

the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,

who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down-

who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.

Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.

Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.

I don't know exactly what a prayer is.

I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down

into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,

how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,

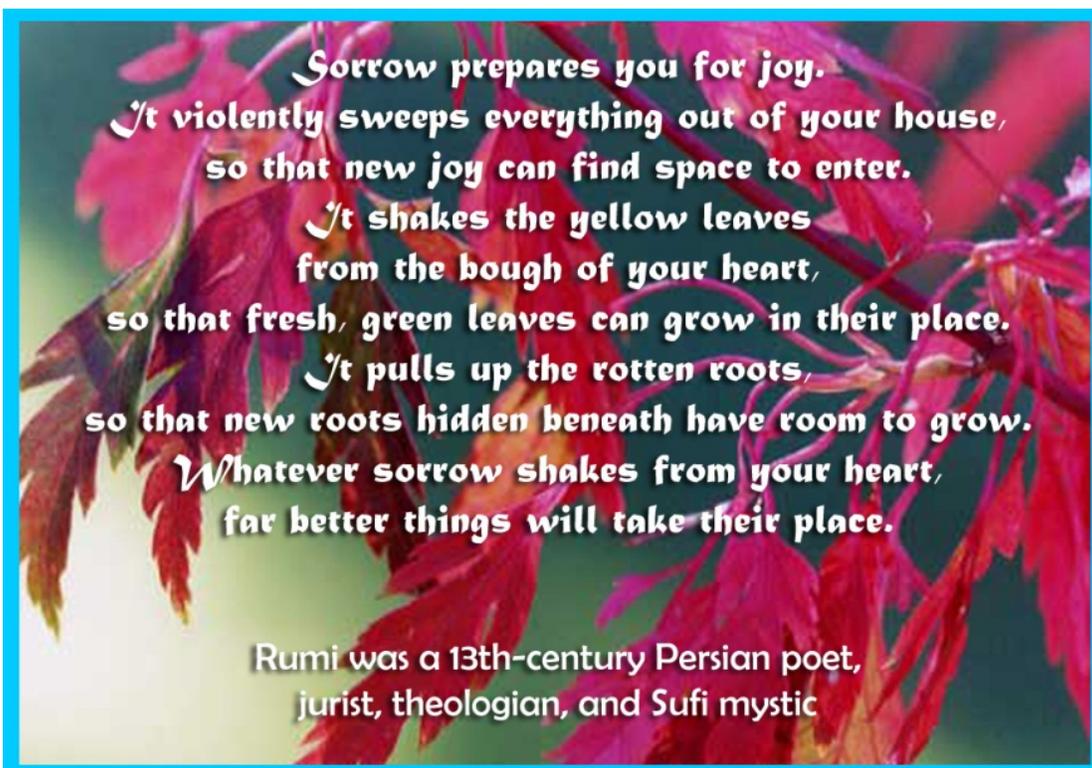
which is what I have been doing all day.

Tell me, what else should I have done?

Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?

Tell me, what is it you plan to do

with your one wild and precious life?



"We forget so quickly that we are God's beloved children and allow the many curses of our world to darken our hearts. Therefore we have to be reminded of our belovedness and remind others of theirs."

