



## CHAPTER 4:

# PRAYERS, POEMS AND MEDITATIONS

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### WE PRAY FOR ALL

A Jewish Prayer from the  
Liberal Jewish Prayer Book

We pray for all who come here  
this evening.  
Although differences in thought and  
belief divide us,  
let the desire to serve you,  
the love of truth  
and the pursuit of holiness unite us.  
Strengthen the spirit of friendship  
among people of various faiths  
and increase mutual understanding  
between us.  
We look to a time  
when greater knowledge of you and  
your word  
shall bind all who serve you  
into one holy fellowship.

### SUSCIPE (TRADITIONAL)

St. Ignatius Loyola

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,  
My memory, my understanding  
And my entire will,  
All I have and call my own.  
You have given all to me.  
To you, Lord, I return it.

Everything is yours; do with it what  
you will.  
Give me only your love and your grace,  
That is enough for me.

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ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA WAS A SPANISH  
KNIGHT FROM A NOBLE FAMILY AND A  
THEOLOGIAN WHO FOUNDED THE SOCIETY  
OF JESUS AND SERVED AS ITS FIRST  
SUPERIOR GENERAL.

## ARCHBISHOP OSCAR ROMERO PRAYER: A STEP ALONG THE WAY

Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.  
The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.  
We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent  
enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of  
saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.  
No statement says all that could be said.  
No prayer fully expresses our faith.  
No confession brings perfection.  
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.  
No program accomplishes the Church's mission.  
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.  
This is what we are about.  
We plant the seeds that one day will grow.  
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.  
We lay foundations that will need further development.  
We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.  
We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.  
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.  
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an  
opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.  
We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master  
builder and the worker.  
We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.  
We are prophets of a future not our own.

Amen.

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BISHOP KEN UNTENER OF SAGINAW WROTE THIS PRAYER AS A REFLECTION ON THE  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE MARTYRDOM OF BISHOP ROMERO. EVEN THOUGH HE NEVER SPOKE IT,  
THE PRAYER IS OFTEN ATTRIBUTED TO OSCAR ROMERO, ARCHBISHOP OF SAN SALVADOR,  
WHO WAS ASSASSINATED IN 1980.

## THE EXAMEN IN FIVE STEPS

The following is a version of the Examen  
developed by Fr. James Martin, S.J.  
It's only slightly modified from what  
St. Ignatius suggests in the *Exercises*.

Before you begin, as in all prayer,  
remind yourself that you are in God's  
presence, and ask God to help you with  
your prayer.

1. Gratitude: Recall anything from  
the day for which you are especially  
grateful, and give thanks.
2. Review: Recall the events of the day,  
from start to finish, noticing where  
you felt God's presence, and where  
you accepted or turned away from  
any invitations to grow in love.
3. Sorrow: Recall any actions for  
which you are sorry.
4. Forgiveness: Ask for God's  
forgiveness. Decide whether you  
want to reconcile with anyone you  
have hurt.
5. Grace: Ask God for the grace you  
need for the next day and an ability  
to see God's presence more clearly.

## PASSAGES FROM SACRED ISLAMIC TEXTS

Qur'an 5:8

O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for  
Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and  
let not the hatred of others to you make  
you swerve to wrong and depart from  
justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and  
fear Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted  
with all that ye do.

From the Hadith collection of  
Sahih Al-Bukhari, Volume 9,  
report number 84

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon  
him) said: "Help your brother whether  
he is an oppressor or the oppressed." A  
man then said: "I will help him if he is  
oppressed, but if he is an oppressor, how  
shall I help him?" The Prophet replied:  
"By preventing him from oppressing  
(others)."

## FALL IN LOVE

Author Unknown; attributed to Pedro Arrupe, S.J.

Nothing is more practical than finding God, than falling in Love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything.

It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you do with your evenings, how you spend your weekends, what you read, whom you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.

Fall in Love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.

## ST. PATRICK'S BREASTPLATE OR THE DEER'S CRY

I arise today  
Through the strength of heaven;  
Light of the sun,  
Splendor of fire,  
Speed of lightning,  
Swiftness of the wind,  
Depth of the sea,  
Stability of the earth,  
Firmness of the rock.

