

# Teach Us To Pray

A BOOK OF PRAYERS FOR CURA GROUPS



**Cura--Christian Life Community  
Communities Discerning for Mission**

An important part of facilitating a Cura 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 cura 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.

~ 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



## 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.

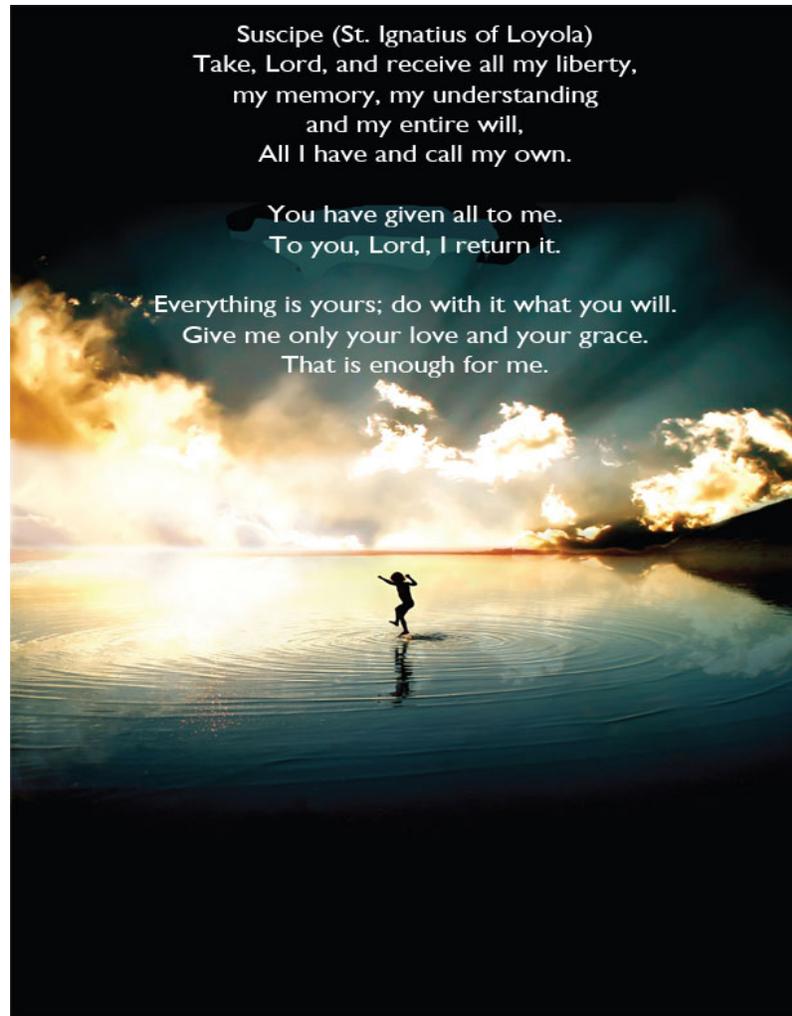
Let my heart, O God, always  
recognize,  
cherish,  
and enjoy your goodness in all of creation.