-Henri Nouwen

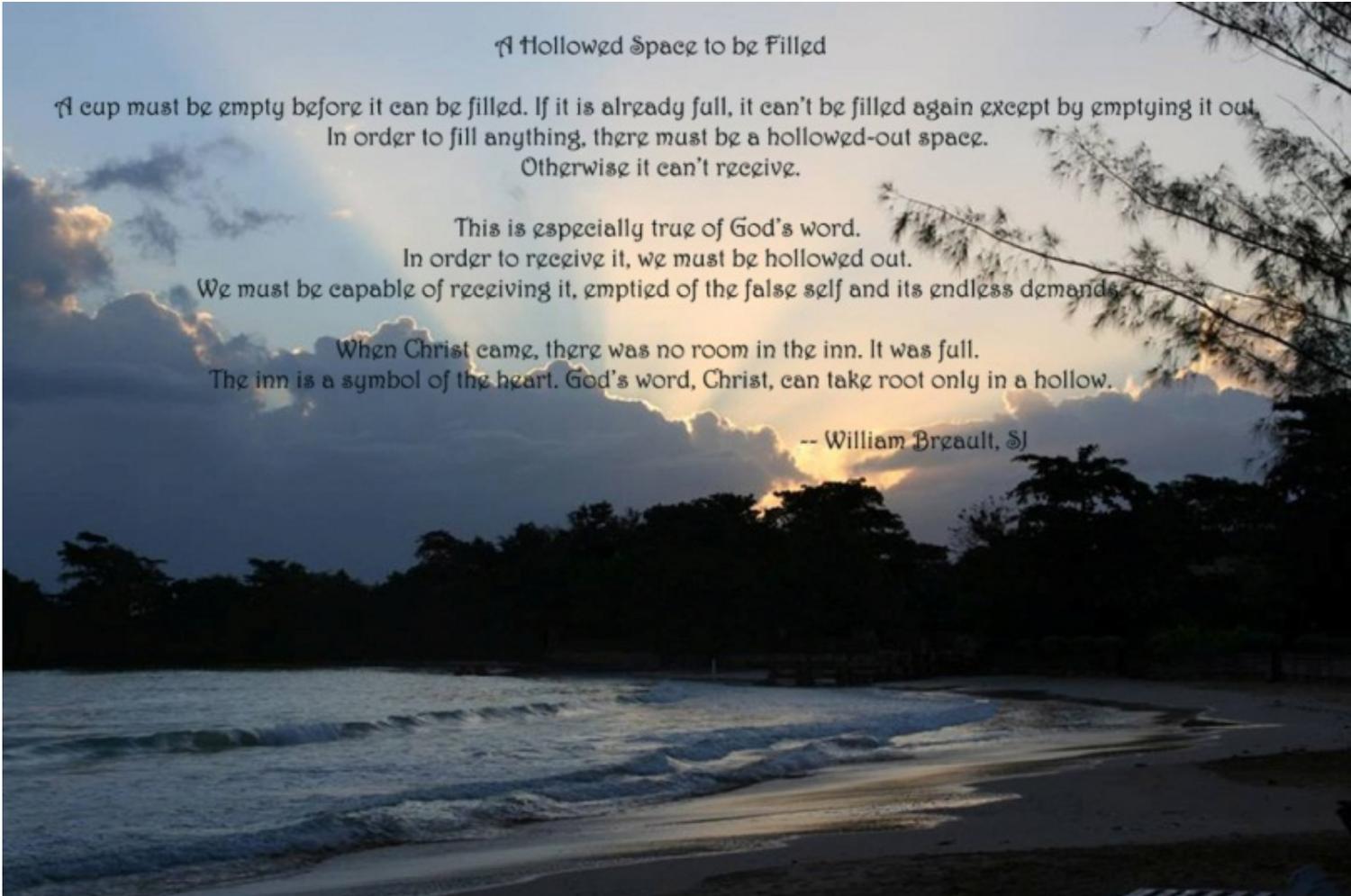
A Hollowed Space to be Filled

A cup must be empty before it can be filled. If it is already full, it can't be filled again except by emptying it out.
In order to fill anything, there must be a hollowed-out space.
Otherwise it can't receive.

This is especially true of God's word.
In order to receive it, we must be hollowed out.
We must be capable of receiving it, emptied of the false self and its endless demands.

When Christ came, there was no room in the inn. It was full.
The inn is a symbol of the heart. God's word, Christ, can take root only in a hollow.

-- William Bragault, SJ



Teilhard De Chardin's Mass on the World

Since once again, Lord...I have neither bread, nor wine, nor altar, I will raise myself beyond these symbols, up to the pure majesty of the real itself; I, your priest, will make the whole world my altar and on it will offer you all the labors and sufferings of the world.

- Over there, on the horizon, the sun has just touched with light the outermost fringe of the eastern sky. Once again, beneath this moving sheet of fire, the living surface of the earth wakes and, once again, begins its fearful travail. I will place on my paten, O God, the harvest to be won by this renewal of labor. Into my chalice I shall pour all the sap which is to be pressed out this day from the earth's fruits.
- My chalice and my paten are the depths of a soul laid widely open to all the forces which in a moment will rise up from every corner of the earth and converge upon the Spirit. Grant me the remembrance and the mystic presence of all those whom the light is now awakening to a new day.

One by one, Lord, I see and I love all those whom you have given me to sustain and charm my life. One by one, I also number those who make up that other beloved family which has gradually surrounded me, its unity fashioned out of the most disparate elements, with affinities of the heart, of scientific research, and of thought. And one by one—more vaguely, it is true, yet all-inclusively—I call before me the whole vast anonymous army of living humanity; those who surround me and support me though I do not know them; those who come and those who go; above all, those who in office, laboratory, and factory, through their vision of truth or despite their error, truly believe in the progress of earthly reality and who today will again take up their impassioned pursuit of the light.

- This restless multitude, confused or orderly, the immensity of which terrifies us; this ocean of humanity whose slow, monotonous wave-flows trouble the hearts of even those whose faith is most firm; it is to his deep that I thus desire all the fibers of my being should respond. All the things in the world to which this day will bring increase; all those that will diminish; all those, too, that will die: all of them, Lord, I try to gather into my arms so as to hold them out to you in offering. This is the material of my sacrifice, the only material you desire.

Once upon a time, men took into your temple the first fruits of their harvest, the flower of their flocks. But the offering you really want, the offering you mysteriously need each day to appease your hunger, to slake your thirst, is nothing less than the growth of the world borne ever onward in the stream of universal becoming.

- Receive, O Lord, this all-embracing host which your whole creation, moved by your magnetism, offers you at this dawn of a new day.

This bread, our toil, is of itself, I know, but an immense fragmentation; this wine, our pain, is no more, I know, than a draught that dissolves. Yet in the very depths of this formless mass you have implanted—and this I am sure of, for I sense it—a desire, irresistible, hallowing, which makes us cry out, believer and unbeliever alike, "Lord, make us one."

"Lord, make us one....."

Prayer Practices

Guides for Group Prayer

The following pages contain guides for introducing new forms of prayer in a group setting. At its core, prayer is simply cultivating our awareness that we are in God's presence. It often begins with communicating to God, through words or actions, our intentions and desires. There are many different ways to do this, but the objective is always the same: to reach out to God, and then to sit back and know that God meets us in that attempt. As an old man once explained his prayer to St. John Vianney, "I look at God, and [God] looks at me."

There is no "right" or "wrong" to these practices. They are a place to begin your own prayer journey. If something works for you or your group, try it again! If it does not, move on until you find something that feels right.

