

For the Companions of St. Luke, O.S.B

Prayers during this Time of Hope



Christ Pantocrator or "The Ruler of All, Sustainer of All, the Eternal Light"

PREPARATION FOR SILENT PRAYER

Father, we praise and glorify your holy Name, for you did not speak to Elijah the prophet in the fire, earthquake, or tempest, but rather chose to reveal yourself to him in the intimate silence of a still, small voice. You also chose the silence of the desert and the solitude of the mountain to strengthen and refresh your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. In the silence and solitude of our hearts may the Holy Spirit guide and direct us during this time of prayer. *Amen (Anglican Monastic Breviary, p.434)*

Divine and Hidden Friend,
I often feel that I fail at prayer,
But I rejoice that your Spirit
Prays ceaselessly in the cellar of my heart.

Grant me the grace to sit still
that I may hear the Spirit's silent song,
ever flowing like a river deep within,
singing my love for you.

Quiet my restless heart,
Calm my roving, runaway mind,
As now, in communion with all the earth
And her many-colored children,
I enter into the song of love,
The prayer of stillness. *Amen*

Prayers

Catch me in my anxious scurrying, Lord, and hold me in this Advent season: hold my feet to the fire of your grace and make me attentive to my mortality that I may begin to die now to those things that keep me from living with you and with my neighbors on this earth; to grudges and indifference, to certainties that smother possibilities, to my fascination with false securities, to my arrogant insistence on how it has to be: to my corrosive fear of dying someday which eats away the wonder of living this day, and the adventure of losing my life in order to find life in you. *Amen*

Catch me in my mindless scurrying, Lord, and hold me in this Advent season: hold my spirit to the beacon of your grace and grant me light enough to walk boldly, to feel passionately, to love aggressively; grant me peace enough to want more, to work for more and to submit to nothing less, and to fear only...loosing you only you! *Amen*

Give me no becalmed seas, slack sails and premature benedictions, but breathe into me a torment, storm enough to make within myself and from myself...something...something new, something saving, something true, a gladness of heart, a pitch for a song in the storm, a word of praise lived, a gratitude shared, a cross dared, a joy received! *Amen*

Catch me in my aimless scurrying, Lord, and hold me in this (Lenten) season: hold my heart to the beat of your grace and create in me a resting place, a quiet listening place, a kneeling place the sacred place where you and I are one. *Amen*

(from Guerrillas of Grace by Ted Loder.

With our uplifted hearts, hearts full of gratitude, may this prayer of thanksgiving rise to You, God of All Gifts and of Great Generosity. We are thankful for times of stillness which allow us to listen to that Holy River of Prayer flowing in the heart; for the presence of Your Holy Spirit within, the Spirit that prays continuously. *Amen* .

These times of quiet heal us, within and without, replenish our spirit with new strength, and prepare us to meet the constant struggle of daily life, with renewed hope and joy. Like Your Son, Jesus, who climbed mountains at night, who retreated deep into the desert to find You in the Stillness, may we, after this Silent Solitary Communion with You, allow our lives to reveal Your Glory and Grace. *Amen* .

Lord, may the seeds of the tree of stillness bear fruit for us and for all the restless world. Blessed are You, Lord our God, who gives to us nourishment in times of silence and solitude. *Amen*

Almighty God, in whose hands are the destiny of all nations, and in whose will is our peace, we plead for the peace of the world. Save us, we pray thee, from the horror and suffering and waste of further war. Restrain the violence which seeks the short cut of force alone. Forgive the pride that insists on its own way. Forgive the blindness which prevents persons from considering any ends but their own. Give wisdom to all who bear the heavy responsibility of leadership.

Soften the hearts of our enemies and guide the nations in this hour. Show all the nations, before it is too late, the path of Thy purposes, and guide the wounded feet of weary humanity into the way of peace through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen Leslie Weatherhead (adapted)*

O God, by whose power we are created, and by whose love we are redeemed, hear the prayers of a desperate and sinful world. Restore us, we pray, from sickness to newness of life, chasten the oppressor and rescue the oppressed, replace our enmities with penitence and our anxieties with trust. Above all, draw us by your Spirit into the unity of faith wherein we are made mindful of your mercy, through Jesus our Lord. *Amen M. Margaret Sheets, SCHC*

For the victims of violence

God of love, whose compassion never fails; we bring before you the griefs and perils of peoples and nations; the necessities of the homeless; the helplessness of the aged and weak; the sighings of prisoners; the pains of the sick and injured; the sorrow of the bereaved. Comfort and relieve them, O merciful Father, according to their needs; for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

after St Anselm (1033-1109)

Prayers of Entrusting and Commending

Eternal light, shine into our hearts,
Eternal Goodness, deliver us from evil,
Eternal Power, be our support,
Eternal Wisdom, scatter the darkness of our ignorance,
Eternal Pity, have mercy upon us;
that with all our heart and mind and soul and strength
we may seek thy face
and be brought by thy infinite mercy to thy holy presence;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Alcuin of York (735-804)

Lord God, patient and steadfast you wait for us until we open to you. We wait for your word, help us to hear your voice. Speak and bring your Son to us, Jesus the word of your peace. We wait for your word, Lord God, patient and steadfast. *Amen*
(from *Seeking God, the Way of St. Benedict*, by Esther de Waal, p. 54)

I am giving Thee worship with my whole life,
I am giving Thee assent with my whole power,
I am giving Thee praise with my whole tongue,
I am giving Thee honour with my whole utterance.