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*



**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***



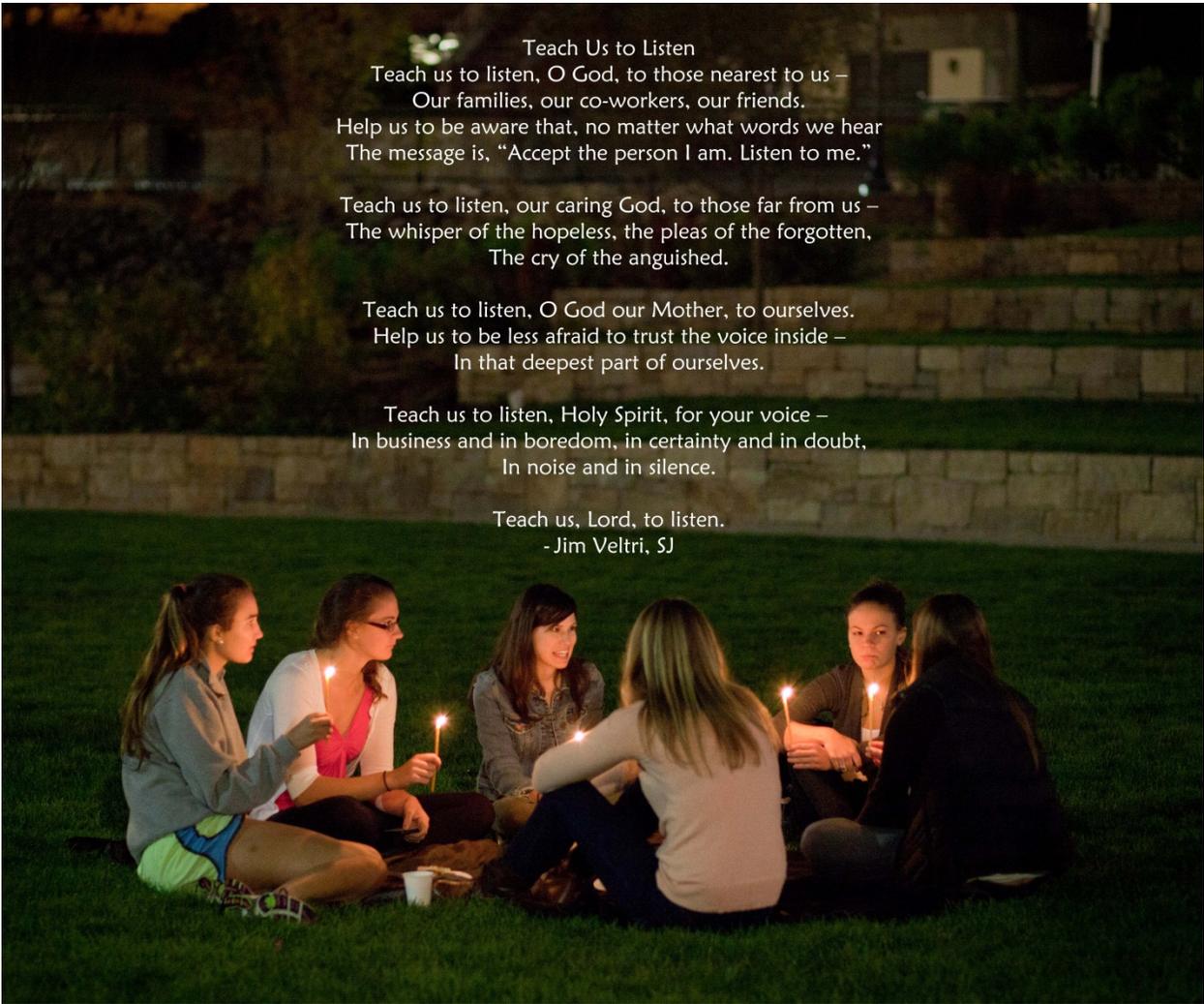
Teach Us to Listen  
Teach us to listen, O God, to those nearest to us –  
Our families, our co-workers, our friends.  
Help us to be aware that, no matter what words we hear  
The message is, “Accept the person I am. Listen to me.”

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

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### **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.

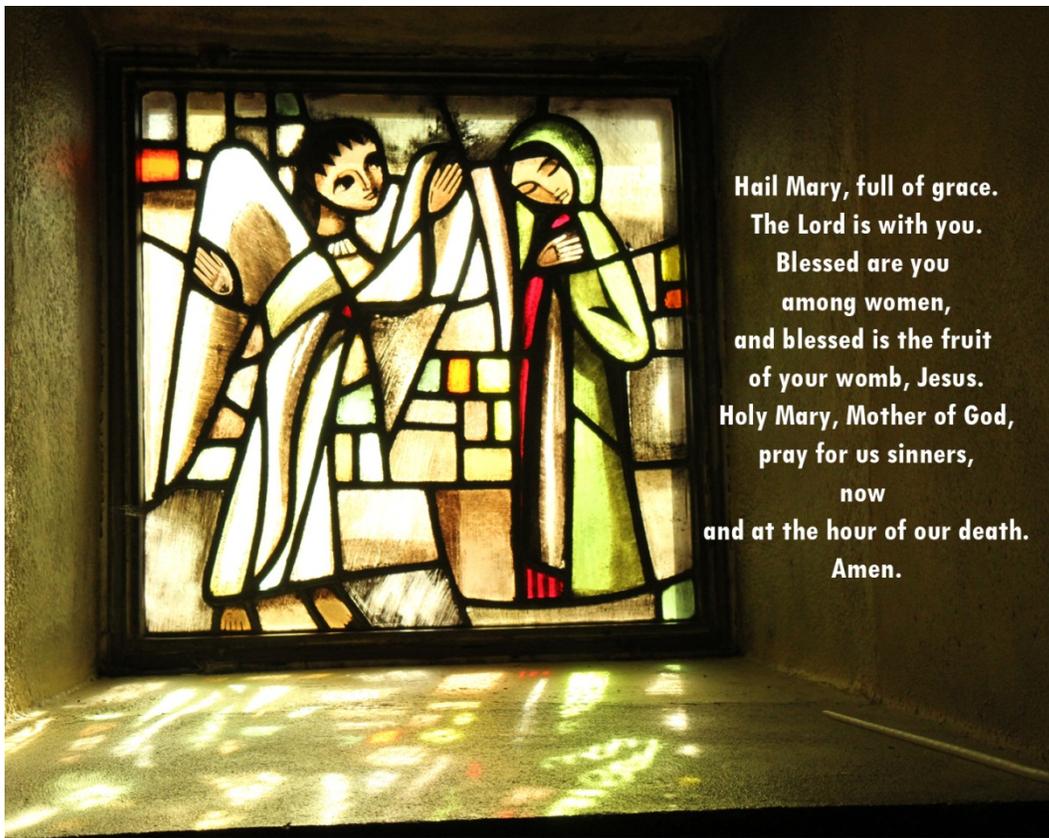
He has mercy on those who fear him  
in every generation.  
He has shown the strength of his arm,  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

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!



Meeting the Lord in Poetry.