Good luck! God is waiting.

Ariell Watson

CLC Graduate Assistant, M.Div. 2018

Prayer Practices

- Art
- Chants and Taize Prayer
- Breath Prayer
- Votive Candles and Incense
- Colloquy
- Contemplation of Place
- Icons
- Labyrinth
- *Lectio Divina*
- Litany of Saints
- Liturgy of the Hours
- Rosary & Walking Rosary
- Rote Prayer
- Silence
- Spiritual Journaling

Art

Intro to this practice:

Praying through artistic creation is a way to incorporate your mind and your senses in prayer. The goal of praying with art, like any other form of prayer, is process, not product, so do not worry about your level of artistic ability or training.

Suggested media to use:

Collage, watercolors, pastels, or any other dynamic art materials

Script for leading in group:

The goal of praying with art, like any other form of prayer, is process, not product, so do not focus on what your art looks like at the end. It will probably be abstract, so it does not need to “look like” anything at all.

Start by simply picking colors or materials that appeal to you. Apply them in a way that feels natural. Follow your instincts. Play with colors, different lines and strokes, or even with cutting or ripping. We'll spend [15] minutes in this process before we take some time to sit back and reflect.

[If possible, play music softly in the background. Give everyone a few minutes' warning before you turn down the music and call them back together.]

Now, take a moment to sit back and silently look at your work. What do you see? What can you observe about your current spiritual state from the colors or shapes to which you were drawn? What does your image proclaim? If any words or phrases come to mind, write these on your work or in your journal.

Chants and Taize Prayer

Intro to this practice:

Chanting, or repeatedly singing a short phrase, is a prayerful practice in many world religions. It has been used by Christians for millennia as a way to incorporate body and mind in prayer. In the early twentieth century, a group of monks in Taize, France made simple, chanted prayer a major practice of their community. Since then, their particular style of prayer and their musical settings have become popular around the world.

Chants involve repetition, which allows one to meditate on the meaning of the words, praying that one line or phrase very deeply. The repetition eventually makes it possible to move into deeper, wordless communion with God in the soul, even while the mind and body continue to go through the motions of chanting.

Suggested chants to use:

You can find dozens of Taize chants on YouTube or on iTunes. There are also many online resources with other forms of Christian and non-Christian chants.

Script for leading in group:

We're going to chant together, repeatedly singing the line _____ for several minutes. Make yourself comfortable and close your eyes if you would like to do so. Don't worry about singing beautifully or staying in tune--you can chant as loudly or as softly as you feel comfortable. The key is simply to let yourself get caught up in the repetition. I'll play the music and we'll begin....

Breath Prayer

Intro to this practice:

This simple style of prayer dates back to at least the 6th Century, and is most commonly used among Eastern and Orthodox Christians. It's easy to use, personalize, and weave into your daily life-on-the-go. People love Breath Prayer for its simplicity and personalness.

Suggested prayers to use:

The traditional prayer is the "Jesus Prayer": "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

In interfaith settings or with students who don't identify with this language, encourage participants to write their own Breath Prayer, simply composed of a name of the divine and a request. For example: "Divine One, heal me." or "Mother, be near."

Script for leading in group:

[First, introduce this practice using the Jesus Prayer.]

Breath Prayer is a very old and simple way of praying wherever you are. The only "prop" you need is your breath! It is very relaxing and rhythmic, matching your words to the rhythm of your inhalation and exhalation. The goal is to relax your body and mind, focusing completely on the words of your prayer, your intention behind them, and ultimately on being in the presence of God. Your mind will probably wander, and that's okay--just remain attentive, and when you notice yourself getting distracted, bring your focus back to your words. It will get easier and easier to remain focused, and eventually for the words to become a backdrop for you as you feel God's presence.

The most traditional Breath Prayer is called the "Jesus Prayer": "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." Christians for many hundred years have found that this prayer communicates much about their faith in a few words.

[If you plan to use the Jesus Prayer, continue here. If not, skip to the next section to help participants write their own prayers]

Try praying this all in one breath, as you exhale. [Try it together.]

Next we will shorten it a little, to "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me." Then it will become "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy." We'll keep shortening it, then, to "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God," then "Lord Jesus Christ," then "Jesus."

To review that it, goes:

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me."

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy."

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God."

"Lord Jesus Christ."

"Jesus."

Try to match each phrase to your exhale. As the phrase gets shorter, you will find yourself putting all of your breath into fewer words and dwelling on them more deeply. Let's try it!

[Please note that you can either do this quietly, with each person praying under their breath, or together in unison. Pray this way, over and over, for at least 3 minutes. Your group may want to build the prayer in the opposite direction, starting with “Jesus” and ending with “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.”]

Over time, the Jesus Prayer has shortened to its essence: “Jesus, mercy.” This is usually prayed silently, either in your mind or by moving your lips/whispering, with “Jesus” matching inhalation and “mercy” matching exhalation. You can repeat it over and over, using these two words to express all of your hopes, anxieties, and intentions in the simple rhythm of your breath.

To make this prayer your own, you may want to choose words that fit your view of and relationship with the divine. Consider:

- What is the name that you are most comfortable to use for God? Who is the divine, for you?
- What do you need? What do you want from God?

Your answers to these questions can compose your own Breath Prayer, such as “Mother, hold me,” “Holy One, open my eyes,” or “God, help.” You may try several combinations of words as you find something that “fits” your deepest longing in this moment.

