

PRAYERS AND REFLECTIONS



UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO | University Ministry





PRAYERS AND REFLECTIONS



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WELCOME TO THIS SACRED

In your hands, you hold more than just a book — it is a living mosaic of faith, reflection, and hope. Created within the heart of our Jesuit Catholic university, this collection brings together prayers and meditations from a rich tapestry of spiritual traditions. It honors the many paths University of San Francisco students, faculty, staff, and community members walk in search of meaning, belonging, and God.

Rooted in the Ignatian tradition, we believe that God can be found in all things and all people. This book is a reflection of that belief: a space where the depths of our spiritual lives can meet, where silence and song, ancient words, and spontaneous cries of the heart, can sit side by side.

GATHERING OF VOICES.

In this community, we cherish both the particularity of our Catholic identity and the beauty of religious and spiritual diversity. This interfaith collection is an invitation — to pause, to pray, to reflect, and to encounter one another more deeply. Whether you turn to these pages in search of peace, clarity, courage, or gratitude, may you find yourself met by the Spirit that transcends and unites.

As you read, may you feel at home.
As you reflect, may you be inspired.
And as you pray — however you pray — may you know you are not alone. We are with you on the journey.

University Ministry
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Suscipe

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.

St. Ignatius of Loyola

Praying

It doesn't have to be
the blue iris, it could be
weeds in a vacant lot, or a few small stones;
just pay attention, then patch
a few words together and don't try
to make them elaborate, this isn't
a contest but the doorway
into thanks, and a silence in which
another voice may speak.

Mary Oliver





Lone Mountain Praise Song

For chipped-wing cloud-skimming hawks
whirling wild;

for the velvet gold flush of California poppies;
for the coyote mother
shepherding her young through the purpletop
vervain hillside;

for the cobalt flash of sweet-trilling scrub jays,
for ladybugs aflutter among the yellow yarrow,
for cypresses brimming with soft-hooting owls,
for the Farallone peaks breaking blue through
the fog,

and for the sky becoming sea becoming sky
becoming sea
we give thanks, we give thanks, we give thanks
forever.

Lalini Shanela Ranaraja '24

The Place Where You Are Now

This place where you are right now
God circled on a map for you.

Wherever your eyes and arms and heart can move
Against the earth and the sky,
The Beloved has bowed there —

Our Beloved has bowed there knowing
You were coming...

Hafiz

Tefilat Haderech (Wayfarer's Prayer from the Jewish Tradition)

Adonai shall guard your coming and going from this time forth and forever.

Adonai, the whole world is full of your glory. Wherever I go, you are near to me. If I take up the wings of the morning and dwell on the ocean's farthest shore, even there Your hand will lead me; Your right hand will hold me.

You have always been a light to my path. Now that I begin another journey, I turn to You in confidence and trust. Protect me from the perils of the way. May I go forth in health and safely reach my destination. May this journey not be in vain; let its purpose be fulfilled; let me return in contentment to my dear ones. Then shall I know Your blessing in all my travels.

A Universal Peace Prayer (A Jain Prayer)

Let blessings go forth unto the entire universe! May everyone rise above self interest through feelings of genuine concern for the well being of all! May the mental veils which cloud our heart be completely removed from our consciousness! Everywhere let everyone live in peace and contentment, in health and happiness, in abundant reverence for life!





A Prayer for Our Earth

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light. We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

Pope Francis, From the encyclical Laudato Si (2015)

A Step Along the Way

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.

Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw wrote this prayer as a reflection on the anniversary of the martyrdom of Óscar Romero. Even though he never spoke it, the prayer is often attributed to Óscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador, who was assassinated in 1980.





An Ashanti (West African) Prayer

O God,
creator of our land,
our earth, the trees,
the animals and humans,
all is for your honour.

The drums beat it out,
and people sing about it,
and they dance with noisy joy
that you are the Lord.

You also have pulled the other continents
out of the sea.

What a wonderful world you have made
out of wet mud,
and what beautiful men and women!
We thank you for all the beauty of this earth.

The grace of your creation is like a cool day
between rainy seasons.

We drink in your creation with our eyes.
We listen to the birds' jubilee
with our ears.

How strong and good
and sure your earth smells,
and everything that grows there.

Bless us. Bless our land and people.
Bless the waters that flow through our land.

Be with us in the whole world.
Prepare us for the service that we should render.

A Prayer of Julian of Norwich

In you, Father all-mighty, we have our preservation and our bliss.
In you, Christ, we have our restoring and our saving.
You are our mother, brother, and Saviour.

In you, our Lord the Holy Spirit, is marvellous and plenteous grace.
You are our clothing; for love you wrap us and embrace us.
You are our maker, our lover, our keeper.

Teach us to believe that by your grace
all shall be well,
and all shall be well,
and all manner of things shall be well. Amen

Prayer for Those Who Serve

As we serve others we are working on ourselves.

