

# **PRAYER GROUP**

May 6, 2020

## ***A TIME FOR A CHECK-IN***

### ***GREETING***

*Leader:* Jesus said,  
“Where two or three are gathered in my name,  
there am I, in the midst of them.

### ***LIGHTING THE CANDLE***

*Leader:* We light this candle as a reminder that Jesus,  
who is for us the light of the world,  
will be with us always,  
even until the end of the age.

### ***AN INVITATION INTO STILLNESS***

*Richard Bott*

Breathe in.

Know the Holy Spirit is around,  
and in,  
and with you.

Breathe out.

Know that all creation is dancing,  
arm in arm with the Creator.

Breathe in.

Know that the peace of Christ,  
the peace that passes all understanding,  
rests and remains with all things,  
all creatures, all people,  
all places, all times.

Breathe, beloved siblings.,

and know that each breath  
is a prayer -  
of lament and of joy,  
of hallelujah, whole or broken,  
but always holy.

Breathe.

## ***PRAYER***

*Reader:* Christ, as a light illumine and guide us.  
Christ, as a shield overshadow us.

*All:*       **Christ under us; Christ over us;  
Christ beside us on our left and our right.**

*Reader:* This day be within and without us,  
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.

*Reader:* Be in the heart of each to whom we speak;  
in the mouth of each who speaks unto us.

*Reader:* This day be within and without us,  
lowly and meek, yet all-powerful.

**All: Christ as a light; Christ as a shield;  
Christ beside us on our left and our right.**

**A VIDEO REFLECTION** “Christ Be With Me”—*The Work of the People,*  
*used with permission*

**SCRIPTURE READING John 17:12ff**

-12 I spelled out your character in detail  
To the men and women you gave me.  
They were yours in the first place;  
Then you gave them to me,  
And they have now done what you said.  
They know now, beyond the shadow of a doubt,  
That everything you gave me is firsthand from you,  
For the message you gave me, I gave them;  
And they took it, and were convinced  
That I came from you.  
They believed that you sent me.  
I pray for them.

I'm not praying for the God-rejecting world  
But for those you gave me,  
For they are yours by right.  
Everything mine is yours, and yours mine,  
And my life is on display in them.  
For I'm no longer going to be visible in the world;  
They'll continue in the world  
While I return to you.

Holy Father, guard them as they pursue this life  
That you conferred as a gift through me,  
So they can be one heart and mind  
As we are one heart and mind.

As long as I was with them, I guarded them  
In the pursuit of the life you gave through me;

I'm praying not only for them  
But also for those who will believe in me  
Because of them and their witness about me.

The goal is for all of them to become one heart and mind—  
Just as you, Father, are in me and I in you,  
So they might be one heart and mind with us.  
Then the world might believe that you, in fact, sent me.  
The same glory you gave me, I gave them,  
So they'll be as unified and together as we are—  
I in them and you in me.  
Then they'll be mature in this oneness,  
And give the godless world evidence  
That you've sent me and loved them  
In the same way you've loved me.

**REFLECTION**     “The Foundation of Community” *(from the Centre for  
Action and Contemplation)*

A divine foundation of relationship is what all religion, spirituality, and perhaps even politics, is aiming for. The Trinity offers us this precise gift—a grounded connection with God, self, others, and the world. This ancient doctrine dared to affirm that *God is relationship itself*. The way of Jesus therefore is an invitation to a way of living, loving, and relating—on earth as it is in God. We are intrinsically like the Trinity, living in absolute relatedness. While we may not always recognize it, we are all together in a web of mutual interdependence. When we recognize it on a spiritual level, we call it *love*.

The 12th-century mystic Richard of St. Victor (1123–1173) wrote about the Trinity as a mutual, loving companionship of friends—a community, if you will. In my book *The Divine Dance*, I summarized some of his thinking: For God to be good, God can be one. For God to be loving, God has to be two, because love is always a relationship. But for God to share “excellent joy” and “delight” God has to be three, because supreme happiness is when two persons share their common delight in a third something—together. [1] All we need to do is witness a couple after the birth of their new baby, and we know this is true.

The people I have loved with great abandon and freedom were not just the people who loved me, but people who loved what I loved. People who cared about community, the Gospel, the poor, justice, honesty—this is where the flow was easy, natural, and life-giving. Two people excited about the same thing are the beginning of almost everything new, creative, and risky in our world. Surely this is what Jesus meant by his first and most basic definition of church as “two or three gathered” (Matthew 18:20).

A community inspired by the Trinity will be a community of people who treat each other as subjects and not objects. Just as the persons of the Trinity know and love one another, from God’s side we are always known and loved *subject to subject*. God and the human person must know one another center to center, subject to subject, and never subject to object. This is why there is no seeking of power *over* in the Trinity, but only *power with*—a giving away, a sharing, a letting go, and thus an infinity of trust and mutuality. This has the power to change all relationships: in marriage, in culture, and even in international relations.

If we believe in a Trinitarian God, then we must hold fast to the truth that God is community—a completely loving, mutually self-giving, endlessly generative relationship between equal partners. We are included in that community and so is everyone else! A Trinitarian image of God should have changed our politics, our gender relationships, all power differentials, and friendship itself. But most of Christian history was never practically Trinitarian.

### ***GATEWAY TO ACTION & CONTEMPLATION:***

What word or phrase resonates with or challenges me? What sensations do I notice in my body? What is mine to do?

### ***PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION***

O Great Love, thank you for living and loving in us and through us. May all that we do flow from our deep connection with you and all beings. Help us become a community that vulnerably shares each other's burdens.

Listen to our hearts' longings for the healing of our world.

We pray for those who struggle...

We pray for those who struggle at this time of huge uncertainty;

for political leaders faced with unforeseen challenges, uncharted ways, difficult decisions...

*(time of silent reflection)*

We pray for those who struggle.

We pray for those in situations never before experienced...

We pray for moms and dads who struggle with having children at home all day...

It is difficult to find new activities; it is hard to stay creative.

Holy One, we will listen carefully to the challenges, we will encourage fresh ways of communication with good friends.

*(time of silent reflection)*

We pray for those who struggle.

We pray for those whose day is radically different...

We pray for those who must leave their usual workspace, for those breadwinners who must work at home...

Holy One, we will support the new priorities, we will not intrude into the working hours.

*(time of silent reflection)*

We pray for those who struggle.

We pray for those who have lost their jobs...

We pray for those whose financial security has gone, who have anxiety around paying rent or providing for family needs...

Holy One, we will be there in the testing times, we will assure them of their self-worth. *(time of silent reflection)*

We pray for those who struggle.

We pray for those who have been affected  
by the Covid 19 virus...

Those who are sick at home  
and those who have been hospitalized,  
in their suffering, and in their fear...

Holy One, we will hear and respond to their distress,  
we will be a safe but compassionate presence  
to their loved ones.

*(time of silent reflection)*

Knowing you are hearing us better than we are speaking,  
we offer these prayers in all the holy names of God,  
**AMEN.**

## ***THE LORD'S PRAYER***

## ***WORDS OF BLESSING***

*Leader:* May the peace of Christ go with us,  
wherever God may send us.

May God guide us through the wilderness,  
protect us through the storm.

May God bring us home rejoicing  
at the wonders we've been shown.

May God bring us home rejoicing  
once again into these doors. Amen