I am giving Thee love with my whole devotion,
I am giving Thee kneeling with my whole desire,
I am giving Thee love with my whole heart,
I am giving Thee affection with my whole sense,
I am giving Thee my existence with my whole being,
I am giving Thee my soul, O God of all gods.
Amen (Celtic dressing prayer, *ibid*, p.96)

Bliss

I call to you, O my God,
and you answer me.
I plead and your kindness
gives me what I desire;
with you I find what I seek.

Filled with awe and joy
I strike the harp before you, my God,
for I turn all my works toward you.
All my hope I place in you
And I rest content in your arms.
(*The Windows of Faith, Prayers of Holy Hildegard*, p. 61)

New Light

Almighty God, who hast poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that the same light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen* (BCP, p.213)

Prayers of trusting and self-offering

I bind unto myself today
The power of God to hold and lead,
His eye to watch, his might to stay,
His ear to hearken to my need.
The wisdom of my God to teach,
His hand to guide, his shield to ward;
The word of God to give me speech,
His heavenly host to be my guard. *Amen from St Patrick's
Breastplate*

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all who love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.
From St Patrick's Breastplate

Alone with none but thee, my God
I journey on my way.
What need I fear, when thou art near
O king of night and day?
More safe am I within thy hand
Than if an host didst round me stand.
St Columba (c.521-597)

Almighty and everlasting God, you govern all things both in
heaven and on earth: Mercifully hear the supplications of your
people, and in our time grant us your peace; through Jesus Christ
our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one
God, for ever and ever. *Amen (BCP, p.215)*

Almighty God, kindle, we pray, in every heart the true love of
peace, and guide with your wisdom those who take counsel for
the nations of the earth, that in tranquility your dominion may
increase until the earth is filled with the knowledge of you love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in
the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen
BCP, p.258)*

A Responsive Lord's Prayer

Our Father in Heaven,

*Remind us constantly that you are parent to all you children, whoever,
or wherever they are or come from.*

Hallowed by your name. Your Kingdom come,

Establishing peace and justice, hope and life for all peoples.

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,

Give us today our daily bread..

Disturb us into awareness of the needs of others.

Forgive us our sins,

Our pride and our prejudices.

As we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into
temptation;

Especially keep our hearts and minds open to see the good in others.

Deliver us from evil. For the kingdom,

Just and true,

The power,

Gentle and fair,

And the glory,

Shot through with the colors of love,

Are yours for ever and ever. Amen

Scripture Readings

The Lord Will Fill You With Hope

Like the people of Judah, whose homes and cities were destroyed,
put your hope and trust in the Lord.
I tell myself "I am finished!
I can't count on the Lord to do anything for me."
Just thinking of my troubles and my lonely wandering
makes me miserable.
That's all I ever think about, and I am depressed.
Then I remember something that fills me with hope.
The Lord's kindness never fails!
If he had not been merciful, we would have been destroyed.
The Lord can always be trusted to show mercy each morning.
Deep in my heart I say, "The Lord is all I need;
I can depend on him!"

Lamentations 3:18-24 (Contemporary English Version)

The Lord Will Give You Strength

You people of Israel, say, "God pays no attention to us!
He doesn't care if we are treated unjustly."
But how can you say that? Don't you know?
Haven't you heard? The Lord is the eternal God,
Creator of the earth.
He never gets weary or tired; His wisdom cannot be measured.
The Lord gives strength to those who are weary.
Even young people get tired, then stumble and fall.
But those who trust the Lord will find new strength.
They will be strong like eagles soaring upward on wings;
They will walk and run, and never get tired.

Isaiah 40:27-31 (Contemporary English Version)

God's Love is Faithful

Your love is faithful, Lord
and even the clouds in the sky can depend on you.
Your decisions are always fair.
They are firm like mountains, deep like the sea.
and all the people and animals are under your care.

Your love is a treasure,
and everyone finds shelter in the shadow of your wings.
You give your guests a feast in your house,
and you serve a tasty drink that flows like a river.
The life-giving fountain belongs to you,
and your light gives light to each of us. *Psalms 36:5-9 (Contemporary English Version)*

The Spirit intercedes...

The Scriptures say that the Holy Spirit will help you pray even when you don't know what to pray for. God understands your needs.

Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. *Romans 8:26-27 (New Revised Standard Version)*

Do not let your hearts be troubled

Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit to help you.