Every act, every word, every gesture of genuine compassion
naturally nourishes our own hearts as well.

It is not a question of who is healed first.

When we attend to ourselves with compassion and mercy,
more healing is made available for others.

And when we serve others with an open and generous heart,
great healing comes to us.

Mahatma Gandhi

Sh'ma Yisrael

Sh'ma Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad!
Hear, O Israel, Adonai is our God, Adonai is One!
Baruch shem k'vod malchuto l'olam va-ed.
Blessed is God's glorious majesty forever and ever.

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 #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)."





Our Lady of Guadalupe

Let not your heart
be disturbed.

Do not fear
any sickness or
anguish.

Am I not here, who
is your Mother?

Are you not under my protection?

Am I not your health?

Are you not happily within my fold?

What else do you wish?

Do not grieve nor be disturbed by
anything.

As spoken to St. Juan Diego

Fall in Love

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.

Author Unknown

(Attributed to Pedro Arrupe, S.J.)



Golden Chain Prayer (A Buddhist Prayer)

We are a link in Amida's
golden chain of love
that stretches around
the world.

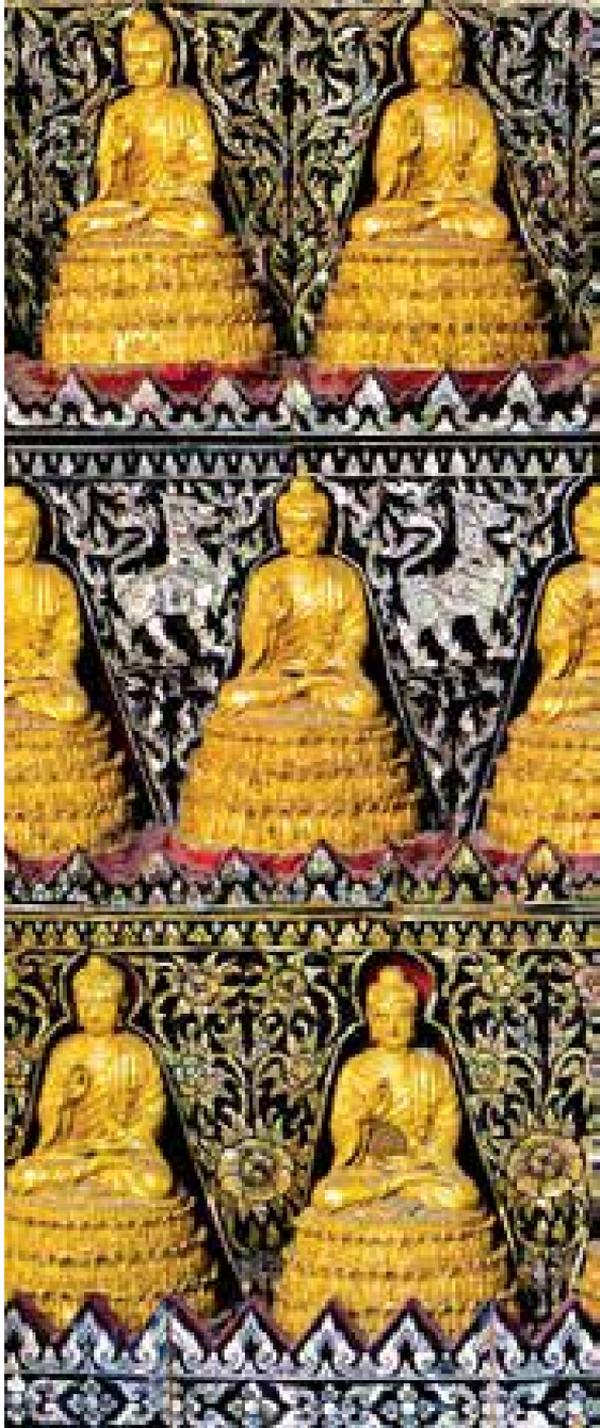
We will keep our link
bright and strong.

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.

Namo Amida Buddha





Some Centering Moment

How good it is to center down!
To sit quietly and see one's self pass by!
The streets of our minds seethe with endless traffic;
Our spirits resound with clashings, with noisy silences,
While something deep within hungers and thirsts for
the still moment and the resting lull.
With full intensity we seek, ere the quiet passes,
a fresh sense of order in our living;
A direction, a strong sure purpose that will structure
our confusion and bring meaning in our chaos.
We look at ourselves in this waiting moment —
the kinds of people we are.
The questions persist: what are we doing with our lives?
— what are the motives that order our days?
What is the end of our doings? Where are we trying to go?
Where do we put the emphasis and where are our values focused?
For what end do we make sacrifices?
Where is my treasure and what do I love most in life?
What do I hate most in life and to what am I true?
Over and over the questions beat in upon the waiting moment.
As we listen, floating up through all the jangling echoes
of our turbulence, there is a sound of another kind —
A deeper note which only the stillness of the heart makes clear.
It moves directly to the core of our being.
Our questions are answered,
With the peace of the Eternal in our step.
How good it is to center down!