To pray your prayer, “say” the name of the divine as you inhale and your request as your exhale.

We will repeat this, over and over, on pace with your breathing, for several minutes. I will tell you when [4] minutes have passed. Please make yourself comfortable and feel free to close your eyes as we begin.

Votive Candles and Incense

Intro to this practice:

Since ancient times, many religions have used incense and fire in worship, with the idea that the aroma rises through the air to heaven, carrying the prayers of the faithful.

Today, many people still find the lighting of candles and the burning of incense to be a way to engage their senses and bodies in prayer. Votive candles are lit, often in front of a statue or icon, to symbolize a prayer intention. As long as that candle continues to burn, the prayer continues, even after the individual has left.

Script for leading in group:

[Please be attentive to fire codes when engaging in this practice. You may need to be in an outdoor or designated chapel space to use candles and incense on campus, especially if candles will be left unattended.]

We will light candles/burn incense tonight as a way of praying for certain intentions. Before you light each candle/add incense, say aloud or silently reflect upon your prayer intention. Then, light the candle/add incense.

[Lead group members in taking turns lighting candles or burning incense.]

These candles/this incense will continue to burn, even as we move on with our meeting/evening. The light and aroma reminds us that our prayers continue to rise to God, even as our minds are focused on other things.

Colloquy

Intro to this practice:

A colloquy is an intimate conversation between you and God, between you and Jesus, or between you and Mary or one of the saints. In the colloquy, we speak and listen as the Spirit moves us: expressing ourselves, for example, as a friend speaks to a friend, or as a person speaks to one whom he or she has offended, or as a child speaks to a parent or mentor, or as a lover speaks to his or her beloved. Whatever the context, be “real,” □ speaking from the heart. As in any meaningful conversation, make sure to leave times of silence for listening.

Suggested scenes to use:

- Ignatius suggests imagining ourselves before the Cross and considering three questions: What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I do for Christ?
- You may also imagine yourself in a painful situation/place in your life. Imagine yourself “pressing pause” on that scene, and walking through it with Jesus, describing what is happening and how you feel about it. Ask Jesus where He was in that moment, or what He would have you do.
- Imagine yourself in your “happy place”--a scene where you feel comfortable and safe. Tell Jesus how you feel there. Thank Him for the grace of that place.

Script for leading in group:

“Colloquy” is a fancy word for an imagined conversation that we have in prayer. We’ll first pray, asking God to guide us our thoughts and imaginations, and then we’ll place ourselves in a scene. We’ll picture ourselves in that scene with Jesus, and have a conversation. You don’t have to say anything in particular--just speak naturally, like you would to a close friend or mentor. If you find your mind wandering, it may help to write down what you want to say to Jesus.

God, please guide us as we pray. We don’t want to put words in your mouth--we want to listen for Truth. May we have the grace of honesty. Amen.

Now, imagine yourself ... *(Here, narrate one of the scenes suggested above. Once you have invited everyone to enter that scene, allow silence for them to pray silently.)*

Contemplation of Place

Intro to this practice:

Ignatius was convinced that God can speak to us as surely through our imagination as through our thoughts and memories. In the Ignatian tradition, praying with the imagination is called contemplation, a very active way of praying that engages the mind and heart and stirs up thoughts and emotions.

Ignatian contemplation is suited especially for the Gospels. Let the events of Jesus' life be present to you right now. Visualize the event as if you were making a movie. Pay attention to the details: sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and feelings of the event. Lose yourself in the story; don't worry if your imagination is running too wild. At some point, place yourself in the scene.

Contemplating a Gospel scene is not simply remembering it or going back in time. Through the act of contemplation, the Holy Spirit makes present a mystery of Jesus' life in a way that is meaningful for you now. Use your imagination to dig deeper into the story so that God may communicate with you in a personal, evocative way. We might initially worry about going beyond the text of the Gospel. If you have offered your time of prayer to God, then begin by trusting that God is communicating with you.

If you wonder if your imagination is going "too far," then do some discernment with how you are praying. Where did your imagining lead you: Closer to God or farther away? Is your imagining bringing you consolation or desolation? Some people find imaginative prayer difficult. They may not be able to picture the scene easily, yet they may have some intuition or gut reaction to the story. Or they may hear or feel the story more than visualize it. In a spirit of generosity, pray as you are able; don't try to force it. Rest assured that God will speak to you, whether through your memory, understanding, intellect, emotions, or imagination.

Suggested passages to use:

Christian scriptures - Any story from the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John)

Hebrew scriptures (good for Christian, Jewish, and missed groups) – Stories about Moses, found in Exodus

Script for leading in a group:

We're going to read a passage and imaginatively enter the scene as you hear it unfold. Imagine yourself as one of the people in this scene. Notice how you feel and act throughout as you hear the story.

First, I invite you to make yourself comfortable, close your eyes, and focus on your breathing. Let's take a few deep breaths together....

Imagine that it's a hot, dusty day. *[Narrate the scene in which the passage takes place, including sensory details. For example, if this is a parable of Jesus, are they sitting around in a market in a small town? Is it crowded? What time of day is it? Who is around? Some of these details may be mentioned in the scripture, while others you may be able to imaginatively interpret to set the scene.]*

[Once you have set the scene, read the entire passage, slowly and expressively.]

When you are ready, open your eyes.

Who did you imagine yourself to be in this scene? What stuck out to you?