"I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." *John 14:25-27 (New Revised Standard Version)*

Abound in hope...

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so the you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. *Romans 15:13 (New Revised Standard Version)*

THOUGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

Illumination

"O that I might find him" cries the heart,
"That I might touch him as Thomas did."

Then in human proof I found him
as the Christ in you.

I was blinded by his nearness until
healed to perception;
suddenly I saw Christ everywhere,
and he who in his humanity
had no dwelling place,
was sheltered in every loving heart.

(The Shape of Experience by Virginia Huntington, p.46)

God Is For All

God is the life of all free beings. He is the salvation of all; of believers or unbelievers; of the just or the unjust; of the pious or the impious; of those freed from the passions or of those caught in them; of monks or those living in the world; of the educated or the illiterate; of the healthy or the sick; of the young or the very old. He is like the outpouring of the light, the glimpse of the sun, or the changes in the weather, which are the same for everyone without exception. *John Climacus*

(Wisdom of the Desert Fathers, compiled by Benedicta Ward, p. 44)

An Offering

The jasmine behind my house has been completely ruined by the rains and storms of the last few days, its white blossoms are floating about in muddy black pools on the low garage roof. But somewhere inside me the jasmine continues to blossom undisturbed, just as profusely and delicately as ever it did. And it spreads its scent round the House in which you dwell, O God. You can see, I look after you, I bring you not only my tears and my forebodings on this stormy, grey morning, I even bring you scented jasmine.

And I shall bring you all the flowers I shall meet on my way, and truly there are many of those. I shall try to make you at home always. Even if I should be locked up in a narrow cell and a cloud should drift past my small barred window, then I shall bring you that cloud, O God, while there is still the strength in me to do so. I cannot promise you anything for tomorrow, but my intentions are good, you can see. Etty Hillesum

The Peace of God

Peace is not outward quiet.

It is the withdrawal of the soul, into the still place where God is.

While the body walks city streets, pressed by the crowd, or bends to the daily task, while the eye is filled with changing scenes and the ear with the noise of earth, alike in the thronged places of the world or in the desert waste, that withdrawal may take place.

Our souls can go apart and talk with God.

From that still place, the soul at peace with Him takes command of mind and body, directing them according to His will.

And the crowding and the noise, the stress and strain of care and labor, are as naught to the body so commanded.

Peace prevails, and our lives are buoyant with a sense of unity with God.

O God, amidst the rush and hurry of life, help us to keep this quiet place for Thee. And let its holy calm so pervade our days, that we may go untroubled and unafraid, filled with Thy peace "which passeth understanding".

(Friends of the Road, by Grace Carpenter, p.28-29)

Fear

There are so many kinds of fear.

Fear of ourselves, of each other and of God.

Fear of illness and bereavement and loss of friends.

Fear of poverty and loneliness and death.

A fear of everything, a ghostly companion, that stalks at our heels and goes to bed with us at night.

O God, loving Father of unworthy children, give to us the only cure for this unworthy fear.

Give us faith in Thee, and in Thy watchful care that guards us night and day.

Help us to feel Thy protection, Thy friendship and Thy love.

With Christ beside us, give us strength to face each fear and put it to defeat.

Knowing that in Thy love we may be rich, and in Thy friendship we are never truly alone.

(Friends of the Road by Grace Carpenter, p.46-47)

The Comforter

We sorrow, and can find no consolation.

No effort of our own can break the bondage of our suffering; we are alone.

And then, the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, draws near.

He uses a human voice, a friendly hand, He touches and enfolds us. He reaches in and frees the Son, the Word of God, constrained in our darkened heart.

And the Christ within, receives afresh the heavenly dove; He moves in us, and we in Him, and in renewed faith and courage, we go forward in His holy company.

Come, Holy Comforter, through the darkness and the mist.

Touch us with the hand of God.

And by Thy power, move our slow and selfish spirit to response, that in us Christ may be free, and in the comfort of Thy loving presence we shall live..

(The Besieging Spirit by Grace Carpenter, p.10-11)

Trust

Faith lights the way, trust is the act of faith that carries us forward in the dark.

We suffer, and the pain engulfs us; we mourn, and the loss seems too heavy to be borne.
Blackness of grief and mists of despair have overwhelmed our spirit.

Our torch of faith, that seemed so bright, burns dimly, and does not penetrate the shadows; we stumble as we walk by its pale light.

We go on in trust.

In trust, blind act of faith that needs not to see nor feel, we lean upon our knowing; we know that light and love are there.

We commit ourselves, like children in the dark, to the Father whom we cannot see.

And as we lean, in the darkness and the cold, the cloud is lifted and the numbness passes, and we feel about us the everlasting arms of God.

Help us, O God, in days of suffering and doubt, to trust ourselves to Thee. An act of faith, that does not ask to see.

A trust so deep and sure, that to it we may commit our fainting spirit, until the way is lightened and the torch burns clear.

(The Besieging Spirit by Grace Carpenter)