

Campus Ministries 2018-19

Prayer Booklet

A photograph of a group of students in a church setting, seen from behind, with their hands clasped in prayer. A world map overlay is visible in the background, and the hashtag #InThisTogether is prominently displayed in the center.

#InThisTogether

GOSHEN  COLLEGE



Dear Goshen College Student,

In your hands you hold a collection of resources to use this year as you live into the questions and the challenges and the excitement and the struggles and joys inherent in the life of all human beings - and particularly in the life of college students!

The Bohemian-Austrian poet Rilke (1875-1926) said long ago, *"Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books that are now written in a very foreign tongue. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer."*—Rainer Maria Rilke

While some may find this to be fatalistic, I find it to be encouraging: we do not have to possess all of the answers right now. But if we faithfully live in the present moment with our eyes and our ears and our hearts open to the mysteries of life - and the mysteries of God - we will find what we are looking for.

So receive this booklet as a gift - an invitation to live into the big questions of life with an open mind and an open heart. And use it often. Write in it. Doodle in it. Read it. Ponder its contents. Pray with it.

And be encouraged. God is never far away. In fact, the Holy One is as close as your very breath. So rest easy. You are not alone.

Power and peace to you in the process!

—Gwen Gustafson-Zook, *Campus Pastor*

Table of Contents

Campus Ministries Resources	2
Campus Ministries 2018-19 Theme: #InThisTogether	4
#InThisTogether Devotions	5
Genesis 11:6	Building Babel
Ecclesiastes 3:11	God's Timing
Ecclesiastes 3:11	El Tiempo de Dios
Ecclesiastes 4:9-10	Better Together
Ecclesiastes 4:9-10	Performing Together
Matthew 6:25-33	Faith and Letting Go
Matthew 25:31-46	Sheep, Goats, and the Poor People's Campaign
Romans 3:20-24	We are All #InThisTogether
Ephesians 4:32	The Snooze Button
1 John 4:19-21	Loving Will Be Easier
Persian Poetry of Saa'di "Humanity and Suffering" ...	I'm Gandhi and Hitler, too
 Prayer Practices	 16
Writing a Dialogue: Meeting Jesus	Prayers of Lament
Conversational Prayer	Be Still
Examen	Praying with Art
Breath Prayer	Praying with Clay
Lectio Divina: Praying with sacred texts	Praying through Drawing
The Jesus Prayer	Praying with Photography
	Loving Kindness (Metta) Prayer
 Prayers of Others	 28
A Reason to Pray	The Lord's Prayer: Liberation
A Journey Blessing	Theology Version
A Trinitarian Prayer of Protection	Transformation
Psalm 121	God's Pencil
Plea for Perseverance	May I See You Today
God's Encompassing Presence	Protection for the Journey
Desire for Faithfulness	What We Would Like To Do Is Change
Peace Prayer	The World
I Have No Idea Where I Am Going	A Foolish Blessing
A Martyr's Prayer	Psalm 23 Comfort
 Blank Pages for Journaling	 36

Campus Ministries Resources

Centering Prayer: All are welcome to gather for 20 minutes of contemplative prayer every morning (Monday through Friday) at 8:30am in the Quiet Place Prayer Room (Kulp Basement).

Chapel: Chapel gathers the campus community every other Wednesday at 10 a.m. in the Church-Chapel for 40 minutes where we come together before God in worship and seek to be continually formed into the image of Christ.

Fall/Spring Break Service Opportunities: Service opportunities often come up for Fall and/or Spring break. Watch for details on the Campus Ministries bulletin board in the Connector and in the daily Communicator (email).

GC Prayer Booklet: This resource offers devotions, a wide variety of prayer practices and a number of prayers from different traditions. For your free copy, stop by the Campus Ministries office in Wyse 101 or the Connector. It is also available on the Campus Ministries website.

Get to know an employee: The Campus Ministries website offers written and video interviews of employees' faith and vocation journeys.

Goshen-Greencroft Connection: This is a mentoring opportunity in which a Goshen College student is paired with a resident of Greencroft, a nearby continuing care retirement community. Kick-off reception in late September!

Inquiry Programs: The Summer Inquiry Programs (Camping, Ministry, Service) enable students to spend three months in a camp, congregation or service agency working and exploring faith, vocation and leadership. This is coordinated out of the Career Services Office (Wyse 105).

Labyrinth: Located by East Hall, this tool for prayer invites you to meet God as you walk its winding path to the center and back. We also have an indoor cloth labyrinth available for use.

Local Churches Directory: Pick up your copy in the Connector, Union or by the Campus Ministries Office in Wyse 101. It is also available on the campus ministries website.

Muslim Prayer Room: A prayer room for Muslim students is available in the Church-Chapel, Room 106 (near the West entrance). This prayer room is open whenever the building is open.

Pastoral Care: A campus pastor is available to listen and offer spiritual support. You are welcome to contact her @ gwengz@goshen.edu.

Quiet Place Prayer Room: Located in the lower level of Kulp Hall, and open day and night, this space is set aside as a place for prayer and meditation. Another prayer room is available in the Church-Chapel.

Small Groups: Opportunities are available for students who are interested in meeting together in small group and Bible Study settings. Contact a Student Ministry Team member for assistance.

Spiritual Direction: Spiritual Direction is available for students who are interested in monthly support. Contact the campus pastor for more information. (gwengz@goshen.edu)

Student Clubs: The following student-led clubs meet at various times throughout the year — Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Interfaith Club, Hymn Club and Unity.

Table Grace: Comprised of a group of upper-level students and first-year students who meet in the apartments or small group houses for food, games and friendship to help ease the first year's transition to college life.

Taizé Worship Services: Taizé worship services, typically held the second Sunday evening of each month, are a candlelight service that songs sung in a variety of languages, scripture, silence and prayer.

Vigils: Periodic vigils are planned in response to troubling realities in our world. Watch the daily Communicator for details.

Witmer Woods: Located on the west side of Main Street (SR 15) between the main campus and the College Cabin, Witmer Woods is a wonderful 18-acre arboretum of native shrubs and trees. This is an excellent place to spend time with God in nature.

Campus Ministries 2018-19 Theme: *#InThisTogether*

At a very practical level, we are all #InThisTogether. We are a part of a community here at Goshen College - together. Students live in dorms and houses and apartments - together. We interact in classes - together. We gather to eat - together. We congregate for Convocations and Chapels - together. This is the reality of our lives. But the reality doesn't stop there. Our "togetherness" extends beyond our GC community, beyond Goshen, beyond this country, even beyond our human species to include the very earth that sustains us all and all the creatures that inhabit this earth with us.