[Facilitate a short discussion, giving group members a chance to share their experience and any fresh insights they gained.]

Icons

Intro to this practice:

Icons are traditionally images of Jesus or of the saints that have been “written” carefully and prayerfully to serve as a portal for a spiritual experience. In Eastern Christianity, they have a very important role because the process of making them is considered sacred, as well as the process of praying with them. These beautiful images are more than simply works of art; they are invitations to see God in prayer with our eyes open, through the work of human hands.

Christian tradition emphasizes praying *with* or *in the presence of* icons, rather than *to* them. They are like bridges between the viewer and the subject of the icon, whether it be Christ, a saint, or a moment in history.

Traditional icons are a wonderful place to start with this practice. You may also use the same process to pray with other religious art or images from nature--anything that engages your visual sense in the movement of prayer.

Suggested icons to use:

A painting of the Prodigal Son
An image of the Crucifixion or of the Virgin & Child
Stained glass or sculptures in a local church or chapel
Paintings by Thomas Kincade
An image in nature, such as a tree, flower, or landscape

Script for leading a group:

“Reading” an icon is a prayerful practice of gazing at the image with an open mind, allowing yourself to enter it and engage with it fully. You may find yourself noticing colors, shapes, facial expressions, emotions, or something else. Be attentive to all of these.

Practice quieting your mind and focusing your gaze on this image. Try not to fidget or shift your gaze away--simply sit in the presence of the icon for the duration of this period of silence. You may be surprised what it makes you feel, think, or notice!

I will invite us to shift our attention away from these icons and back to the group in [four] minutes.

Labyrinth

Intro to this practice:

Labyrinths have a couple of wonderful qualities that lend themselves well to prayer: they involve physical activity (which is engaging for many people), they are not specific to one religious tradition, and they can lead to deep internal prayer.

If you or a group member finds it difficult to focus mentally during a labyrinth, consider pairing it with a Breath Prayer or a Walking Rosary. The point of all of these is to occupy the surface level of your mind and body so that your deeper consciousness can focus on God.

Script for leading in group:

A Labyrinth looks like a maze, but it's actually very different. Instead of having lots of dead-ends and wrong turns, the labyrinth only has one path. It weaves around, but it always leads to the center. There is only one way in, and only one way out.

Imagine the labyrinth as an image for your soul, or for your life. Your spiritual path weaves around and may not seem very straight-forward, but it ultimately leads to the center of your being. You don't have to guess which way to go, or to worry about making a wrong turn. Your only task in the labyrinth is to keep moving forward, no matter how slowly, and trust that you are on the right path.

Practically, the labyrinth is a great way to pray because, with your body moving, you can quiet your mind and your heart.

You may want to begin by saying a simple prayer before you enter the labyrinth. Quiet your heart and mind. Then, state your intention for this practice. For example "Give me peace," "Guide me," or "God, come near."

Walk the path of the labyrinth slowly and meditatively. Let your footsteps fall in a comfortable rhythm that fits your stride. This isn't a competition, so take your time and focus! You may want to lower your gaze and concentrate on the path, right in front of your feet.

When you reach the middle of the labyrinth, stop for a moment to again acknowledge that you are in a holy space. Then, just as slowly and meditatively, retrace your steps back out toward the periphery of the labyrinth. Try to avoid bumping into each other or making prolonged eye contact. Enjoy!

Lectio Divina

Intro to this practice:

This is a time-honored prayer practice started by Benedictine monks, which you can use either privately or with a group to reflect more deeply on any scriptural text. The script below is geared toward a group engaging in Lectio Divina aloud; you could also engage silently or by journaling.

Suggested passages to use:

Christian Scriptures - anything!

Hebrew Scriptures (good for Christian, Jewish, and mixed groups) - Psalms (ex: Ps. 139)

Non-religious texts - "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Script for leading in group:

[Read the text below as an introduction, so everyone knows what to expect before beginning]

Lectio Divina literally means "Holy Reading." It is a form of prayer practiced by Benedictine monks for hundreds of years.

Each of the four steps is about absorbing the text more deeply into your being. Before each step, I will ask you to listen as I read the text aloud.

The first step is Lectio/reading

As I read the text this time, listen for a word or passage that touches you. When you find that word or phrase, gently recite and ponder it in silence. After a moment of silence each person will simply speak aloud the word or phrase that has touched his or her heart. We will go around the circle sharing these.

The second step is Meditatio/meditation

When I read the text the second time, try to see or hear a call for yourself in the text. Imagine this was written directly to you. Ponder the words that touched you and ask where the word or phrase fits with your life today. How is the divine reaching out to **you** in this text? Then, after silence, each member of the group will share what he or she has "heard" or "seen."

The third step is Oratio/prayer

This time, as you listen, ask yourself what the text is calling you to **do** or to **become** today. After the silence, each person will share for the last time; I invite you to speak this in the form of a prayer or intention for yourself. For example, "May I be a channel of peace," or "May I love generously."

Finally, we will enter Contemplatio/contemplation

This final step is the goal of Lectio Divina: a wordless encounter with the divine, which is similar to Savasana in Yoga. Sit in sacred space and allow your spirit to commune with the transcendent. You don't have to think or do anything specific during this time; try to simply quiet your mind and heart in the presence of God.

Now, I invite you to close your eyes, get comfortable, and center yourselves, remembering that you are, as always, in God's presence.