Sean O'Rourke, 2017

There You were in the eyes of that child,  
Open so wide and filled with wonder, awe and excitement.  
There you stood in the light shining through the stained glass windows  
Of my old school chapel.  
I remember marvelling  
At the colours combining to make the most beautiful of streams,  
As they collided on the wooden pews and confessional boxes.

There you sparked in my mind the idea to start writing today,  
To light a candle, and pray,  
Finally, to just settle down.

God meets you where you are,  
God meets you where you are.  
He's in the trees, the faint ocean breeze, and even,  
Or most of all, maybe,  
In our pleas to be happy.

Our hearts are restless until they rest in You, O Lord.

How many hours have I pounded at the gym?  
Logged in, and sat staring at a screen on Facebook,  
Wondering, "Does any of this really matter?"

How I have endured the dark times,  
Only to be reminded that better times  
Are on the way.  
You flock to my aid, and come running near when I ask for help.

Let me get over myself.  
Make me put my pride, fear, lust and gear to one side.  
None of that really matters, I know,  
But I just feel so consumed by them sometimes.

You've watched me fall,  
You've helped me over the walls I've encountered in my earlier life.  
I want to remain with You now, O Lord.

Help me through the times of pain,  
And remember that You are always there –  
In love and care,  
To guide, protect, and save me.  
Amen.

Blessings  
Sean O'Rourke

How blessed am I to have found You, God.  
How blessed am I to have found You, God.  
How blessed am I to have met You, God.

It all makes sense sometimes.  
How some series of events seems to follow a perfect path.  
"This is too good to be true",  
I feel as I reflect over the mystery of my Creator's love and power.

How He can be found in the greatest and the simplest of things;  
The yellow flower dotted with freckles, the Holy Hour at Adoration,  
Or the massive tower just designed by wonderful engineers.

I talk with fear though sometimes,  
This idea that God wants to connect with me right now.  
I hide and run away far into the deepest of shade.  
But once I turn around to the faintest sound of His voice,  
I hear the words "Do not be afraid."  
I know that all will be okay, then, as my Lord is with me.

Things like money, fame and fortune can go elsewhere.  
"For there, right where you are, is where I'll meet you,"  
He repeats lovingly.

Dear God, take me into Your arms.  
Comfort me in the wings of Your angels  
And lift me from my present worries.  
I know that I am at peace with You.  
I was made for You, to pray to You, to say to You,  
"Thank you for all You have given me."

It is in this moment that I let down all of my defenses,  
Thrown away my silly downtrodden thoughts,  
And I become whole.  
I realize that the ultimate goal is to be with You, O Lord.

And suddenly the hole in my heart is filled,  
With joy.  
Amen

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

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**God Bless the World, John J. Morris SJ**

Mighty God, Father of all,  
Compassionate God, Mother of all,  
Bless every person I have met,  
Every face I have seen,  
Every voice I have heard,  
Especially those most dear;  
Bless every city, town and street that I have known,  
Bless every sight I have seen,  
Every sound I have heard,  
Every object I have touched.  
In some mysterious way these have all fashioned my life;  
Great God, bless the world.

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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

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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

### Valentine's Day Prayer (to be read with I CORINTHIANS 13:4-7 NIV)

Lord, Because love is patient...

Help me to be slow to judge, but quick to listen. Hesitant to criticize, but eager to encourage, remembering your endless patience with me.

Because love is kind...Help my words to be gentle and my actions to be thoughtful.

Remind me to smile and to say "Please" and "Thank You" because those little things still mean so much.

Because love does not envy or boast, and it is not proud...

Help me have a heart that is humble and sees the good in others.

May I celebrate and appreciate all that I have and all that I am,

as well as doing the same for those around me.

Because love is not rude or self-seeking...Help me to speak words that are easy on the ear and on the heart.

When I'm tempted to get wrapped up in my own little world, remind me there's a great big world out there full of needs and hurts.

Because love is not easily angered and keeps no record of wrongs...

Help me to forgive others as you have forgiven me.

When I want to hold onto a grudge, gently help me release it so I can reach out with a hand of love instead.

Because love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth...

Help me stand up for what is right and good. May I defend the defenseless, and help the helpless.

Show me how I can make a difference.

Because love always protects and always trusts...

Help me to be a refuge for those around me.