Howard Thurman



You Have Called Me by Name

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.

Joseph Tetlow, S.J.

Isa Upanishad (A Hindu Text)

Behold the universe in the glory of God: and all that lives and moves on earth. Leaving the transient, find joy in the Eternal: set not your heart on another's possession.

O life-giving sun, off-spring of the Lord of creation, solidary seer of heaven! Spread thy light and withdraw thy blinding splendor that I may behold thy radiant form: that Spirit far away within thee is my own inmost Spirit.

May life go to immortal life, and the body go to ashes. O my soul, remember past strivings, remember! O my soul, remember past strivings, remember!

By the path of good lead us to final bliss, O fire divine thou god who knowest all ways. Deliver us from wandering evil. Prayers and adoration we offer unto thee.



Through the Silence of Nature (Islamic Prayer)

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.

Hazrat Inayat Khan



Personal Prayer of 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.

Pedro Arrupe, S.J.





Prayer for Justice

O God, we thank you for the fact that you have inspired men and women in all nations and in all cultures. We call you different names: some call you Allah; some call you Elohim; some call you Jehovah; some call you Brahma; some call you the Unmoved Mover. But we know that these are all names for one and the same God. Grant that we will follow you and become so committed to your way and your kingdom that we will be able to establish in our lives and in this world a brother and sisterhood, that we will be able to establish here a kingdom of understanding, where men and women will live together as brothers and sisters and respect the dignity and worth of every human being. In the name and spirit of Jesus. Amen.

Martin Luther King, Jr.



Psalm 139

You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.

You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.

You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely.

You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you because I am fearfully

and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them!

Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand — when I awake, I am still with you.

If only you, God, would slay the wicked! Away from me, you who are blood-thirsty!

They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name.

Do I not hate those who hate you, LORD, and abhor those who are in rebellion against you? I have nothing but hatred for them;

I count them my enemies. Search me, God, and know my heart;

test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Discourse on the Psalms

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.

St. Augustine



Help Thanks Wow: The Three Essential Prayers (Excerpt)

Prayer is talking to something or anything with which we seek union, even if we are bitter or insane or broken. (In fact, these are probably the best possible conditions under which to pray.) Prayer is taking a chance that against all odds and past history, we are loved and chosen, and do not have to get it together before we show up. The opposite may be true: We may not be able to get it together until after we show up in such miserable shape.

But in any case, we are making contact with something unseen, way bigger than we could ever imagine in our wildest dreams, even if we are the most brilliant, open-minded scientists and physicists of our generation. It is something we might dare to call divine intelligence or love energy (if there were no chance that anyone would ever find out about this). Prayer is us—humans merely being, as e. e. cummings put it—reaching out to something having to do with the eternal, with vitality, intelligence, kindness, even when we are at our most utterly doomed and skeptical. God can handle honesty, and prayer begins an honest conversation.

Anne Lamott



Ten Commandments of Tirthankar Mahavir (A Jain Text)

All living beings long to live

Live and let live. Love all — serve all.

Where there is love there is life.

All Souls are alike and potentially divine, none is superior or inferior.

Have compassion towards all living beings; hatred leads to destruction.

As I dislike pain, so do all other beings dislike pain.

A person need not kill, nor cause others to kill, nor consent to killing by others.

Silence and self-control amount to non-violence.

Respect for all living beings is non-violence.

Non-violence is the supreme religion.



Patient Trust

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.

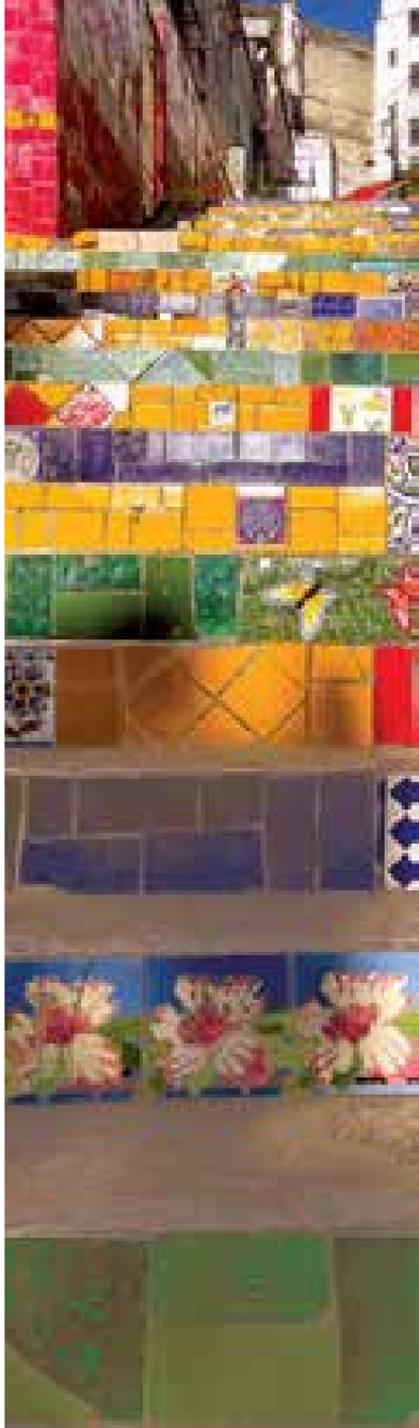
Your ideas mature gradually — let them grow, let them shape themselves, without undue haste.