This year's Goshen College core value is Global Citizenship - out of which flows our Campus Ministries theme: #InThisTogether. It calls us to own the reality that we are more connected than we sometimes acknowledge. And Goshen College is a great place to live into this reality as a diverse community working hard to find authentic ways to honor and value and support each member of our community as a part of a sacred whole.

When we recognize our interconnectedness - I mean really own it as reality - then the way we value and honor and treat each other becomes a sacred act, challenging us to be genuinely thoughtful in the way we interact with each other, challenging us to live in such a way as to extend our concern beyond ourselves and those closest to us. Our eyes are opened to reveal the ways our behavior impacts the people around us, the environment around us, the world around us. We are drawn to a universal ethic of compassion when we acknowledge that we all come from the same source, all made in the "image of God," and all mysteriously connected spiritually, as well as in very practical ways.

Genesis 11:6

Building Babel

BY **Emmy Rupp**

Sophomore Social Work and Music Double Major

The Lord said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them."

There is one language that even the greatest linguists cannot decipher, and that is the language of Google Translate. It is a dialect comprised of awkwardly askew synonyms and frequently broken grammar rules. And yet when you are a foreign language speaker in a country that is not your own, it becomes an essential for survival.

This was clear during my homestay in Nicaragua the summer before my senior year of high school. My friend Liz and I—drained of any remembrance of our two years of high school Spanish—were left literally speechless in the face of our welcoming host mom, her six year old daughter, and the eight teenage girls that showed up at the front door fifteen seconds after we had put our bags down. Clueless and incompetent, our phones quickly became our translators.

But we soon found that the best way to communicate with our host family was not an app, but the universal language of *intentionality*. Intentionality is the reason that those three days became a warm memory and not an uncomfortable nightmare I'd like to forget. We spoke through small acts such as when our host mom inviting half of Estel's youth over to her house to welcome us to the city, or when Liz and I joined in on the neighborhood girls' double dutch game instead of huddling in the corner to discuss our discomfort. Our understanding came from the flexibility we all exhibited in the face of the awkward and the choice we each made to engage with compassion and respect.

In a climate where speaking the same language as the people who reside across the road, the wall, or the political divide feels impossible, a unified way of communicating seems depressingly far-fetched. But as the tower of Babel teaches us, we have been here before and still found ways to communicate. Maybe we need to begin - as they had to begin again - by being intentional in our attempts to understand and be understood.

Prayer: God, you alone know the potential that lies within my communities, severed or united. Teach me to help unlock that potential. Make me aware of the gaps in my communication with others that need creativity and commitment to transcend. Give me the strength to overcome my pride and whatever else holds me back from connecting with my neighbors. May we forever strive to reach higher and higher towards you together. Amen.

Ecclesiastes 3:11

God's Timing

BY **Dali Rodriguez**

Sophomore, Theater Major, Student Ministry Team member

¹¹He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

As a student myself, I know how hard it is at times to keep patience. I understand how it feels to doubt your own self when it comes to pursuing what your heart desires to pursue. I believe college can be a time of desperation. You are fighting for your future without the certainty that you will achieve exactly what it is you've been longing for. You begin to question if all this hard work will at least pay for a \$20 dollar pizza one day, or will you settle for less? I also think our capability of overthinking can take our minds to places it shouldn't. It's easier to feed negativity than to keep a positive mind. Especially in this time of questioning.

However, as I've experienced this, I've experienced something even stronger. Many times God has shown me that His power overcomes my negative thoughts. His amazing ways of showing me that just because nothing is happening right now, doesn't mean something won't happen in the near future, have made it easier to stay patient in this time of waiting. Because when you pour out your heart before Him, and when you hold onto Him, something will happen. Something even better than what you could have ever expected, just by putting everything in His hands. The key lies in the act of trusting and waiting. Waiting and remaining patient is hard. Especially in this season of desperation. Still, trusting that no one works better and harder than Him, especially when you remain still before Him, is enough motivation to keep holding onto the thought that you will get to wherever you want. If you just pray and wait.

"I'm finally beginning to realize that it's in these seasons of waiting and being still before God, pouring out my heart before him, that he does some of his greatest work." (The Season of Waiting, Today's Christian Woman)

To all my peers who are in this time of waiting, we're in this together. Better yet, we're in this with God, and truthfully, there is not quite better company. Let's keep it up.

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for showing me that you care more than anyone else about what I'm struggling to keep fighting for myself. I need you to take care of it. I give it to you with all my heart. I pour out my heart before you and I remain still before you. I trust that you are helping me more than anyone else ever could. It's in your hands for however long you need it to be. Give me peace and reassurance when I struggle, and forgive me if I ever doubt you. Amen.

Eclesiastés 3:11

El Tiempo de Dios

POR **Dali Rodriguez**

Estudiante de segundo año, Major en Teatro, Miembro del Equipo de Ministerio Estudiantil

¹¹ Todo lo hizo hermoso en su tiempo; y ha puesto eternidad en el corazón de ellos, sin que alcance el hombre a entender la obra que ha hecho Dios desde el principio hasta el fin.

Al yo también ser estudiante, puedo entender lo difícil que es a veces mantener la paciencia. Entiendo como se siente dudar de mí misma cuando se trata de por lo que mi corazón siempre ha querido luchar. Pienso que la universidad puede llegar a ser un tiempo de desesperación. Estás luchando por algo sin la certeza de que vas a lograr llegar exactamente a donde siempre has querido llegar. Empiezas a preguntarte si el trabajo por el que pasas ahora, algún día pagará por aunque sea una pizza de \$20 dólares, o si tendrás que conformarte por menos. También pienso que nuestra capacidad de sobre-pensar las cosas puede llevar nuestras mentes a donde no debería. Es más fácil alimentar la negatividad, que lo que es mantener una mente positiva.