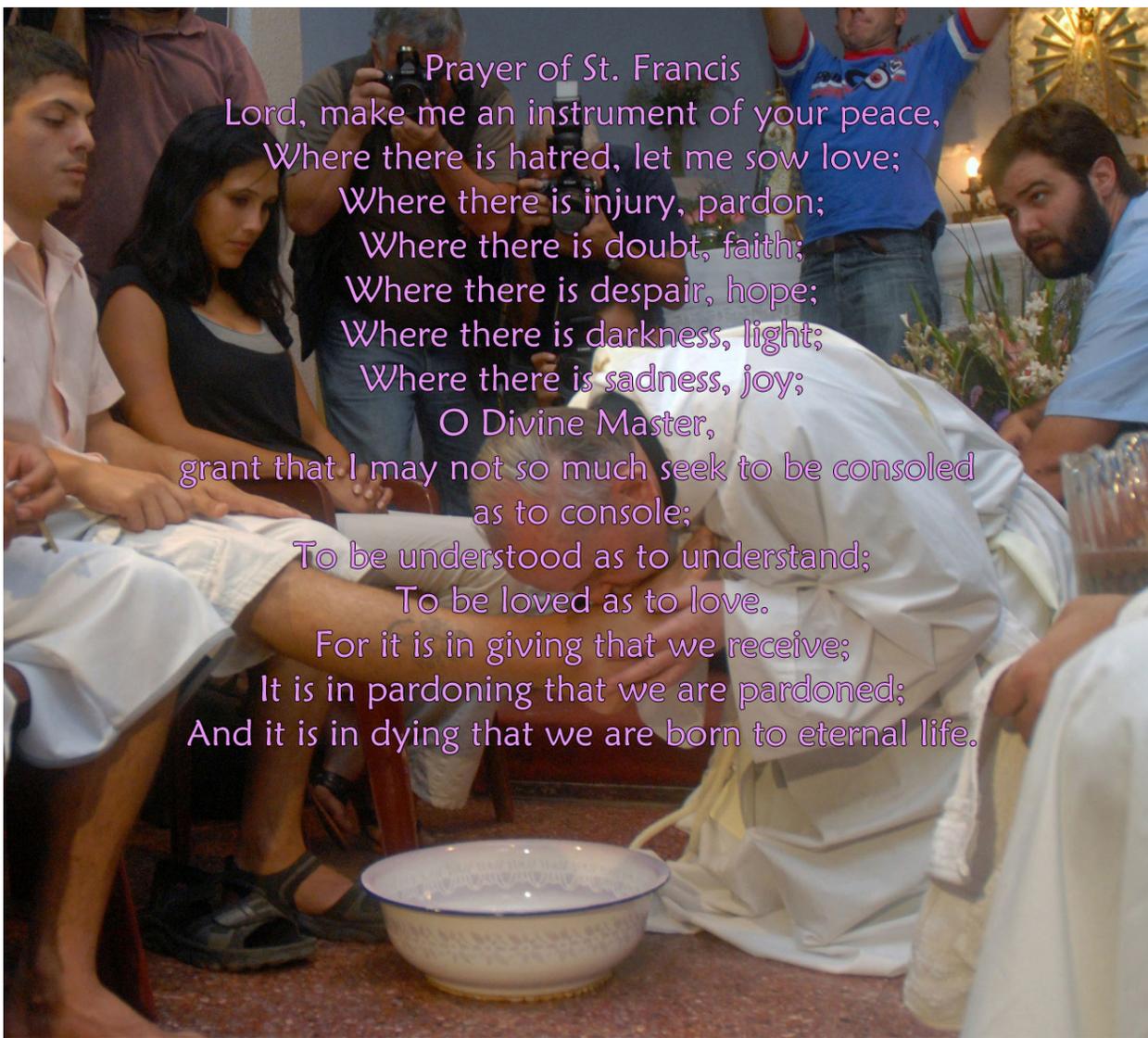
When the world outside is harsh and cold, may my heart be a place of acceptance and warmth.

Finally, because love always perseveres...

Help my heart continually beat with love for You and others.

Thank you for this day when we celebrate love, and for showing us what that word really means.