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.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J.





Daily Examen for Diversity

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?

Debra Mooney, Ph.D., and Cheryl Nunez



Apache 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 bhuvah 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.

The First Principle and Foundation, *Spiritual Exercises*

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 God's life in me.

St. Ignatius of Loyola, Translation by David L. Fleming, S.J.





Karaniya Metta Sutta: The Buddha's Words on Loving Kindness

If you know what is truly good for you and understand the possibility of reaching a state of perfect peace, then this is how you need to live.

Start as a capable person, who is upright (really upright), gently spoken, flexible, and not conceited.

Then become contented and happy, with few worries and an uncomplicated life.

Make sure your sense experience is calm and controlled, be duly respectful, and don't hanker after families or groups.

And avoid doing anything unworthy, that wiser people would criticise.

May all be happy and secure. May all beings become happy in their heart of hearts!

And think of every living thing without exception: the weak and the strong, from the smallest to the largest, whether you can see them or not, living nearby or far away, beings living now or yet to arise — may all beings become happy in their heart of hearts!



May no one deceive or look down on anyone anywhere, for any reason. Whether through feeling angry or through reacting to someone else, may no one want another to suffer.

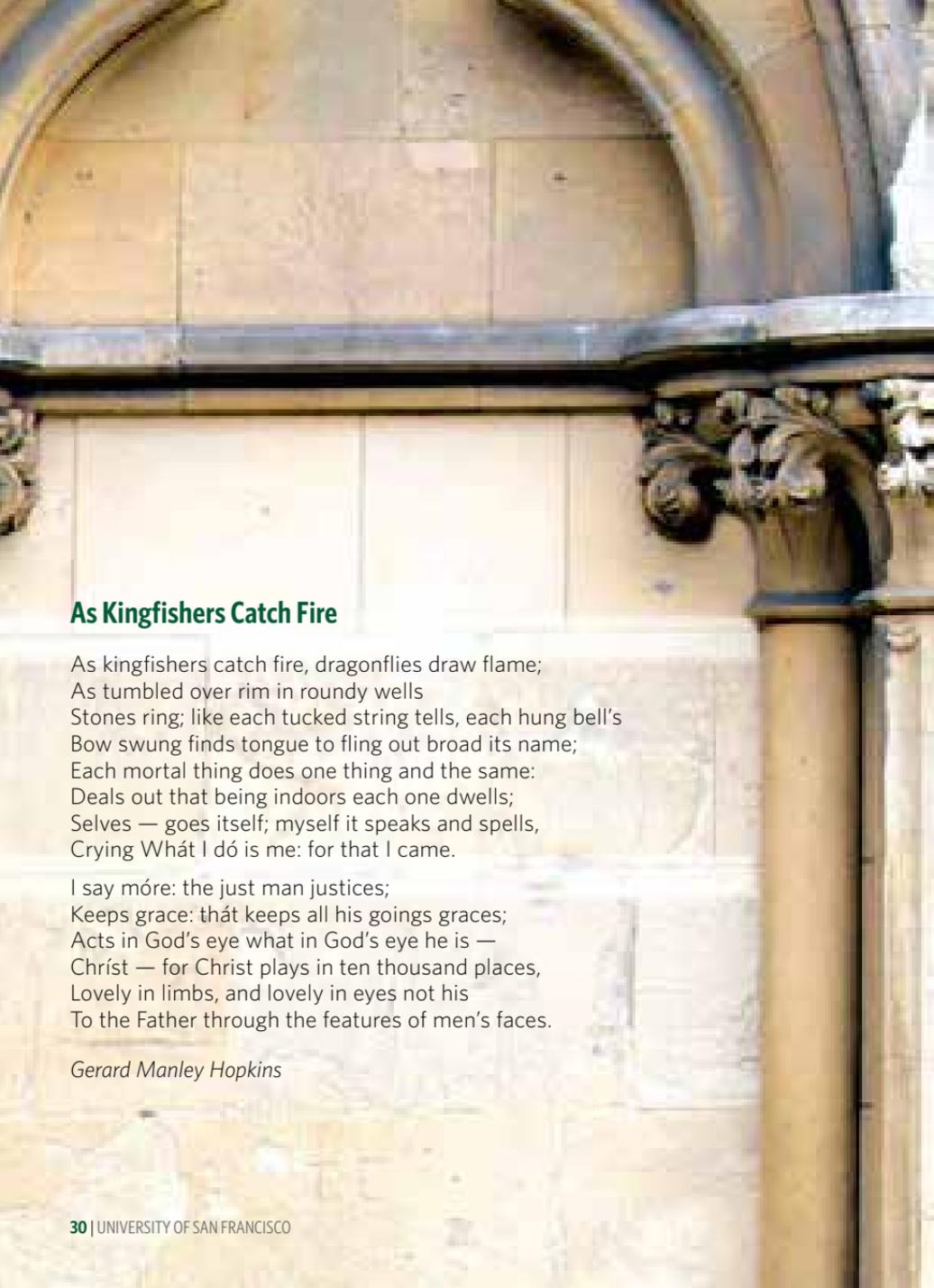
As strongly as a mother, perhaps risking her life, cherishes her child, her only child, develop an unlimited heart for all beings.