Sin embargo, así como he experimentado esto, también he experimentado algo que es aún más grande. Muchas veces Dios me ha mostrado que su poder es más grande que mis pensamientos negativos. Su manera grandiosa de enseñarme que solo porque nada ha pasado aún, no significa que jamás nada pasará, han servido como forma de alivio para mantenerme paciente en este tiempo de espera. Porque cuando le das tu corazón al Señor y te mantienes sostenido a Él, algo sí pasará. Algo aún mejor de lo que jamás te hayas imaginado. Todo lo que tienes que hacer es ponerlo todo en sus manos. La llave se encuentra en confiar en Él y esperar. Esperar y mantener paciencia es difícil. Especialmente en esta temporada de desesperación. Aun así, confiando que nadie trabaja mejor y más duro que Él, especialmente cuando pones tu todo ante Él, es suficiente motivación para seguir luchando por lo que anhelas. Solo tienes que orar y esperar.

“Finalmente me he dado cuenta de que es en esta temporada de espera y mantenerme parada ante el Señor, dándole mi todo, que él hace sus mejores trabajos.” (*The Seasons of Waiting, Today's Christian Woman*)

A todos mis compañeros quienes están en esta temporada de espera, estamos en esto juntos. Mejor aún, estamos en esto con Dios, y sinceramente, no hay mejor compañía que esa. Sigamos adelante.

Oración: Querido Dios, gracias por mostrarnos que podemos poner nuestros sueños ante ti. Esos sueños que aun a nosotros mismos nos da trabajo seguir llevando en pie. Necesito que te encargues. Te los entrego con todo mi corazón. Derramo mi corazón delante de ti y me mantengo parado ante ti. Confío que tú me puedes ayudar más que nadie. Pongo todo en tus manos por todo el tiempo que quieras. Dame paz y seguridad cuando me encuentre sin esperanza, y perdóname si alguna vez dudo de ti. Amén.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Better Together

BY **Shelbey Younts**

Sophomore, Elementary Education major, Student Ministry Team member

“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!”

As I have gotten older I have gotten more and more independent. I mean we all do, right? We want to be able to do things on our own. I have learned to be content being alone and even welcome it sometimes. In some situations having some quiet time between you and God is the perfect solution. But I don't think that God created us to be alone all of the time, he wants us to be in fellowship with others.

In Ecclesiastes it tells us that two are better than one, because if one falls down the other can help him back up. During my sophomore year of high school I went to an event with my youth group at Michigan State University called Acquire the Fire. It is a massive christian youth event filled with worship, speakers, and theatrical performances. On the last day of the event, during the last session of worship I broke down. I started crying and was caught in a moment of surrender. I can't identify the exact reason I was crying, just that the Holy Spirit was doing some work on my heart. As I think back on this moment, I often think about the people that I had around me. Not only was I in a stadium filled with thousands of other christians, but I had some of my best friends supporting me, worshipping with me, and praying for me. I had friends around me to help me up when I had fallen.

God wants us to spend time together. He wants us to cry together, laugh together, worship together, and support one another. He created us to be with one another because he knows that we are better together.

Prayer: God, your ways are greater than mine. I pray that you would surround me with people who will encourage me, pray with me, and support me. I know that I can't fulfill all you have in store for me on my own. I need you and I need other people, Father. Thank you for all you have done for me, I love you. Amen.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Performing Together

BY **Janell Preheim**

Sophomore, Music Education major

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help.

I love playing violin. I enjoy learning new pieces and the challenge of finding the best sound and perfecting it. Recently, I've realized that I also love the thrill of performing. As much as I enjoy it, my nerves always affect my performance. It can be very frustrating when you work so hard on something and it doesn't turn out as well the time it counts. The beauty of playing with an accompanist or in an ensemble is that another person is there to keep the music going as you regain control. You help each other through the tricky spots and mistakes in the performance. And best of all, you can play off each other's emotions and musicality to create an even more expressive and meaningful performance. It is similar in life. We need people that we trust around us to help us up when we make mistakes. Through the support, friendship, and fellowship of others we can have a more meaningful experience and learn to help others grow as well. After I read these two verses a few times, the second part of verse 10 stuck out as a call for me to be more mindful of when others need help. Sometimes I get too caught up in the busyness of whatever I am doing, whether it is work, school, or practicing, that I don't notice that someone close to me is having a tough day or could use a little encouragement. In our often individualistic society, that emphasizes work and productivity, we need this reminder to support and be present with others.

God, thank you for showing us that our reward will be greater and more valuable when we take part in a supportive community. Help us to be aware of the needs of others and to be supportive and encouraging of those around us. Help us to show your love to others and build people up, rather than focusing only on our own wants and desires. Amen.

Matthew 6:25-33

Faith and Letting Go

BY **Hannah Friesen**
Senior Psychology major

²⁵“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

²⁸“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³²For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

As I head into my senior year, the advice offered in this passage is especially difficult to follow. No longer cushioned safely in the middle of my college experience with a several-year buffer between me and the real world, I find that thoughts about my future are constantly lurking in the corners of my brain. Not-so-little worries like what I’m going to do and where I’m going to live are hard to ignore. Reading this passage is frustrating at first, because it seems impossible to trust that my future will work itself out on its own. But it sends a gentle reminder that obsessing over it right now doesn’t help anything. God will take care of it, the passage says. God takes care of the birds and the flowers and all parts of his creation that don’t work for their living, and God will take care of you too.

Before I had even read this passage, God was at work in my life proving that I could truly learn to let go. This past January I headed off to Peru on SST. After I returned I would be coming back to Goshen for the summer, but because I would be out of the country I wouldn’t be able to figure out all the details ahead of time. I hadn’t confirmed that I had a job or a vehicle, even though I knew I would need to be going to South Bend several times a week. When I came back to campus for May term, I sent a message to the congregation I’d been attending and shortly several people stepped forward to offer me access to their own vehicles for a couple months. I couldn’t believe the amazing show of support from this community I’d only been a part of for a few years. While I’m still a decent worrier, I try to remember this story as an example of how things will work themselves out.

Heavenly Caretaker, teach us to let go of the unnecessary worries that pester us on a regular basis. Let us be calm in the realization that if we follow you, the rest will follow. Let us seek to be positive forces in the world, people who stand for good and who work hard to pursue it, and to be comforted in the knowledge that that is enough. Amen.