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ATTRIBUTED TO ST. PATRICK, CO-PATRON SAINT OF SAN FRANCISCO. THIS PRAYER WAS TRANSLATED BY KUNO MEYER AND TAKEN FROM ANAM CARA BY JOHN O'DONOHUE.

## GOLDEN CHAIN PRAYER

A Buddhist Prayer

We are a link in Amida's golden chain of love that stretches around the world. We will keep our link bright and strong. We will be kind and gentle to every living thing and protect all who are weaker than ourselves.

We will think pure and beautiful thoughts, say pure and beautiful words, and do pure and beautiful deeds. May every link in Amida's chain of love be bright and strong, and may we all attain perfect peace. Namó Amida Buddha.

## PERSONAL PRAYER OF PEDRO ARRUPE

Pedro Arrupe, S.J.

Grant me, O Lord, to see everything now with new eyes, to discern and test the spirits that help me read the signs of times, to relish the things that are yours and to communicate them to others. Give me the clarity of understanding that you gave Ignatius.

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PEDRO ARRUPE, S.J. (1907-1991) WAS THE 28TH SUPERIOR GENERAL OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

## YOU HAVE CALLED ME BY NAME

Joseph Tetlow, S.J.

Oh, Lord my God,  
You called me from the sleep of nothingness merely because in your tremendous love you want to make good and beautiful beings.  
You have called me by name in my mother's womb.  
You have given me breath and light and movement and walked with me every moment of my existence.  
I am amazed, Lord God of the universe, that you attend to me and, more, cherish me.  
Create in me the faithfulness that moves you, and I will trust you and yearn for you all my days.

Amen.

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JOSEPH TETLOW, S.J. IS THE DIRECTOR OF A JESUIT RETREAT HOUSE IN DALLAS, TEXAS. HE PREVIOUSLY SERVED IN ROME FOR EIGHT YEARS AS THE HEAD OF THE SECRETARIAT FOR IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY.

## THROUGH THE SILENCE OF NATURE

An Islamic prayer by Hazrat Inayat Khan

Through the silence of nature,  
I attain Thy divine peace.  
O sublime nature,  
in thy stillness let my heart rest.  
Thou art patiently awaiting the moment to manifest through the silence of sublime nature.  
O nature sublime, speak to me through silence,  
for I am awaiting in silence like you the call of God.  
O nature sublime,  
through thy silence I hear Thy cry.  
My heart is tuned to the quietness,  
that the stillness of nature inspires.

## DISCOURSE ON THE PSALMS

St. Augustine

The desire of one's heart constitutes one's prayer. There is a hidden anguish which is inaudible to men.... If your desire lies open to him who is your Father and who sees his secret, he will answer you. For the desire of your heart is itself your prayer. And if the desire is constant, so is your prayer. The Apostle Paul had purpose in saying: "Pray without ceasing." Are we then ceaselessly to bend our knees, to lie prostrate, or to lift up our hands? ... Even if we admit that we pray in this fashion, I do not believe that we can do so all the time.

Yet there is another, interior kind of prayer without ceasing, namely, the desire of the heart. Whatever else you may be doing, if you but fix your desire on God's Sabbath rest, your prayer will be ceaseless. Therefore, if you wish to pray without ceasing, do not cease to desire. The constancy of your desire will itself be the ceaseless voice of your prayer....

If your love is without ceasing, you are crying out always; if you always cry out, you are always desiring; and if you desire, you are calling to mind your eternal rest in the Lord.... If the desire is there, then the groaning is there as well. Even if people fail to hear it, it never ceases to sound in the hearing of God.

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THE ABOVE PASSAGE APPEARS IN THE SECOND READING FROM THE THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT IN THE BREVIARY, A BOOK OF CATHOLIC PRAYERS.

## PATIENT TRUST

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J.

Above all, trust in the slow work of God. We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay. We should like to skip the intermediate stages. We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new. And yet it is the law of all progress that it is made by passing through some stages of instability—and that it may take a very long time.

And so I think it is with you. Your ideas mature gradually—let them grow, let them shape themselves, without undue haste.

Don't try to force them on, as though you could be today what time (that is to say, grace and circumstances acting on your own good will) will make of you tomorrow.