Develop an unlimited heart of friendliness for the entire universe, sending metta above, below, and all around, beyond all narrowness,

beyond all rivalry, beyond all hatred.

Whether you are staying in one place or travelling, sitting down or in bed, in all your waking hours rest in this mindfulness, which is known as like living in heaven right here and now!

In this way, you will come to let go of views, be spontaneously ethical, and have perfect Insight. And leaving behind craving for sense pleasures, from the rounds of rebirth you will finally be completely free!

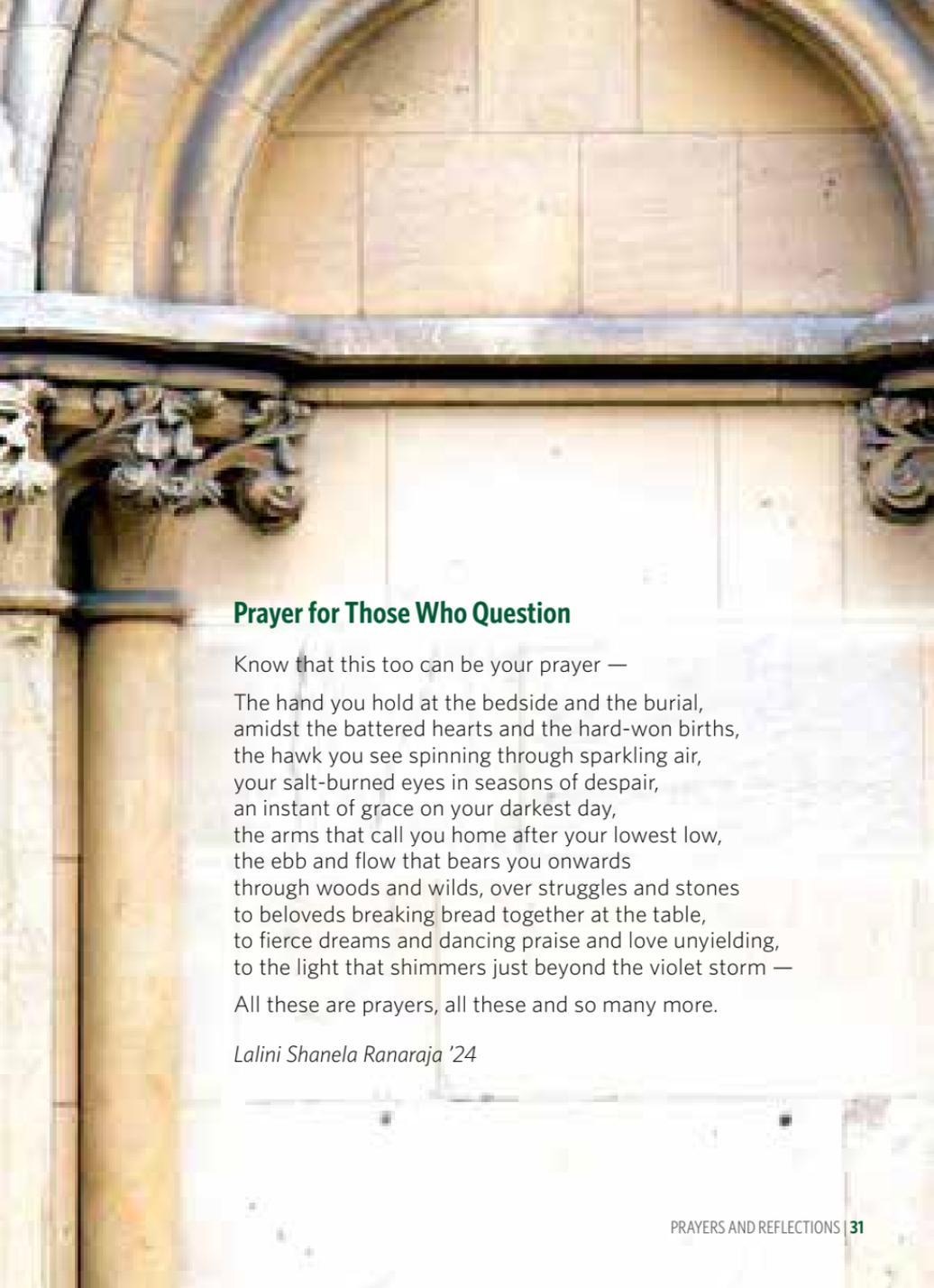


As Kingfishers Catch Fire

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 *Whát I dó is me: for that I came.*