[Allow a moment of silence]

Let's start with **Lectio**-- while I read, listen for a word or phrase that sticks out to you.

[Read text slowly, then allow a moment of silence.]

Now let's share our word/phrase. Mine was _____. *[Motion to the next person. Once all have shared...]*

Next is **Meditatio** -- while I read, imagine this is a message directly to you. Listen to "hear" or look to "see" something that speaks to you today.

[Read text slowly, then allow a moment of silence.]

I heard _____. *[Motion to the next person. Once all have shared...]*

Next is **Oratio** -- while I read, ask what you are called to **do** or **be** today. We'll share this in the form of an intention.

[Read text slowly, then allow a moment of silence.]

May I _____. *[Motion to the next person. Once all have shared...]*

Now for **Contemplatio**, simply sit quietly in the divine presence.

[After several minutes, call everyone back together.]

Litany of Saints

Intro to this practice:

Litanies are lists of holy people who we call upon for help through prayer. Catholicism holds that holy people ("saints") who have died can still play an active role in the world by praying for the living. Just as we turn to our faith communities and families in times of trouble, we can turn to the larger community of saints for their support, as well.

Litanies call upon the strength and comfort of community, both living and dead. They remind us that we are not alone.

Script for leading in group:

Litanies list holy people from the past and ask them for their support. They summons a community of prayer around us, just like our CLC group gathers all of us together in prayer. Imagine our litany as a "dream team" of holy people; who do we want to recruit? These can be famous saints, characters from the Bible, or people we knew personally--anyone we admire as holy.

[Invite the group to contribute names to this list. If they have trouble coming up with people, you may suggest modern saints like `Mother Theresa, Martin Luther King Jr., etc. or think of popular patron saints. Just be sure that everyone knows something about who each person is.]

Now, one person will read the list. After each name, we'll all reply, "Pray for us."

Liturgy of the Hours

Intro to this practice:

The Liturgy of the Hours, also known as the Divine Office, is a Christian practice that dates back to the earliest centuries of Christianity, when monks developed a habit of praying the psalms throughout the day. Seven times a day, monastics would stop whatever they were doing to pray. This habit made prayer part of every aspect of their day and made all of their work holy.

Today, many priests, people in religious life, and lay people join this ancient tradition by praying several times a day, either alone or in groups, either speaking the psalms or chanting them. You may choose to pray just one or two of the hours, as works with your schedule.

Psalms, readings, and prayers are arranged for each of the “hours,” each day of the year. These can be found in a book traditionally called a “breviary,” online, or in some apps and publications.

The Divine Office is a useful practice because it connects prayer with the daily rhythms of life, bringing spirituality into all areas of work and home. It also guides users through the wealth of prayers and wisdom in the Christian tradition in palatable chunks.

Suggested resources to use:

- Give Us This Day (published monthly) -- available in Chris’s office in Campus Ministry. This resource includes daily Morning and Evening prayer, Night prayer, and scripture.
- CatholicExchange.com/Divine-Office or eBreviary.com
- Many Christian traditions have their own books of prayer, such as the Anglican Book of Common Prayer and the Armenian and Byzantine rites.
- Other religious traditions share similar practices of praying at set times throughout the day. In fact, early Christians adopted this practice from Jews, and many Muslims pray five times each day.

Instructions for leading a group:

Before you begin, decide with your group whether you will read in unison, alternate readers by paragraph/stanza, or alternate readers between sections. You may also consider dividing your group in half, with each side taking turns reading in unison. Responsorial psalms can be recited by one person/group, with the “response” or antiphon said between each stanza by the other person/group. Scripture readings are usually read aloud by one voice (not in chorus).

As a leader, you may need to point or signal when each group begins.

Rosary & Walking Rosary

Intro to this practice:

The purpose of the Rosary is to meditate on certain principal events (called “mysteries”) in the Gospel story. The actions of the rosary -- touching the beads and reciting the prayers -- are a way to use and occupy your body and mind during prayer, while allowing your spirit to connect more deeply with the mysteries themselves.

Each bead of the rosary signals a particular prayer. The beads on the loop are arranged in five “decades” of ten beads each, one bead for each Hail Mary prayed in that decade. The rosary is designed so you can meditate on a different mystery for each decade. Call to mind the mystery before you begin the decade, then allow it to settle in your spirit as you go through the motions of the Hail Marys.

*Walking Rosary - The Rosary can also be a great active prayer practice. Walk in a steady rhythm, allowing your footsteps to match the rhythm of the prayers you recite. You may choose to turn and walk the other direction at the end of each decade, to walk a labyrinth, or simply to walk in a large circle. No matter how you choose to incorporate your body into this practice, try to establish a gentle cadence to your movements and prayer, allowing yourself to meditate deeply on the mysteries.