Matthew 25:31-46

Sheep, Goats, and the Poor People's Campaign

BY **Stephen Lowe**

Sophomore music major, Student Ministry Team member

³¹"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' ³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' ⁴⁰And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' ⁴¹Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' ⁴⁴Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?' ⁴⁵Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' ⁴⁶And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

On June 23, 2018, hundreds of people of many faiths joined together on the national mall in Washington D.C. to revive an anti-poverty movement started by Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968, weeks before his assassination. I was fortunate enough to attend the revival, and what I experienced that day was a spiritual movement, spearheaded by Christian ministers and clergy, challenging the federal government, and demanding a moral reality that recognizes the humanity of the poor, and ensures they are provided for. As I reflected on my experience, I couldn't help but think of Matthew 25. This passage is the very last teaching of Jesus' ministry on earth. It finishes a section about the kingdom of heaven, and talks about those who are saved at the end of the world and those who are condemned. This passage has often been seen as a call for Christians to take care of "the least of these," but if we take Jesus' words at face value it is also a warning to those of us who do not care of the poor, who will be sent off to damnation. When we ignore the poor and marginalized we risk our own salvation. In this passage, Jesus makes central to our identity as Christians and intrinsic to our personal salvation how those who are invisible to the world are treated. The problems of the marginalized are also our problems. As Christians, we have been called to be global citizens, and that means advocating for and taking care of those who do not have a voice. That can be the voice less thousands of miles away in the sweatshops of mega corporations, or the family just down the street, struggling to pay monthly rent. We are called to stand for and with those on the margins. This call might not always be political. Sometimes it is the everyday, ordinary actions that subvert the power structures of our society and recognize the

humanity of those relegated to be the refuse of society. As we all embark on this next year of college, I implore all of us to take time with the invisible in our community and to give back to those we have marginalized. Our personal salvation may just depend on it.

God of the poor, outcast, and marginalized

We know that we fall short of the society you envision.

Enable us to see those who the world deems to be less than human, dirty, unworthy, and inspire us to stand with them.

Give us hands, feet, and voices to work for you.

Help us to be citizens of your world and not citizens of the worldly.

In the name of your son, Jesus Christ,

Amen

Romans 3:20-24

We are All #InThisTogether

BY **Chelsea Foster** *Junior History major, Student Ministry Team member*

BY **Kelsey Winters** *Junior Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies major and Business minor, Student Ministry Team member*

²⁰*“Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God’s sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin. ²¹But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.*

²²*This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

²⁴*and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”*

It is easy in today’s world to get caught up in the competition that is so involved in every aspect of life. Particularly in a college environment, competition is often crucial to our individual success. But it also comes through in more subtle ways, through thoughts like “Well, at least I’m doing better than them.” In these instances, competition can be destructive to individuals and relationships. It’s easy to acknowledge this, but harder to walk it out. How should this realization impact how we go about our daily lives?

We are here to learn, to serve, to be better versions of ourselves. And yes, sometimes competition is an important part of this experience. But sometimes we forget that this is only one aspect of our experience and get caught up in the drama, the gossip, and the hatefulness that can come from competing with one another. At the end of the day, we have more in common than we realize. We point fingers at others without first looking at ourselves.

We all fall short of the glory of God. We are all sinners. Not one of us can claim perfection.

While this is a hard truth, God’s grace is Good News--God doesn’t give it to us to fuel guilt and shame. God’s forgiveness is readily available through his unearned, unmerited, and undeserved grace. Can’t we at least try and offer the same understanding to others? Let us remember, we love because God loved us first. So let us be kinder and finally be all #InThisTogether.

Ephesians 4:32

The Snooze Button

BY **Ruguooser (Gogo) Liegise**

Sophomore, Molecular Biochemistry and Music double major

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ forgave you.

After vacations, when the rhythm kicks in, there's always one thing still left unconquered in me; the urge to snooze-button. Getting off the bed seems like the most difficult task on earth. The utmost essential yet a herculean task in itself.

Teen Jordyn Howe took his grandfather's gun to school and while showing the metal piece to his friends he had his friend Lourdes shot dead, accidentally. Jordyn was sentenced and was in the most possibly tragic point of his life. The community and the Judge was astonished when Mrs. Guzman-Jesus, Lourdes' mother stepped up to not only forgive the teen but pleaded for him to get a lighter sentence. Mrs. Guzman knew that this was what Lourdes would want the most. Jordyn served only for a year in a juvenile detention center and also visits local schools with Lourdes' mom to warn kids of the dangers of guns.

2000 years ago, a son of a Jewish carpenter walked on this planet teaching forgiveness and peace and demonstrated His love on the cross, that who ever believes that Christ has forgiven him/her from all their sins shall have everlasting life. This is the reason today that we forgive because he has forgiven us first. It wasn't easy for Mrs. Guzman to not just forgive but to do what Lourdes wanted the most. It was an essential yet an arduous step.

Like getting off the bed in the morning, forgiveness too is an essential but difficult task; however snoozing it and holding grudges only makes it all the more harder in the end. Let it go!

Father, I thank you for your Son Jesus, who forgave me for my sins on the cross. I ask for strength to forgive the people who have and will wrong me. I pray in Jesus name. Amen

1 John 4:19-21

Loving Will Be Easier

BY **Yejin Kim**

Junior Music major, Spanish minor

¹⁹We love because he first loved us. ²⁰Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. ²¹And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

‘Love’ is a complex concept and ‘loving’ may be a challenge in certain situations. With this thought behind, God’s command to “love your neighbor as yourself” and “love your enemies” may seem unfulfillable and remain as a difficult task.

Loving may be difficult because we fail to remember God’s love. God has provided so much for us. God’s work comes through our lives in various ways, unconditionally. But if we cannot recognize God’s love and turn away from it, we fail to remember God’s love. If we fail to remember God’s love, we fail to admit what enables us to love others. If we fail to love others, we cannot say that we truly love God.

Loving may be difficult because of our boundaries. You and I all have boundaries. We believe that some boundaries are appropriate and some provide protection. But some keep us from loving. Some collide with others and cause conflict. Nonetheless, God’s love exceeds the many boundaries we emplace, as God loved us first, giving us the strength and love that may do the same.

Loving may be difficult because of fear. We stay in our boundaries because of fear. We hesitate to leave our comfort zones because of fear. We fear that we might lose our possessions and our privilege. We fear our enemies, but also fear the strangers, the foreigners, the minorities and the ones who need love in our global community. But, there is no fear in love. If we hold onto God’s love, we will overcome our fears. If we reach out to those who need love, we will find love.

Loving will be easier when we truly love God. When we can truly love our community. When we can truly love those who we have seen and live together. If we truly love God, then we must truly love one another and defeat our ignorance, breakdown our boundaries, and overcome our fears. Because God has commanded us, and has loved us first.