*I say móre: the just man justices;
Keeps grace: thát 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.*

Gerard Manley Hopkins



Prayer for Those Who Question

Know that this too can be your prayer —

The hand you hold at the bedside and the burial,
amidst the battered hearts and the hard-won births,
the hawk you see spinning through sparkling air,
your salt-burned eyes in seasons of despair,
an instant of grace on your darkest day,
the arms that call you home after your lowest low,
the ebb and flow that bears you onwards
through woods and wilds, over struggles and stones
to beloveds breaking bread together at the table,
to fierce dreams and dancing praise and love unyielding,
to the light that shimmers just beyond the violet storm —

All these are prayers, all these and so many more.

Lalini Shanela Ranaraja '24

Miracles

Why, who makes much of a miracle?

As to me I know of nothing else but miracles,

Whether I walk the streets of Manhattan,

Or dart my sight over the roofs of houses toward the sky,

Or wade with naked feet along the beach just in the edge of the water,

Or stand under trees in the woods,

Or talk by day with anyone I love, or sleep in the bed at night
with any one I love,

Or sit at table at dinner with the rest,

Or look at strangers opposite me riding in the car,

Or watch honey-bees busy around the hive of a summer forenoon,

Or animals feeding in the fields,

Or birds, or the wonderfulness of insects in the air,

Or the wonderfulness of the sundown, or of stars shining so quiet and bright,

Or the exquisite delicate thin curve of the new moon in spring;

These with the rest, one and all, are to me miracles,

The whole referring, yet each distinct and in its place.

To me every hour of the light and dark is a miracle,

Every cubic inch of space is a miracle,

Every square yard of the surface of the earth is spread with the same,

Every foot of the interior swarms with the same.

To me the sea is a continual miracle,

The fishes that swim — the rocks —

the motion of the waves — the ships with men in them,

What stranger miracles are there?

Walt Whitman



Prayer for Radical Amazement

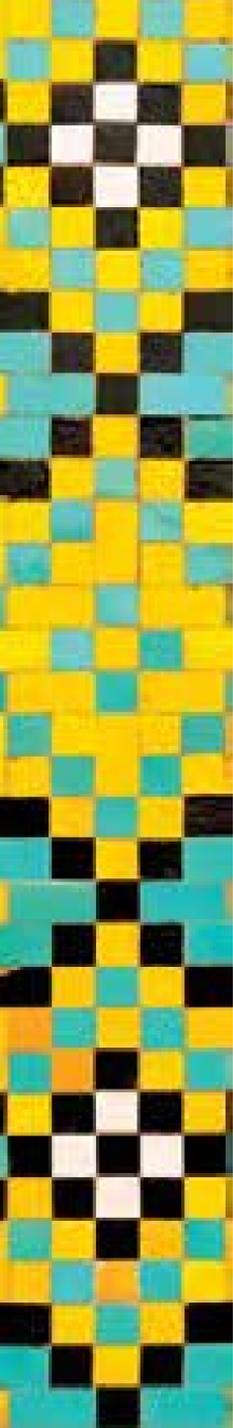
Our goal should be to live life in
radical amazement.
Get up in the morning and look at the world
in a way that takes nothing for granted.
Everything is phenomenal;
everything is incredible;
never treat life casually.
To be spiritual is to be amazed.

Abraham Joshua Heschel

Listen to Your Life

Listen to your life.
See it for the fathomless mystery it is.
In the boredom and pain of it, no less than
in the excitement and gladness: touch, taste,
smell your way to the holy and hidden heart
of it, because in the last analysis all moments
are key moments, and life itself is grace.

Frederick Buechner



Beginners

But we have only begun to love the earth.
We have only begun to imagine the fullness of life.
How could we tire of hope?
— so much is in the bud.

How can desire fail?
— we have only begun

to imagine justice and mercy,
only begun to envision

how it might be to
live as siblings with beast and flower,
not as oppressors.

Surely our river
cannot already be hastening
into the sea of nonbeing?

Surely it cannot
drag, in the silt,
all that is innocent?

Not yet, not yet—
there is too much broken
that must be mended,

too much hurt we have done
to each other
that cannot yet be forgiven.

We have only begun to know
the power that is in us if we
would join
our solitudes in the
communion of struggle,

So much is unfolding that must
complete its gesture,
so much is in bud.