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

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

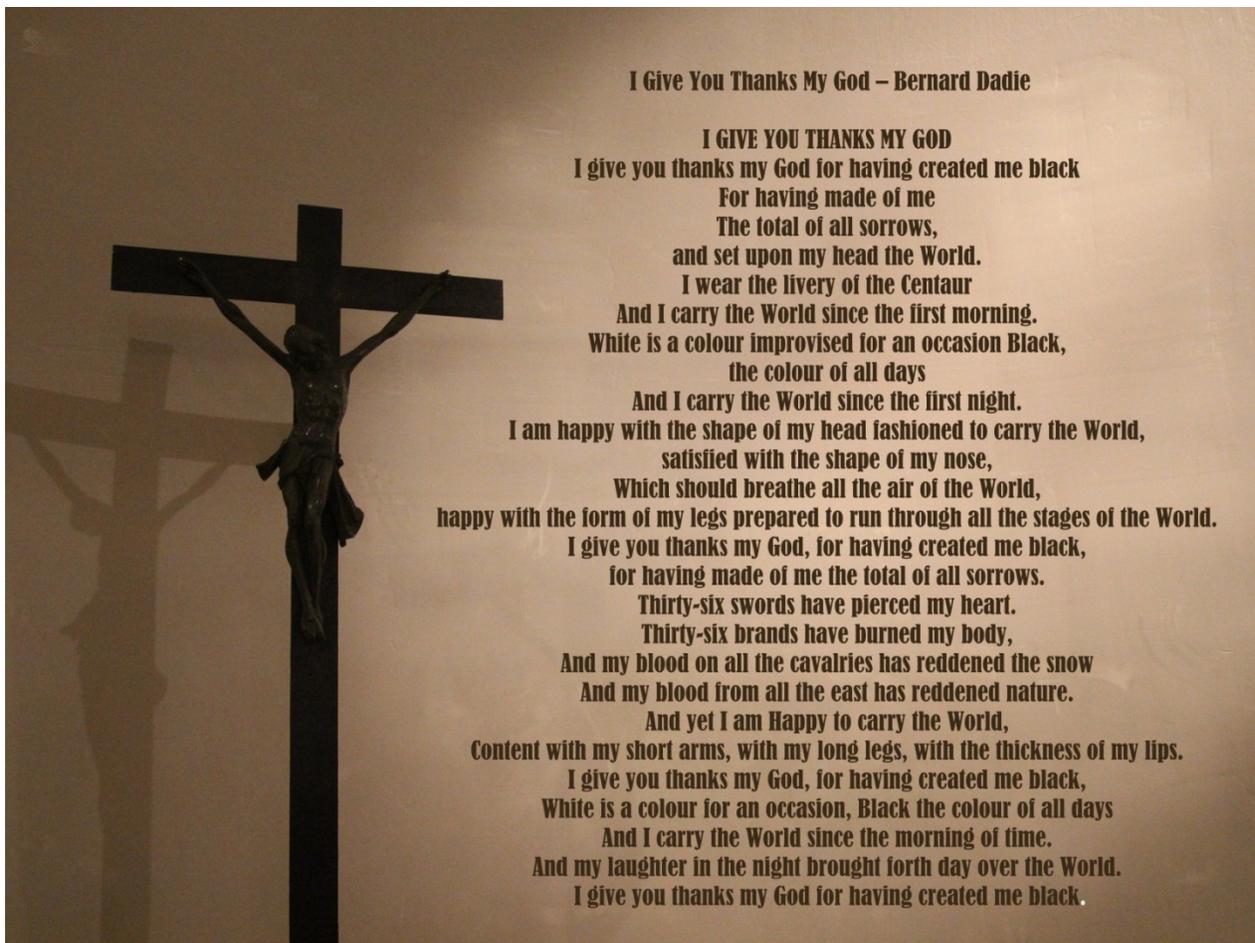
**Let us Pray.**

**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 without prejudice. Amen*



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.

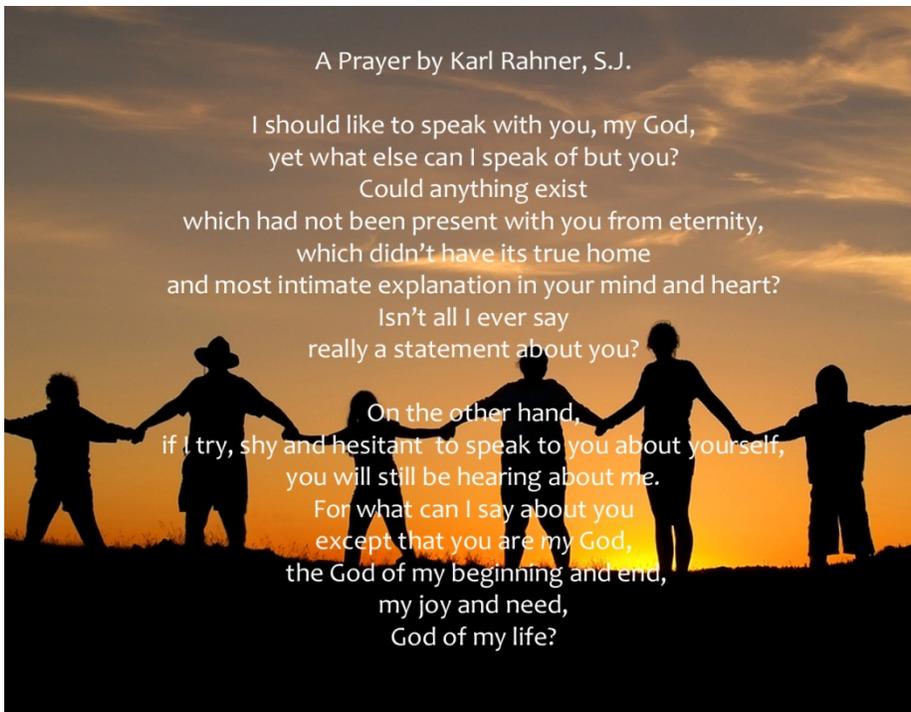


A Prayer by Karl Rahner, S.J.

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”*

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 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.

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## 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

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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**

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### **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**

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## **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

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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.

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**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

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## 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 (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.

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.

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.

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.

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...

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,

wearied 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

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## **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.

Beloved, I AM there.

**Who Am I?**  
**by Deitrich Bonhoeffer**

Who am I? They often tell me  
I stepped from my cell's confinement  
Calmly, cheerfully, firmly,  
Like a Squire from his country house.

Who am I? They often tell me  
I used to speak to my warders  
Freely and friendly and clearly,  
As though it were mine to command.

Who am I? They also tell me  
I bore the days of misfortune  
Equably, smilingly, proudly,  
like one accustomed to win.