Prayer: God, grant us the ability to defeat our ignorance, to breakdown our boundaries, to overcome our fears. Let us see those who need love. The strangers, the foreigners, the minorities and ourselves, for by your arms we are all loved, and your love only enables us to live and love one another. Amen.

Persian Poetry of Saa'di “Humanity and Suffering” I’m Gandhi and Hitler, too

BY **Nasim Fatemeh Rasoulipour**

Junior, Interdisciplinary Major, Student Ministry Team member

Once I watched a video called “The Egg.” It was about a homeless man who dies on the street and goes up to meet God. The conversation that he has with God is very interesting. God explains to the man that the reason for creating the whole universe is just for this man to mature - because there is no one else in the universe and it’s just him and God. God continues and tells the man that all the people who ever lived on earth, Gandhi and everyone who followed him or Hitler and the millions that he killed, are in fact him! But with different manifestations. “Every time you victimize someone, you’ve victimized yourself and every act of kindness you’ve done, you’ve done to yourself.”

The world can be so different once we start looking at each other as we are seeing ourselves, as part of one body. Accepting and helping each other is helping ourselves. We can “mature” in this life through opening our hearts to each other. One of the most famous Iranian poets, Saadi says:

Humanity are members of one body

Created out of the same essence

when one member of the body

feels pain

others remain distraught

You,

unfeeling to the suffering of others

are unworthy

of the name human

(Saa'di, 1184, 1291, Shiraz, Iran, Trans: Omid Safi)

Kindest and Most Companionate Soul, strengthen our sensitivity toward our other parts of this body and help us remember each other in hard times. Let us open the doors of generosity and help toward others and close the doors of selfishness towards ourselves. Amen.

Writing a Dialogue: Meeting Jesus

BY **Marlene Kropf**

Begin by reading John 1:35-39 slowly and thoughtfully.

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, “Look, here is the Lamb of God!” The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi” (which translated means Teacher), “where are you staying?” He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day.

Imagine the scene in which John and his disciples see Jesus passing by. Notice the details of the scene – the road, the town, the sky, and vegetation. Let yourself become one of the characters in the story, perhaps one of the two disciples. Become aware of the disciple’s feelings as he or she follows Jesus. What is the disciple thinking? What does the disciple see in Jesus’ face when Jesus turns around and speaks? How does it feel to ask Jesus a question? What happens as the disciples follow Jesus to the place where he is staying?

Begin writing the story as though you are there.

You can begin at any point in the action. When you come to the place where Jesus asks the disciples, “What are you looking for?” let yourself become a partner in the conversation. Answer Jesus’ questions as if they are addressed to you.

For example, write:

Jesus: *What are you looking for? What do you want?*

Your Name: *Here you write whatever response seems like the one you would make to Jesus.*

Jesus: *Write Jesus’ response to you.*

Continue writing the dialogue as long as you have something to say. Don’t try to decide if the words are really the words of Jesus. Just write until the conversation is finished. There will be time later to reflect on what has happened in the exchange. Writing a dialogue is a way of trusting our imagination to lead us into a conversation with God. As a kind of prayer in which we both listen and speak to God, such dialogues can be a helpful discipline in hearing a personal word from God as well as helping to clarify our inner thoughts and motivations. In some cases, these dialogues can also be a way to discern God’s direction in our lives.

Conversational Prayer

Here you are invited to carry on a conversation with God which requires both speaking and listening. You can start on either side of the paper, “Me” or “God.”

If you start on the “Me” side:

What is it that you want to say to God? What is on your mind? What are you struggling with right now? Write it down. Then go to the side that says “God.” Listen to what God might be saying to you. Write what you think God would say to you in response to, what you have written. Then, go back to the “Me” side and respond to God. Continue this conversation back and forth for as long as you need to. Reread what you have written.

If you start on the “God” side:

What is it that God wants to say to you? Write it down. Then go to the side that says “Me.” Say what you want to God. Follow the same steps as above, going back and forth between the sides for as long as you need to. Then, reread what you have written.

ME

GOD

Examen

The Examen is a way of praying, in which you take time to be aware of God's loving presence, while quietly reflecting on two questions. The questions are opposite from one another.

These questions are designed to help us think about our day, our week, or our month, etc. in a way that recognizes both our joys and disappointments. It gives a way to name what disappoints, hurts, or scares us while at the same time declaring that there are things that bless, uplift, and carry us. It is a way of allowing God to be a part of our everyday ups and downs.

Here are some examples of questions you can use. Pick a question pair or two to use and then spend some time reflecting on each question. Share your thoughts and feelings with God, or your spiritual friend.

Example Questions:

- *What made me smile?*
- *What made me scowl or frown?*
- *For what moment am I most grateful?*
- *For what moment am I least grateful?*
- *When did I feel the most alive?*
- *When did I feel the most drained?*
- *What scared me?*
- *What made me feel safe & hopeful?*
- *What in my relationship with God is most helpful?*
- *What in my relationship with God is most challenging?*

Try with a pair of questions every night or at the end of every week as a way of strengthening your prayer life. You may want to design your own questions as well.

"Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."

—Howard Thurman

A Breath Prayer

For centuries the breath prayer has existed as a way to connect with God. For some it is a way to befriend silence; it gives you something to do as you begin to experience holy silence.

As you repeat the prayer, its words eventually become background so you can be open to hearing what God might say. You can choose your own breath prayer and then repeat it over and over in rhythm with the inhale and exhale of your breath.

First choose a simple phrase that summarizes what you may need from your relationship with God right now. You might choose a line from a song or a phrase of Scripture, as long as it is not too wordy. Or choose something like:

- *Be with me, God*
- *Jesus, help me follow you*
- *Spirit, give me strength*
- *Gracious God, fill me with love*
- *Guide me, Savior*
- *Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me*

You may wish to simply pray this prayer for a few minutes or up to 10, 20, or 30 minutes... however long you feel this is beneficial to your soul. You might also consider praying a breath prayer as you walk, run, ride bike, or some other seemingly mundane activity.

Isaiah 12:2

Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the Lord God is my strength and my might; God has become my salvation.

"We must learn to realize that the love of God seeks us in every situation and seeks our good."

—Thomas Merton, *Seeds of Contemplation*

Psalms 117:1-2

¹Praise the Lord, all you nations! Extol God, all you peoples! ²For great is the Holy One's steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord!