Denise Levertov (1982)

Breathe

Breathe into me, Spirit of God,
that I may think what is holy.
Drive me, Spirit of God,
that I may do what is holy.
Draw me, Spirit of God,
that I may love what is holy.
Strengthen me, Spirit of God,
that I may preserve what is holy.
Guide me, Spirit of God,
that I may never lose what is holy.

St. Augustine

Prayer for Forgiveness (A Bahá'í Prayer)

Thou forgiving Lord! Thou art the shelter of all these Thy servants. Thou knowest the secrets and art aware of all things. We are all helpless, and Thou art the Mighty, the Omnipotent. We are all sinners, and Thou art the Forgiver of sins, the Merciful, the Compassionate. O Lord! Look not at our shortcomings. Deal with us according to Thy grace and bounty. Our shortcomings are many, but the ocean of Thy forgiveness is boundless. Our weakness is grievous, but the evidences of Thine aid and assistance are clear. Therefore, confirm and strengthen us. Enable us to do that which is worthy of Thy holy Threshold. Illumine our hearts, grant us discerning eyes and attentive ears. Resuscitate the dead and heal the sick. Bestow wealth upon the poor and give peace and security to the fearful. Accept us in Thy kingdom and illumine us with the light of guidance. Thou art the Powerful and the Omnipotent. Thou art the Generous. Thou art the Clement. Thou art the Kind.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

A Contemplation for Non-Believers (Excerpt)

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.

Claudia Bernard

The Merton Prayer

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.

I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end, nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.

And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.

I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.

I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

Thomas Merton



Reflection on Ignatian Discernment

There's a question that Ignatius would have us continually ask of ourselves:

What do you really want?

Peel away the layers of desires, fears, ambitions, and dreams and get in touch with the deepest desire of your heart.

Ignatius believed that when you touch what the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins called the "dearest, freshness, deep-down things," you'll find God there.

Jim Manney, S.J.

Prayer for Community

Dear God,

Thank You for creating us all to be Your family. Help us to remember this truth about us and so make us more caring, more compassionate for our sisters and brothers, members of our family, members of Your family, through Jesus Christ, our brother.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Prayer of Mother Teresa

People are often unreasonable and self-centered.

Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of ulterior motives.

Be kind anyway.

If you are honest, people may cheat you.

Be honest anyway.

If you find happiness, people may be jealous.

Be happy anyway.

The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow.

Do good anyway.

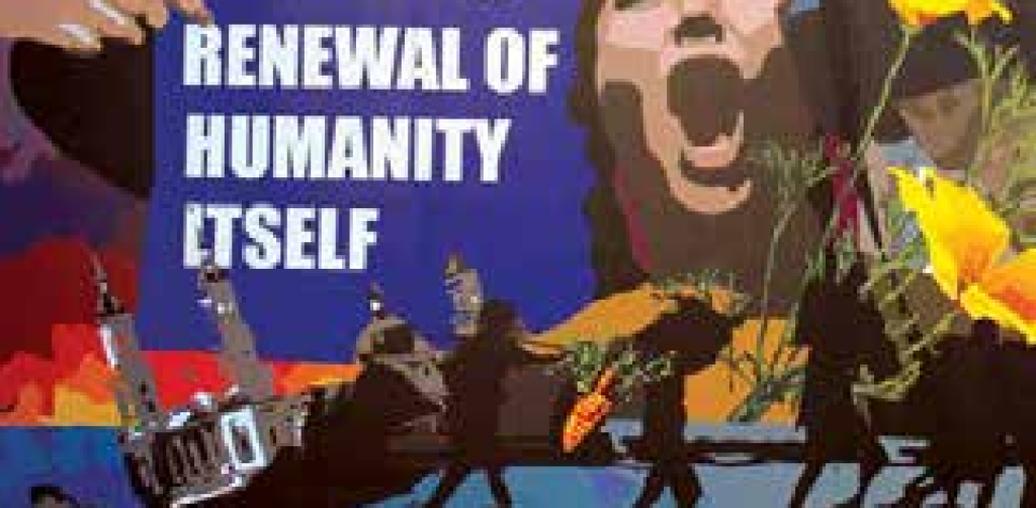
Give the world the best you have and it may never be enough.

Give your best anyway.

For you see, in the end, it is between you and God.

It was never between you and them anyway.