Am I then really that which other men tell of?  
Or am I only what I myself know of myself?  
Restless and longing and sick, like a bird in a cage,  
Struggling for breath, as though hands were compressing my throat,  
Yearning for colors, for flowers, for the voices of birds,  
Thirsting for words of kindness, for neighborliness,  
Tossing in expectations of great events,  
Powerlessly trembling for friends at an infinite distance,  
Weary and empty at praying, at thinking, at making,  
Faint, and ready to say farewell to it all.

Who am I? This or the Other?  
Am I one person today and tomorrow another?  
Am I both at once? A hypocrite before others,  
And before myself a contemptible woebegone weakling?  
Or is something within me still like a beaten army  
Fleeing in disorder from victory already achieved?

Who am I? They mock me, these lonely questions of mine.  
Whoever I am, Thou knowest, O God, I am thine!

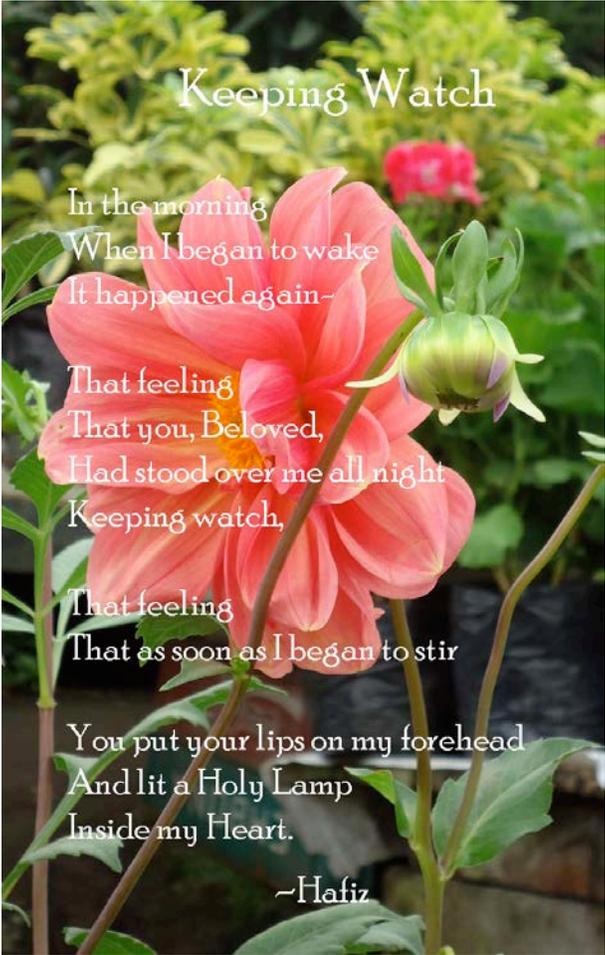
## **In the Evening We Shall Be Examined on Love**

### **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

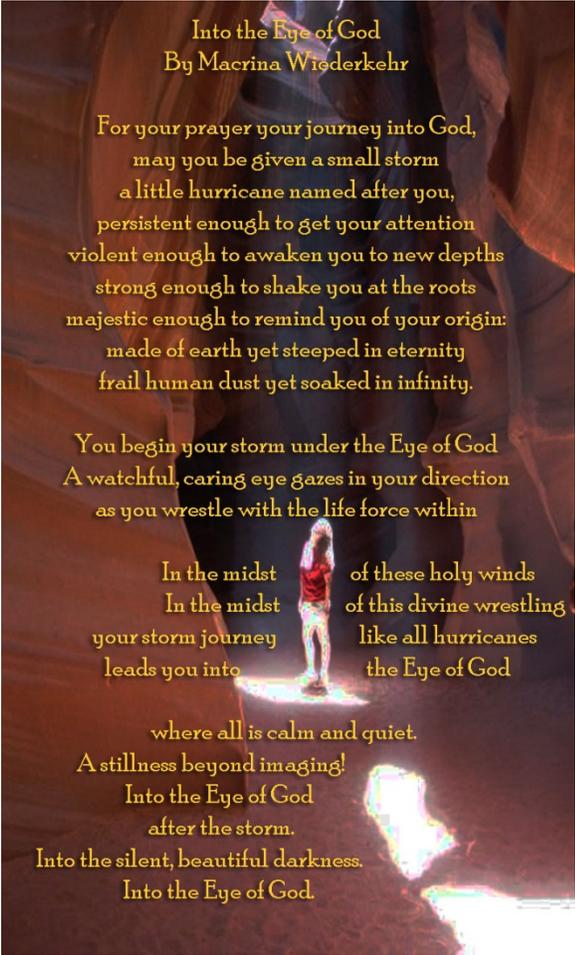
### **A Prayer for Discerning One's Vocation**

**O most loving God, we pray in thanksgiving for this desire and thirst to be closer to You and to commit in to a way of life that serves 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. 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