Lectio Divina: Praying The Sacred Texts

“Reading the Bible and praying the Bible are two very different undertakings. To pray the Bible is to apply listening and silence to the Word of God in order to hear God speak...The ancients realized that scripture, when read the right way, opens doors to a direct relationship with God.” (Creating a Life with God, pages 38-39.)

Lectio Divina is a way of praying Scripture. It dates back to the Middle Ages and has primarily been used among Benedictine monks. It “aims at giving an awareness of God’s presence through a fourfold process.”

This method can take five minutes or it can take several hours! You are encouraged to spend an equal amount of time with each part. Though any passage can be used, those that work well for this method of praying are often the Gospel stories and Psalms that range in length no more than ten verses.

Part I-Lectio (reading) Receive the word of God. Read the text twice, out loud or in silence, then pause for a moment. Read the text slowly again so that you can savor it.

Part II-Meditatio/Ruminatio (ruminate; mull over) Allow the word to be present. Read the text again slowly. Take notice of a word or phrase that strikes you in a unique way. After you read the text think about that word or phrase.

Part III-Oratio (speak) Articulate your response. Read the text slowly again pausing afterwards. During your silent pause take time to ask God, “Why does this word or phrase stand out to me today? What are you saying to me today?” Just wait and listen for a moment or two.

Part IV-Contemplatio (“contemplate”) Rest in the presence of God. Carry this prayer experience with you. Thank God for the word that was revealed to you today.

Some passages you might consider...

- *Psalm 1:1-6*
- *Psalm 15:1-5*
- *Psalm 101:1-8*
- *Matthew 6:25-34*
- *Matthew 14:22-33*
- *Matthew 20:20-28*
- *Mark 4:35-41*
- *Mark 6:6b-13*
- *Mark 7:24-30*
- *Mark 12:41-44*
- *Luke 8:22-25*
- *Luke 9:23-27*
- *Luke 11:1-13*
- *Luke 19:1-10*

The Jesus Prayer

“Prayer is essentially an entering into that knowledge of the Divine love holding us.”

— Simon Barrington-Ward, p.22

Turning our attention to God in an intentional way is the cornerstone of prayer. One prayer practice used over the centuries is the simple Jesus Prayer. This repetitive prayer invites the prayer to put her/himself in the presence of God and invite God’s mercy to wash over the prayer and the world. Three different options are listed here:

*Lord Jesus Christ
Son of God
Have mercy on me.*

*Lord Jesus Christ
Son of God
Have mercy on me, a sinner.*

*Lord Jesus Christ
Love of God
Have mercy on me
and on the whole world.*

Instructions from *The Jesus Prayer: A Way to Contemplation** by Simon Barrington-Ward include the following:

How to begin:

- Sit comfortably, relax and breathe slowly
- Pray the words of the prayer out loud: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me,” repeating the prayer over and over.
- Try to pray for ten minutes at first; gradually increase the time, if desired.

Additional Notes:

- When you find your mind wandering, let the words of the prayer bring you back to an awareness of God: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God...”
- You may choose to breathe intentionally as you pray, breathing in as you say the first half of the prayer (Lord Jesus Christ, Son/Love of God) and breathing out as you say the second half (Have mercy on me/Have mercy on me and on the whole world).
- Use this as a prayer of intercession by putting the name of a person, a group of people, or a situation in place of “me” as you repeat this prayer.
- Gradually let the prayer lead you into times of complete silence, resting in the love of God.

**The Jesus Prayer: A Way to Contemplation*, Simon Barrington-Ward, (US Edition: Pauline Books & Media, Boston, MA), 2011

Prayers Of Lament

Expressions of biblical lament can be found in numerous books of the Bible, particularly in Psalms. Of the 150 Psalms, nearly half can be categorized as a form of lament. These prayers can be for both individual and corporate settings. Though not all lament psalms follow the same format, there is often a common flow and movement among these prayers. See below. In these psalms, a critical turning point occurs in most of them when the plea or complaint turns to praise.

“The practice of lament gives you time and permission to vent your pent-up anger, your deep sadness, and your self-blame. You allow yourself to grieve in a way that leads to healing and renewal. As you pour out your grief, loss, pain, and anger in the presence of God, you discover that God hears your cries of anguish and comforts you. While you can’t remove the storms, quiet the thunder, or stop the lightning from striking, you can trust your tears to be the raindrops that release the clouds, allowing rays of sunlight to shine through. Before catching a glimpse of the rainbow, though, you have to brace yourself for the raging storm within.”*

Write your own “3-Act” psalm

Act I: Arguing with God

People get mad at God (or some other event/reality) and pour out their raw emotions.

Act II: Remembering God’s goodness

Gradually those who complained remember God’s help in the past and know that God has heard them.

Act III: Praising God

Those who lament realize they can trust God with their lives and they tell God, “Thanks!”

*Bass, Dorothy & Don Richter, eds. *Way to Live: Christian Practices for Teens*. (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2002), page 251.

Psalm 22:1-2

¹My God, my god, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? ²O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest.

Be Still

Be still and know that I am God. — Psalm 46:10a

In our busy and noisy world, it can be difficult to slow down...to stop...to relax...to breathe...to be still. This way of praying gives you opportunity to do just that...be still. And to do it in a way that calls us to remember who God is.

To pray this prayer, you simply keep in mind the phrase “Be still and know that I am God,” but you will actually “chop off” words of this verse until you are in total stillness. Repeat each phrase in the quietness of your mind for one minute. Or you can do it for more or less time than that, but keep it an equal amount of time.

Repeat the following phrases each for one minute...for a total of five minutes:

Be still and know that I am God

Be still and know

Be still

Be

...silence...

Psalm 46

¹God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ²Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; ³though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. *Selah*

⁴There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. ⁵God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns. ⁶The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; God utters speech, the earth melts. ⁷The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. *Selah*

⁸Come, behold the works of the Lord; see what desolations God has brought on the earth. ⁹The Holy One makes wars cease to the end of the earth; God breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. ¹⁰‘Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.’ ¹¹The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. *Selah*

Praying With Art

Spending time contemplating an art piece can be a way of entering into prayer. It can be a way of listening in prayer. It can be a way that Scripture comes to life for you.

