

PRAYER GROUP

September 2, 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.

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

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 READING — Isaiah 46:3-4,9-10,12-13

You survivors in Israel, listen to me, the Lord. Since the day you were born, I have carried you along. I will still be the same when you are old and gray, and I will take care of you. I created you. I will carry you and always keep you safe. I alone am God! There are no other gods; no one is like me. Think about what happened many years ago. From the very beginning I told what would happen long before it took place. I will soon come to save you. I am not far away and will waste no time; I take pride in you and will save you.

A REFLECTION—*Frederick Buechner,*
originally published in Whistling in the Dark, and later, Beyond Words

OLD AGE IS NOT, as the saying goes, for sissies. There are some lucky ones who little by little slow down to be sure, but otherwise go on to the end pretty much as usual. For the majority, however, it's like living in a house that's in increasing need of repairs. The plumbing doesn't work right anymore. There are bats in the attic. Cracked and dusty, the windows are hard to see through, and there's a lot of creaking and groaning in bad weather. The exterior could use a coat of paint. And so on.

The odd thing is that the person living in the house may feel, humanly speaking, much as always. The eighty-year-old body can be in precarious shape, yet the spirit within as full of beans as ever. If that leads senior citizens to think of all the things they'd still love to do but can't anymore, it only makes things worse. But it needn't work that way.

Second childhood commonly means something to steer clear of, but it can also mean something else. It can mean that if your spirit is still more or less intact, one of the benefits of being an old crock is that you can enjoy again something of what it's like being a young squirt.

Eight-year-olds, like eighty-year-olds, have lots of things they'd love to do but can't because they know they aren't up to them, so they learn to *play* instead. Eighty-year-olds might do well to take notice. They can play at being eighty-year-olds, for instance. Stiff knees and hearing aids, memory loss and poor eyesight are no fun, but there are those who marvelously survive them by somehow managing to see them as, among other things and in spite of all, a little funny.

Another thing is that, if part of the pleasure of being a child the first time round is that you don't have to prove yourself yet, part of the pleasure of being a child the second time round is that you don't have to prove yourself any longer. You can be who you are and say what you feel, and let the chips fall where they may.

Very young children and very old children also have in common the advantage of being able to sit on the sideline of things. While everybody else is in there jockeying for position and sweating it out, they can lean back, put their feet up, and like the octogenarian King Lear "pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh at gilded butterflies."

Very young children and very old children also seem to be in touch with something that the rest of the pack has lost track of. There is something bright and still about them at their best, like the [sun](#) before breakfast.

Both the old and the young get scared sometimes about what lies ahead of them, and with good reason, but you can't help feeling that whatever inner goldenness and peace they're in touch with will see them through in the end.

VIDEO “I Was There To Hear Your Boring Cry”

https://youtu.be/pJI3NFT5T_c

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...

THE LORD'S PRAYER

WORDS OF BLESSING

May God bless you and keep you.

May God's face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

May God look upon you with kindness and give you peace.

Amen.