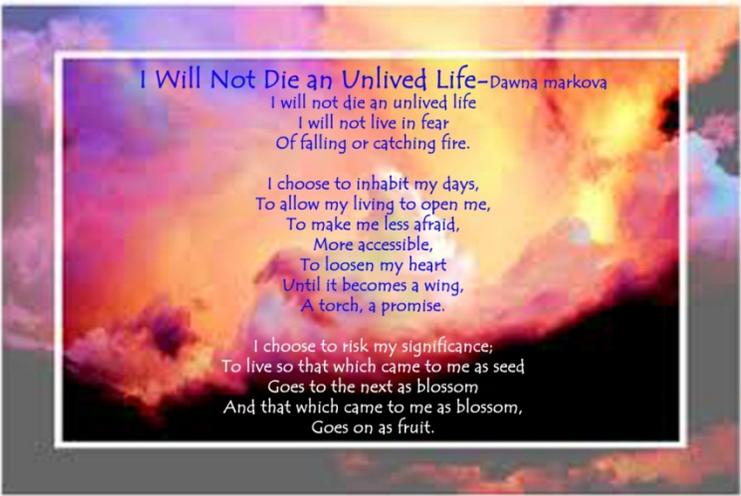
# Into the Eye of God By Macrina Wiederkehr

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.

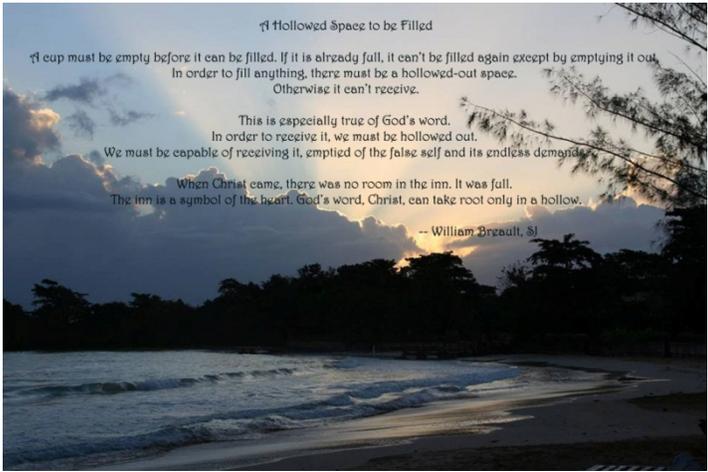


# I Will Not Die an Unlived Life—Dawna Markova

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.



# 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 Brault, SJ

### 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

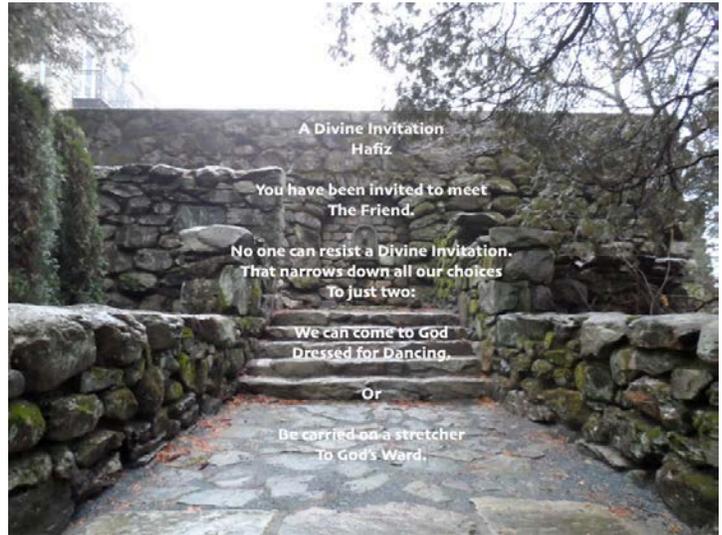
and a hundred sweet promises  
and those heroic vows  
no one can ever keep.

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.



### 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.**

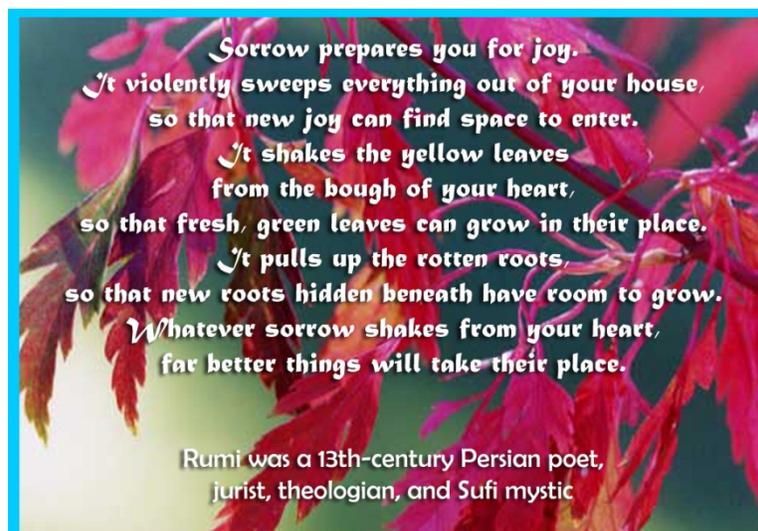
**I don't know exactly what a prayer is.**

**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









## Ways to Pray:

Praying with scripture: St. Ignatius' 'Contemplation of Place'

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. In the Exercises, contemplation is a very active way of praying that engages the mind and heart and stirs up thoughts and emotions. (Note that in other spiritual traditions, *contemplation* has quite a different meaning: it refers to a way of praying that frees the mind of all thoughts and images.)