There are twenty mysteries reflected upon in the Rosary. Traditionally these are divided into four sets of five, with different sets being the focus of different days of the week:

Joyful Mysteries (Mon. & Sat.) The Annunciation (Lk 1:28) The Visitation (Lk 1:41-42) The Nativity Mary (Lk 2:7) The Presentation (Lk 2:22) The Finding in the Temple (Lk 2:46-47)	The Glorious Mysteries (Weds. & Sun.) The Resurrection (Mk 16:5-6) The Ascension (Mk 16:19) The Descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:3) The Assumption (Song 2:10-11) The Crowning of Mary (Rev 12:1)
The Sorrowful Mysteries (Tues. & Fri.) The Agony in the Garden (Mt 26:41) The Scourging at the Pillar (Mt 27:24,26) The Crowning with Thorns (Mt 27:28-29) The Carrying of the Cross (Jn 19:17) The Crucifixion (Jn 19:25)	Luminous Mysteries (Thurs.) The Baptism of the Lord (Mt 3:16-17) The Wedding Feast at Cana (Jn 2:5) The Preaching of the Kingdom (Mk 1:15) The Transfiguration (Mt 17:2) Institution of the Eucharist (Mk 14:22-23)

Script for leading in group: *(Select which set of mysteries is appropriate for today. Refer to these throughout.)*

Let's begin with the Sign of the Cross: In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Holding the crucifix, let's pray the Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Next we'll hold the first, bottom bead and pray the Our Father:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

On the next **three** beads, we'll pray the Hail Mary:

Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death. Amen. (X 3)

We're now on the last bead before the circle, so we'll pray the Glory Be:

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Before we start the first decade of ten beads, let's call to mind the first mystery, _____, and pray the Our Father:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Now we'll recite the Hail Mary ten times, counting them by touching each of the ten beads in this decade:

Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death. Amen. (X 10)

Before we start the next decade, let's pray the Glory Be:

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

[Repeat for each of the five decades. For each decade, state the Mystery, pray the Our Father, then ten Hail Marys and the Glory Be].

Finally, now that we're back at the beginning, let's pray the Hail, Holy Queen:

Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy,
our life, our sweetness, and our hope.
To you we cry, poor banished children of Eve;
to you we send up our sighs,
mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.
Turn, then, most gracious advocate,
your eyes of mercy toward us;
and after this, our exile,
show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus.
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.
Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

We finish by making the Sign of the Cross:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Rote Prayer

Intro to this practice:

“Rote” prayer is a practice of using pre-written, often traditional prayers or poems to voice our own intentions to God. Familiar examples of this include the “Our Father,” “Hail Mary,” and others. Psalms in the Bible and in liturgy are also rote prayers, which were originally used in Hebrew worship and have been passed down to modern Christian practice.

Rote prayers can be valuable because they suggest a pattern of prayer for us to emulate. If you’ve ever wondered “what should I pray?” or “what should I say to God?” rote prayers are a great place to start; we can borrow someone else’s words.

Many rote prayers have been around for centuries because people have found them valuable spiritual tools. They have pointed many others in a helpful direction, and may do the same for you. Try different rote prayers to find ones that have personal meaning for you.

Suggested passages to use:

Christian Scriptures - Matt. 6:9-13 (The Lord’s Prayer)

Hebrew Scriptures (good for Christian, Jewish, and mixed groups) - Psalm 139, Psalm 3, 1 Sam. 2:1-10

Non-religious prayer - Serenity prayer or Prayer of St. Francis

Script for leading in group:

As we recite this prayer together, try to say the words with intentionality. Even if they are very familiar, imagine saying them yourself as if for the first time, so that it’s *your* prayer to God. You may find that it means something different to you than in the past, or that a different part sticks out. Let the prayer direct your thoughts.

Let’s begin...

Silence

Intro to this practice:

Silence is the simplest form of prayer or meditation. It is a practice shared by many faiths and traditions, as well as by non-religious philosophies. Unlike other prayer practices, which use words or images to mediate communication with God, silence focuses on simple stillness in divine communion. This can be very uncomfortable for some people, especially those who are immersed in a technology-rich environment. Most groups should begin by practicing silence in short periods. 4-5 minutes is a good place to start. Those who practice sitting in silence regularly will find themselves able to do so for longer periods of time.

Script for leading in group:

Silence is increasingly rare in the 21st century. Music, words, or the ticking of a clock are often the background noises of our lives. Like hearing, our other senses are often bombarded as well; flashing images, bright lights, rich odors, and piquant tastes are part of the daily routine. With all of these external stimuli, our minds work hard to process everything. The barrage of information from the outside world can drown out the sacred voice inside each of us.

To hear that sacred voice, many people find it necessary to block out all other distractions. Turn off the radio, close your laptop, and just sit. When the external distractions are gone, you may find that your own mind generates new ones! Our minds are so used to constant, frenetic motion that they often continue to race, filling the silence with internal distractions. This is normal. Cultivating inner silence takes practice and discipline.

Imagine clearing your mind like a blank slate. When thoughts crowd in, simply acknowledge them, put them to the side, and return to stillness. You will probably have to do this many, many times. That is okay! Slowly, other thoughts will become less intrusive. With your thoughts on “pause,” you may discover feelings welling up deep inside of you. Like your thoughts, acknowledge these, sit with them, and let them pass.

This time, let’s sit in silence for 5 minutes. That may seem very long or very short, but I will tell you when it is over. Let’s open in prayer, and then quiet our minds...

God of all, we call to mind that we are now, as always, in your presence. Please still our hearts and minds so that we can rest fully in you. If there is anything you want to communicate to us today, we are here and listening.

Spiritual Journaling

Intro to this practice:

This is an extremely versatile practice which practitioners often appreciate for its flexibility and reflective value. Your group members may find this a particularly accessible form of prayer because it uses familiar skills of writing or drawing. While it can certainly be practiced as a one-time prayer experience, journaling has the potential to be a long-term habit. Having one journal with many successive entries provides a wonderful opportunity to look back on your prayer life, answered prayers, and personal growth.