Only God could say what this new spirit gradually forming within you will be. Give Our Lord the benefit of believing that his hand is leading you, and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.

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PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, S.J., (1881-1955) WAS A JESUIT PRIEST AND A FRENCH PHILOSOPHER WHO ALSO TRAINED AS A PALEONTOLOGIST AND GEOLOGIST.

## DAILY EXAMEN FOR DIVERSITY

Debra Mooney, Ph.D. and Cheryl Nunez

St. Ignatius Loyola's Examen is an opportunity for peaceful daily reflective prayer. It invites us to find the movement of God in all the people and events of our day. The examen is simply a set of introspective prompts for you to follow or adapt to your own character and spirit. Begin with a pause and a slow, deep breath or two; become aware that you are in the presence of the Holy.

From my interactions with the people and world around me...

What experiences of my culture have I had today?

What experiences of other cultures have I had today?

How have I been enriched because of these experiences?

How have I been challenged?

Did these experiences cause me to feel closer to, or further from, others?

Did these experiences cause me to feel closer to, or further from, God?

What might God be saying to me through these experiences?

How can I honor the gifts of my cultural heritage tomorrow?

How can I honor the gifts of other cultures that God has bestowed upon me?

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## THE FIRST PRINCIPLE AND FOUNDATION

St. Ignatius as paraphrased by David L. Fleming, S.J.

The Goal of our life is to live with God forever.  
God, who loves us, gave us life.  
Our own response of love allows God's life  
To flow into us without limit.

All the things in this world are gifts from God,  
Presented to us so that we can know God more easily  
And make a return of love more readily.  
As a result, we appreciate and use all these gifts of God  
Insofar as they help us to develop as loving persons.  
But if any of these gifts become the center of our lives,  
They displace God  
And so hinder our growth toward our goal.

In everyday life, then, we must hold ourselves in balance  
Before all of these created gifts insofar as we have a choice  
And are not bound by some obligation.  
We should not fix our desires on health or sickness,  
Wealth or poverty, success or failure, a long life or a short one.  
For everything has the potential of calling forth in us  
A deeper response to our life in God.

Our only desire and our one choice should be this:  
I want and I choose what better leads  
To God's deepening his life in me.

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DAVID L. FLEMING (1934-2011) WAS A FORMER PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR OF THE JESUITS IN THE MISSOURI PROVINCE AND EDITOR OF REVIEW FOR RELIGIOUS, A BIMONTHLY JOURNAL OF SPIRITUALITY.

## APACHE BLESSING

A Native American Blessing

May the sun bring you new energy by day,  
may the moon softly restore you by night,  
may the rain wash away your worries,  
may the breeze blow new strength into  
your being,  
may you walk gently through the  
world and  
know its beauty all the days of your life.

## GAYATRI MANTRA

A Hindu Mantra

*Om Bhur Bhuva Svah  
Tat Savitur Varenyam  
Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi  
Dhiyo Yo Naha Prachodayat*

On the absolute reality and its planes,  
On that finest spiritual light,  
We meditate, as remover of obstacles  
That it may inspire and enlighten us.

## AS KINGFISHERS CATCH FIRE

Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J.

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies  
draw flame;  
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells  
Stones ring; like each tucked string  
tells, each hung bell's  
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out  
broad its name;  
Each mortal thing does one thing and  
the same:  
Deals out that being indoors each  
one dwells;  
Selves—goes itself; *myself* it speaks  
and spells,  
Crying *What I do is me: for that I came.*

I say more: the just man justices;  
Keeps grace: that keeps all his  
goings graces;  
Acts in God's eye what in God's  
eye he is—  
Christ—for Christ plays in ten  
thousand places,  
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his  
To the Father through the features of  
men's faces.

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GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS, S.J., (1884-1889) WAS AN ENGLISH POET, ROMAN CATHOLIC CONVERT, AND JESUIT PRIEST.

## A CONTEMPLATION FOR NON-BELIEVERS

Claudia Bernard

Each time I stand for the *Amidab*  
I sift through the tangle of legend and learning that is our inheritance  
Searching for my own blessings, my own prayer.