Ignatian contemplation is suited especially for the Gospels. In the Second Week of the Exercises, we accompany Jesus through his life by imagining scenes from the Gospel stories. 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.

Excerpt from [\*The Ignatian Adventure\*](#) by Kevin O'Brien, SJ.

## Guide to *Lectio Divina*

Choose a word or phrase of the Scriptures you wish to pray. It makes no difference which text is chosen, as long as you have no set goal of “covering” a certain amount of text. The amount of text covered is in God’s hands, not yours.

*Read.* Turn to the text and read it slowly, gently. Savor each portion of reading, constantly listening for the “still, small voice” of a word or phrase that somehow says, “I am for you today.” Do not expect lightning or ecstasies. In *lectio divina*, God is teaching us to listen, to seek him in silence. God does not reach out and grab us but gently invites us ever more deeply into his presence.

*Ponder.* Take the word or phrase into yourself. Memorize it and slowly repeat it to yourself, allowing it to interact with your inner world of concerns, memories, and ideas. Do not be afraid of distractions. Memories or thoughts are simply parts of yourself that, when they rise up during *lectio divina*, are asking to be given to God along with the rest of your inner self. Allow this inner pondering, this rumination, to invite you into dialogue with God.

*Pray.* Whether you use words, ideas, or images—or all three—is not important. Interact with God as you would with one who you know loves and accepts you. Give to God what you have discovered during your experience of mediation. Give to God what you have found within your heart.

It is not necessary to assess the quality of your *lectio divina* as if you were “performing” or seeking some goal. *Lectio divina* has no goal other than that of being in the presence of God by praying the Scriptures.

—Fr. Luke Dysinger

*Luke Dysinger, OSB, is a Benedictine monk of Saint Andrew's Abbey, Valyermo, California.*

Praying with art: From Bob Gilroy, SJ 'Prayer Windows' website

Prayerful images can inspire viewers' faith as well as their desire to be more creative. You are invited to simply look only at a painting. Or you can look at a painting with text that includes scripture and a poem that reflect on the subject of each painting. In either case the following directions can lead you to more conscious contact with God. If you're interested in using this method of prayer in a more organized, long-term way, go to [prayerwindows.org](http://prayerwindows.org) online retreat.

Choose a Prayer Path

Art Only/Gallery

Online Retreat

Paintings & Reflections

1. QUIET: Stop for a moment, breathe and simply relax. Perhaps recite a formal prayer.
2. INTENTION: What am I grateful for?  
What do I want right now?
3. ATTENTION: Look over the entire image. Is there a figure, shape, color, texture or word that calls your attention?
4. NOTICE: What feelings, thoughts, or desires do you notice?  
What could they reveal about God and your life?
5. RESPOND: Speak to God as you would one friend to another.
6. CLOSE: Offer a prayer or gesture as a way to end the experience.

If you find it helpful, keep a journal to record these sacred encounters. This will allow you to see how God is present in your life over time and share your experience with others.

Ideas and suggestions for more creative activities as a way to pray can be found on [Creative Art Activities](#).



## ANOTHER VERSION OF IGNATIUS' EXAMEN

Close your eyes . . . take a deep breath . . . *feel* the presence of everyone around you.

Focus on your breathing . . . Feel your chest rise and fall . . . Focus on your heart beat . . . Pay attention to your heart . . . Pay attention to how God is talking to you . . .

I'm going to go through each step, taking time for some reflection points at each step. [*Take special care to read the following slowly and pause well for each instruction/question*]

### **First, be aware of God's presence**

- Take a moment to recognize that God is with you, in this room, next to you, *within* you, here and now. [*pause*]

### **Now, ask for honesty**

- Briefly ask God to help you be open to *whatever* God might have to show you as you reflect. [*pause*]

### **Now, be thankful**

- Ask yourself, "When did I *love* today? When did I act in complete *freedom* and *without hidden motives*?" [*long pause*]

God's love will show you that you are the hands, heart, and voice of Christ in the world, revealing your great love for yourself and for others. [*brief pause*]

- Now ask yourself, when did I *feel loved* today? When did you experience genuine acceptance and caring? [*pause – longer than before*] If you feel compelled to thank God for these times, do so.

### **Now, see where you could grow from your day**

- What did you struggle with today? Recognize the times when you would say you "failed" during the day. Consider that these failures can be opportunities to hear God's voice in your life and ask, how did these moments feel? How do they feel *now*? [*pause*]
- If you feel compelled to express regret to God for these times today, do so, confident that God is lovingly ready to help with whatever you ask. [*pause*]

### **Finally, think of tomorrow**

- Briefly consider what your day may hold tomorrow. Ask God for help as you face the day tomorrow, and ask in particular to recognize God's presence as you go through your day.
- To end the Examen, thank God for being with you in your day, for God's efforts in your life. [*brief pause*]  
When you're ready, open your eyes and be back in the room.



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