Script for leading in group:

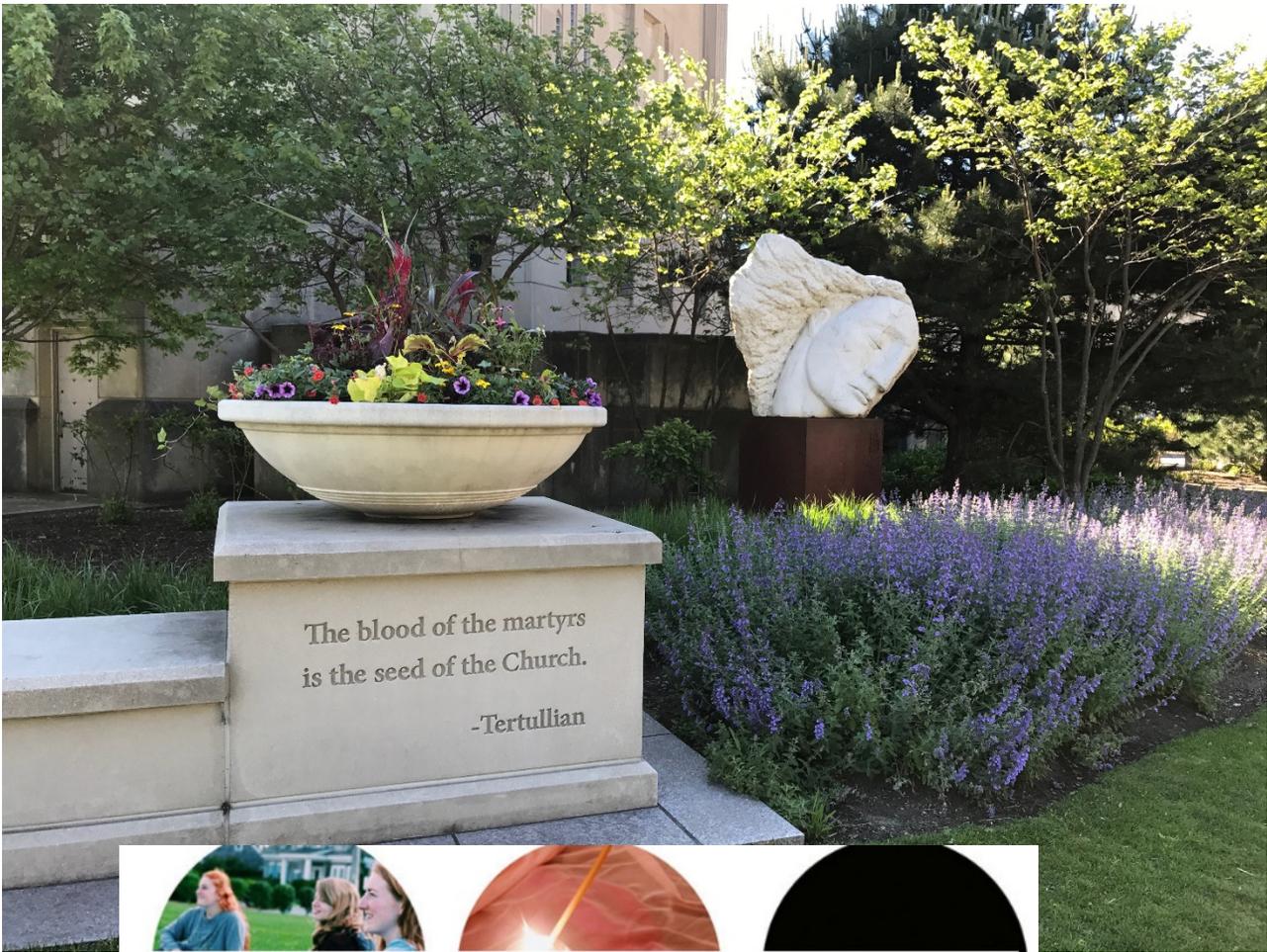
Journaling may already be a familiar practice for many of you. On the surface, it's a simple concept: you write down your thoughts on a piece of paper or in a notebook. Let's talk, though, about how this can be a sacred practice:

Imagine that your journal is a shared space for you and God. Anything that you put there, you are showing to God. This doesn't mean that God cannot see other aspects of your life, thoughts, or actions; instead, imagine that this is a special space of conversation for you and the divine. Parents, for example, often know much about the lives of their young children. Still, they delight when their kids show them their small treasures or express their feelings explicitly. Like a child, you can bring aspects of your daily life to God in prayer for special consideration. The conversation, like that of parent and child, will enrich the relationship.

There is no "right" or "wrong" in journaling. Try to be as honest as possible, whether that means expressing gratitude, or even cursing (God has heard worse!). Channel your experience in the way that feels most natural and expressive to you. Some people like writing a letter to God; others write poetry or song lyrics; others draw or sketch; still others will collage, or use a combination of styles. Again, there is no "right" or "wrong."

If you have difficulty getting started, try checking in with yourself emotionally. How do you feel right now? How does your body feel? What is on your mind? Put all of this into your journal, telling God about your experience in this moment. Nothing is too small or silly to include. Your journal is your space, an open forum for you to express yourself to the God who is always waiting for you.

[Make sure that everyone has a writing utensil, paper, and room to spread out comfortably. If possible, provide simple art supplies and play quiet music in the background.]



*Community * Spirituality * Mission*