- Choose a picture you would like to focus on. You may want to choose something related to a certain Scripture passage. Or select some paintings or drawings from religious art books or other sources.
- Sit down; make yourself comfortable. Ask God to open something up to you through this work of art.
- Spend time looking at the picture: notice color, texture, layers, the characters and scenery. Allow yourself to hone in on details.
- After some time, allow yourself to withdraw from looking at detail and look at the “big picture.”
- Ask what is this piece trying to portray? What is it saying?
- Allow yourself to be drawn in again, this time imagining yourself as a part of the scene. What character do you relate to? What emotion in the picture might describe where you are right now? What strikes you?
- Spend some time praying asking God what this means for you. It may be that this simply gives you a different view of Jesus or someone else to ponder. It may be a tool God is giving you to open up Scripture to you in a whole new way. It may be an insight into yourself. Whatever it is, thank God for it.

“Whatever may be the tensions and the stresses of a particular day, there is always lurking close at hand the trailing beauty of forgotten joy or unremembered peace.”

—Howard Thurman, *Meditations of the Heart*

“Do not think that love in order to be genuine has to be extraordinary. What we need is to love without getting tired. Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies.”

—Mother Teresa

“Earth is crammed with heaven”

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Praying With Clay

Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. —Isaiah 64:8

It isn't always easy to put into words what we want to share with God. Sometimes it is downright hard to pray. Praying with clay can be a rich new way for you to experience prayer. You can use your hands to feel that you are sharing something with God.

- Choose a ball of clay to work with. Then make yourself comfortable.
- You may want to choose a Scripture passage on which to reflect, or simply use the clay to express some feelings or challenges you are experiencing.
- Try to get a bit lost in what you are doing, allowing God to enter into your process of creating.
- When you are done you may have a symbol before you or you may simply have worked some things out through the clay.

Psalm 8:1-9

¹*O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. ²Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger. ³When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; ⁴what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? ⁵Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. ⁶You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, ⁷all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, ⁸the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. ⁹O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

Praying Through Drawing

Sometimes it is difficult to put into words what we are experiencing, what we want to share with God. Therefore, sharing with God through drawing can be helpful.

- It may help to capture emotions you are experiencing that are so hard to describe.
- It may be a special way to describe something you are struggling with.
- Drawing, like journaling, can be a special thing you can look back on and remember where you were spiritually when you offered such a prayer.
- Finally, try to think of this as a special offering to God. You are creating something as you pray. It is a gift that you share with God. It can be a symbol of your relationship with God and where you are in your journey.

Find a comfortable spot to spend some time drawing your prayers to God.

Psalms 139:1-6

1 O Lord, you have searched me and known me. 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. 3 You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely. 5 You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.

*I swim inside this love on my inside
Love that was before there was a time
Love that will be after there will be a time*

—Rumi, *Radical Love*

Praying With Photography

Use your camera to help you see reflectively. With your camera in hand, take a contemplative walk, being present to the life and to the details around you. Be mindful of that to which your eye is drawn. Receive (as opposed to “take” or “shoot!”) each of these visual gifts with your camera. Choose the image that most draws your attention. Use this image as a starting point for reflection on the holy, the sacred, the presence of God in all things.

Sit reflectively with one image and ponder some of these questions:

- *What emotions does this image evoke in you?*
- *What might God be offering you through this image?*
- *What might God be showing you about yourself in this image?*
- *In what ways does this image call you to grow or to be transformed?*

Receive your awareness with thanks and gently transition back to your day.

Adapted from *Eyes of the Heart: Photography as a Christian Contemplative Practice* by Christine Valters Paintner (Sorin Books, Notre Dame, IN 2013)

Loving Kindness

We all need to practice being kind, particularly to ourselves. Only when we first reconnect with the infinite love—our original and inherent blessing—that is our ground of being can we extend that love to others through nonviolent actions. When we remember that we are love, we can truly wish even our enemies well. The Buddhist practice of *metta*, loving kindness, is a wonderful way to grow compassion for yourself and for others.

Begin by sitting in silence and finding the place of loving kindness within you. Then speak the following statements aloud:

May I be free from inner and outer harm and danger. May I be safe and protected.

May I be free of mental suffering or distress.

May I be happy.

May I be free of physical pain and suffering.

May I be healthy and strong.

May I be able to live in this world happily, peacefully, joyfully, with ease.

Repeat these affirmations as many times as you wish. When you are ready, replace the “I” in each statement with someone else’s name. You might begin with a beloved, then move in widening circles to send love toward a friend, an acquaintance, someone who has hurt you, and finally the whole universe.

Prayers Of Others

A Reason to Pray

Whoever has not begun the practice of prayer, I beg for the love of the Lord not to go without so great a good. There is nothing here to fear but only something to desire. Even if there be no great progress, or much effort in reaching such perfection as to deserve the favor and mercies God bestows on the more generous, at least a person will come to understand the road leading to heaven. And if one perseveres, I trust then in the mercy of God, who never fails to repay anyone who has taken Him for a friend. For mental prayer in my opinion is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us.

—Teresa of Avila, a 16th century Catholic Spanish mystic

A Journey Blessing

The journey blessing of Mary MacDonald has a sense of the presence of the Trinity accompanying the traveler, that profound and totally natural experience of God as Trinity that is so much a mark of Celtic prayer:

God be with thee in every pass, Jesus be with thee on every hill,
Spirit be with thee on every stream,
 Headland and ridge and lawn;
Each sea and land, each moor and meadow,
Each lying down, each rising up,
In the trough of the waves, on the crest of the billows,
 Each step of the journey thou goest.

—*The Celtic Way of Prayer*, page 11

A Trinitarian Prayer of Protection

This prayer is from the Carmina Gadelica, a 19th century Scottish collection of hymns, prayers, and blessings.

The guarding of the God of life be upon me,
The guarding of loving Christ be upon me,
The guarding of the Holy Spirit be upon me,
 Each step of the way,
 To aid me and enfold me,
 Each day and night of my life.

—*The Celtic Way of Prayer*, page 27

Psalm 121

“I lift up my eyes to the hills - from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. God will not let your foot be moved; God who keeps you will not slumber. The One who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all evil; The Holy One will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore.”

Plea for Perseverance

Dear eternal, heavenly Father,
 I call upon you from the depths of my heart;
 do not let me turn from you,
 but keep me in your truth unto my end.
 Instruct and teach me,
 your poor, unworthy child,
 that I may press even unto death,
 through all sorrows, sufferings, anguish and pain.
 Let me persevere, O God,
 that I may not be separated from your love.
 Comfort me by your holy word,
 in which I firmly trust.
 I commend myself to you and your church.
 Be my Protector today,
 for your holy name's sake,
 through Jesus Christ. Amen.