I stand with one foot planted in empiricism and the other entwined in the messiness  
of my own humanity.  
No body part touches the God of my ancestors.  
My heart wishes to be open,  
My mind to be fully present.  
And so each time I stand for the *Amidab* I invent my own religion.

The religion I invent makes use of evolution:

An unimaginable sweep of time,  
Numberless generations spawning by infinitesimal steps  
Complex living beauty out of inert matter  
Driven on by random mutation,  
Natural selection and environmental change,  
The tragedy of forms continually dying,  
And lately the wonder of minds emerging  
And with them  
Morality, love, art, cities.  
And the unprecedented bonus of being demonstrably true.

I cry tears of sea water,  
And bleed with the cycles of the moon.  
My bones are of calcium phosphate,  
The clay of earth molded into human shape.  
I share my genes with every organism the world has known,  
Traced back to the rays of the sun  
Igniting the compounds of the sea.

And the whole world  
The whole organic world of which I am an integral part  
Constitutes a single great web of life.  
And I and you are not so much on the earth as of the earth.

The religion I invent makes use of curiosity:

As Albert Einstein said:

“Curiosity has its own reason for existing.  
We cannot help but be in awe  
when we contemplate the mysteries,  
of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality.  
It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend  
a little of this mystery every day.  
Never lose a holy curiosity.”

And the religion I invent makes use of prayer:

My actions ripple across the collective earth-pond that is life.  
They ripple across the lives of our human ancestors  
and the lives of our single-celled predecessors.  
They ripple across the lives of our great-grandchildren yet to be  
born and of our children already here.

Each tea bag I compost  
each candy-wrapper-bottle-top-soda-can I pluck from the beach  
each child I teach  
each heart I hold with compassion  
each act of *tikkun olam*  
is a prayer.  
A prayer in honor of our human ancestors  
and one-celled predecessors,  
a prayer in honor of future generations,  
a prayer to the great web of life.

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CLAUDIA BERNARD IS A CONGREGANT AT CONGREGATION SHA'AR ZAHAV IN SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA.

## A PASSOVER SEDER PRAYER FOR WELCOMING ELIJAH

Aaron J. Hahn Tapper

שפך אהבתך על הגויים אשר לא ידעוך — יהודים ושאנים יהודים — ועל ממלכות אשר בשמך קוראים לשובא על כי אנו זקוקים לעזרתך לראות את השנאה בקרבינו. תשתנה מחשבתינו הרעה ונשתמש בכחינו להשלים את העולם ולתקן את שבריו. נזכה לראות סכת שלום ולשמח בשמחת כל גוייך. תן לכלנו את עזרתך להשיג שלום פנימי ושלום אנושי, בשמך אם לא בשמינו, בשמינו אם לא לשמך. עושה שלום במרומו הוא יעשה שלום עלינו ועל כל ישראל ועל כל יושבי תבל ואמרו אמן.

Pour out Your love upon the communities who do not know You—both Jews and non-Jews—and the regions where they call upon Your name in vain, for we all need help from You to see the hate inside of us.

Transform our evil thoughts so that we can use our power to make the world whole and to perfect its brokenness. May we live to see the sukkah of peace and to participate in the happiness of all of Your nations.

Give all of us Your support so that we can achieve a state of internal peace and a peace within the human collective, in Your name if not in ours, in our name if not in Yours. You who brings peace to Your world brings peace to us and to the people of Israel and to all humankind, and we say Amen.

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AARON J. HAHN TAPPER IS MAE AND BENJAMIN SWIG ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF JUDAIC STUDIES AND DIRECTOR OF THE SWIG JEWISH STUDIES AND SOCIAL JUSTICE PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO. HE IS ALSO THE FOUNDER AND CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ABRAHAM'S VISION, A CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION ORGANIZATION WORKING WITH MUSLIMS, JEWS, ISRAELIS, AND PALESTINIANS. THIS PRAYER WAS WRITTEN BY HAHN TAPPER TO SERVE AS A CONTEMPORARY ADDITION (OR SUBSTITUTION) FOR A CENTURIES-OLD PRAYER CALLED "SHFOKH HAMATKHA," THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN INCLUDED IN THE PASSOVER SEDER DURING THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD.