

PRAYER GROUP

September 16, 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.

OPENING SENTENCES

Leader: One thing I have asked of God
this is what I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of God
all the days of my life;
to behold the beauty of God
and to seek God in God’s temple.

Who is it that you seek?

We seek God, the Holy One.

Do you seek God with all your heart?

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Do you seek God with all your soul?

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Do you seek God with all your mind?

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Do you seek God with all your strength?

Amen. Christ, have mercy.

DECLARATION OF FAITH

Leader: To whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life,
and we have believed and have come to know
that You are the Holy One of God.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ,
King of endless glory.

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.**

AN INVITATION INTO STILLNESS

Let us now take a moment to settle into the silence.

Hear and feel the quiet of this place
and this community of people.

Hear and feel your quiet breathing.

Inhale the good gifts that God provides,
and exhale all of the things
that you need to release.

Breathe in strength. *(Pause for breath...)*

Exhale exhaustion. *(Pause for breath...)*

Breathe in freedom. *(Pause for breath...)*

Exhale all that holds you back. *(Pause for breath...)*

Breathe in a new sense of direction. *(Pause for breath...)*

Exhale the paths you no longer want to use.

Breathe in hope. *(Pause for breath...)*

Exhale self-doubt. *(Pause for breath...)*

Breathe in unconditional love. *(Pause for breath...)*

Exhale distrust and hate. *(Pause for breath...)*

In this time of prayer,
may our minds be open to new truth,
and our hearts be receptive to love.

Let us open ourselves to the Spirit of Christ
in our midst.

A SONG—“Gather Us In” (#7 *More Voices*)

A SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 9:5-15

⁵ ‘And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶ But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.^[b]

⁷ ‘When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹ ‘Pray then in this way:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.

¹⁰ Your kingdom come.

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

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread.^[c]

¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And do not bring us to the time of trial,^[d]
but rescue us from the evil one.^[e]

¹⁴ For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

REFLECTION—John Dominic Crossan, *The Greatest Prayer*

“What if the Lord’s Prayer is neither a Jewish prayer for Jews nor yet a Christian prayer for Christians? What if it is...a prayer from the lips of Judaism on the lips of Christianity for the conscience of the world? What if it is...a radical manifesto and a hymn of hope for all humanity in language addressed to all the world?”

A SONG—“Be Not Afraid” <https://youtu.be/RF0DIpFOoBg>

1. You shall cross the barren desert
but you shall not die of thirst.
You shall wander far in safety
though you do not know the way.
You shall speak your words to foreign lands
and all will understand.
You shall see the face of God and live.
- R. Be not afraid. I go before you always.
Come follow Me and I will give you rest.
2. If you pass through raging waters in the sea,
you shall not drown.
If you walk amidst the burning flames
you shall not be harmed.
If you stand before the pow'r of hell
and death is at your side,
know that I am with you, through it all. R

3. Blessed are your poor
for the Kingdom shall be theirs.
Blest are you that weep and mourn
for one day you shall laugh.
And if wicked men insult and hate you
all because of Me,
blessed, blessed are you! R

4. And when the earth has turned beneath you
and your voice is seldom heard.
When the flood of gifts that blessed your life
has long since ebbed away.
When your mind is thick and hope is thin
and dark is all around,
I will stand beside you till the dawn. R

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

(Richard Rohr)

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...

WORDS OF BLESSING

May the grace of Christ attend us,
The Love of God surround us,
The Holy Spirit keep us,
Now and evermore. Amen.