—**Anna of Freiburg**, a 16th century German Anabaptist martyr
zealous in her faith; drowned & burned

God's Encompassing Presence

God be in my head and in my understanding;
 God be in mine eyes, and in my looking;
 God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;
 God be in my heart, and in my thinking;
 God be at my end, and at my departing.

—**Sarum Missal**, a 16th century English church liturgical prayer book

Desire for Faithfulness

O God,
preserve us in your keeping,
that we may not faint and abandon your Word.
Let us enjoy the faithfulness which you have shown
through your Son Jesus Christ.
Kindle in us the fire of your divine love;
lead us to practice love as your dear children.
Let the light of your divine glory illuminate us,
that we may walk in it.

O God,
we ask you for one thing more:
send us your Holy Spirit,
endue us with power,
renew our hearts,
and make us strong in you
that we may obey you
and praise your name. Amen.

—*Prayer of Hans Langmantel and his manservant and maidservant,
16th century Dutch Anabaptist martyrs*

Peace Prayer

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;
And 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.
Amen.

—*attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, a 13th century Italian Catholic monk*

Prayer: I Have No Idea Where I Am Going

“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 that 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 will I 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*

A Martyr's Prayer

Loving God,
 You have baptized us into one body
 and made us to drink the one Spirit.
 Now grant us pure and faithful hearts
 that we may serve one another diligently in love
 and find no cause to separate or divide.
 Call each of us to esteem others better than ourselves
 so we may remain together in peace and joy.
 Grant these mercies to us and all your people. Amen.

—Tijds Jeuriaenss, a 16th century Anabaptist minister.
In 1569 Minister Tijds was strangled and burned at the stake.

Prayer: The Lord's Prayer: Liberation Theology Version

Our Father and Mother
who is in us here on earth,
holy is your name
in the hungry
who share their bread and their song.
Your Kingdom come,
which is a generous land
flowing with milk and honey.
Let us do your will,
standing up when all are sitting down,
and raising our voice
when all are silent.
You are giving us our daily bread
in the song of the bird and the miracle of the corn.
Forgive us
for keeping silent in the face of injustice,
and for burying our dreams;
for not sharing bread and wine,
love and the land,
among us, now.
Don't let us fall into the temptation
of shutting the door through fear,
of resigning ourselves to hunger and injustice,
of taking up the same arms as the enemy.
But deliver us from evil.
Give us the perseverance and the solidarity
to look for love,
even if the path has not yet been trodden,
even if we fail;
so we shall have known your Kingdom
which is being built forever and ever.
Amen.

Transformation

O my Divine Saviour

Transform me into Yourself.
 May my hands be the hands of Jesus.
 May my tongue be the tongue of Jesus.
 Grant that every faculty of my body
 May serve only to glorify You.

Above all,

Transform my soul and all its powers
 So that my memory, will and affections
 May be the memory, will and affections
 Of Jesus.

I pray to You

To destroy in me
 All that is not of You.

Grant that I may live

But in You, by You and for You,

So that I may truly say with St. Paul,

“I love now, not I,
 But Christ lives in me.”

—Saint John Gabriel Perboyre, 19th century French priest and missionary
 to China, executed on September 11, 1840 for preaching Christianity

God's Pencil

I always say I am a little pencil in the hands of God. He does the thinking. He does the writing. He does everything--and it's really hard--sometimes it's a broken pencil. He has to sharpen it a little more. But be a little instrument in His hands so that He can use you any time, anywhere. . . . We have only to say Yes to Him.

—Mother Teresa of Calcutta, a 20th century Albanian nun

May I See You Today

Dearest Lord, may I see You today and every day in the person of Your sick, and, while nursing them, minister unto You. Though You hide Yourself behind the unattractive disguise of the irritable, the exacting, the unreasonable, may I still recognize You, and say, “Jesus, my patient, how sweet it is to serve You.”

—Mother Teresa of Calcutta, 20th century Catholic nun

Protection for the Journey

“The path I walk, Christ walks it.” The opening words of a traditional 6th century poem attributed to St. Columba ask for the protection and support of Christ’s presence on this journey wherever it may carry us.

The path I walk, Christ walks it.

May the land in which I am be without sorrow.

May the Trinity protect me wherever I stay,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Bright angels walk with me – dear presence –in every dealing.

In every dealing I pray them that no one’s poison may reach me.

The ninefold people of heaven of holy cloud,

the tenth force of the stone earth.

Favourable company, they come with me,

so that the Lord may not be angry with me.

May I arrive at every place, may I return home;

may the way in which I spend be a way without loss.

May every path before me be smooth,

man, woman and child welcome me.

A truly good journey!

Well does the fair Lord show us a course, a path.

—*The Celtic Way of Prayer*, page 6

What we would like to do is change the world

—make it a little simpler for people to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves as God intended them to do. And, by fighting for better conditions, by crying out unceasingly for the rights of the workers, the poor, of the destitute—the rights of the worthy and the unworthy poor, in other words—we can, to a certain extent, change the world; we can work for the oasis, the little cell of joy and peace in a harried world. We can throw our pebble in the pond and be confident that its ever widening circle will reach around the world. We repeat, there is nothing we can do but love, and, dear God, please enlarge our hearts to love each other, to love our neighbor, to love our enemy as our friend.

—Dorothy Day

A Foolish Blessing

May God bless you with discomfort
 at easy answers, half truths, and superficial relationships,
 so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger
 at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people,
 so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears
 to shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger and war,
 so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and
 to turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness
 to believe that you can make a difference in the world,
 so that you can do what others claim cannot be done
 to bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor.

—*A Franciscan Benediction*

Psalm 23 Comfort

I am a child of God,
 I have everything I need.

This beautiful earth feeds my body.
 You feed my soul.

You guide me in the ways of Life,
 for You are Life.

And though I will walk through dark places, and eventually to death,
 I need never be afraid.

For You are with me always,
 In You I can find comfort.

With Your help, I can face whatever comes.
 My joy overflows.

Your goodness and blessing will be with me
 Every day of my life — and forever.

—*23rd Psalm adapted by Christine Robinson, Psalms for a New World website*

Journal

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