St. Teresa of Calcutta



Prayer for Migrants

Creator God,

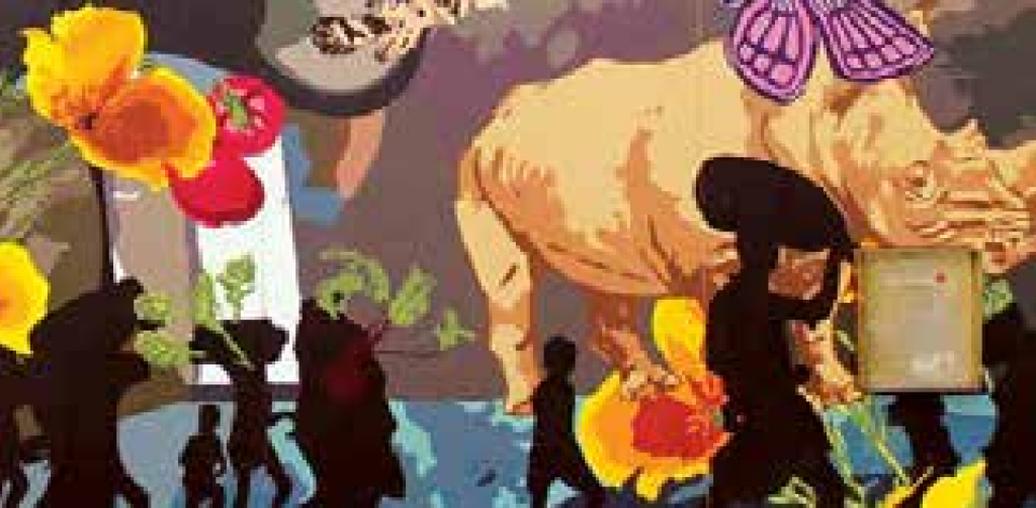
open our eyes so we can see you in the eyes of our immigrant brothers and sisters,
eyes downcast for having lived so long in the shadows,
eyes challenging us to join them in the streets or picket lines,
eyes lifted looking for the Christ light in us.

Compassionate God, who has come to dwell among us,
open our ears to hear the cries of your children,
children being separated from their parents,
rounded up in raids,
led to detention centers,
silently giving up dreams.

God of Justice, who crosses all boundaries,
give us courage to resist, to say NO
to unfair labor practices,
to unjust laws and contracts.

Give us the strength to stand with and for your inclusive love,
faith to believe,
another world is necessary and possible. Let it begin with us. Amen.

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas



Kinship

Loving, Faithful God,

Your spacious heart calls us to be in the world who you are: compassionate, loving, kind.

You invite us to imagine a circle of compassion and then invite us to imagine no one standing outside that circle.

You beckon us then to dismantle the barriers that exclude and asked us to take seriously, what Jesus took seriously.

And so, with Jesus, we seek to create a community of kinship, such that You might recognize it.

And with Your love and Your grace, we stand with the poor, and the powerless and the voiceless;

We stand with those whose dignity has been denied;

We stand with those whose burdens

are more than they can bear;

We feel such privilege to stand with the easily despised and the readily left out;

With the demonized, so that the demonizing will stop;

And with the disposable, So that the day will come when we stop throwing people away.

You invite us to stand at the margins, Knowing, that this is how margins get erased.

Your dream come true is that we be one and have planted within us the same deep longing that we belong to each other.

Only you can obliterate the illusion that we are separate.

Keep us one, in You, in love. Amen.

Greg Boyle, S.J.

Prayer for Guidance

Most high, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart; give me, Lord, a correct faith, a certain hope, a perfect charity, sense and knowledge, so that I may carry out Your holy and true command.

St. Francis of Assisi

Prayer for Spiritual Growth (A Bahá'í Prayer)

Create in me a pure heart, O my God, and renew a tranquil conscience within me, O my Hope! Through the spirit of power confirm Thou me in Thy Cause, O my Best-Beloved, and by the light of Thy glory reveal unto me Thy path, O Thou the Goal of my desire! Through the power of Thy transcendent might lift me up unto the heaven of Thy holiness, O Source of my being, and by the breezes of Thine eternity gladden me, O Thou Who art my God! Let Thine everlasting melodies breathe tranquillity on me, O my Companion, and let the riches of Thine ancient countenance deliver me from all except Thee, O my Master, and let the tidings of the revelation of Thine incorruptible Essence bring me joy, O Thou Who art the most manifest of the manifest and the most hidden of the hidden!

Bahá'u'lláh





Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity to accept
the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.

Slow Me Down

Slow me down, God, slow me down, so that
I may see you more and move in my faster
and faster life. Give me a listening heart, and
contemplative eyes, so that I may see you in
my active world. Amen.

James Martin, S.J.

Gaelic Blessing

May the road rise up to meet you.

May the wind always be at your back.

May the sun shine warm upon your face; the
rain fall soft upon your fields, and until we
meet again, may God hold you in the palm of
His hand.



Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi (Prayer for Peace)

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

Where there is injury, pardon.

Where there is doubt, faith.

Where there is despair, hope.

Where there is darkness, light.

Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;

to be understood, as to understand;

to be loved, as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive.

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life. Amen.

Unknown

The Grace, Asking for Forgiveness (A Jain Prayer)

I forgive all beings; May all beings forgive me. I am a friend to all life: I have no ill will toward anyone. All living beings, including myself, have been suffering and reincarnating throughout the universe because of clinging to conditions and habits; The push and pull of karma we can bring an end to by mutual forgiveness. So, again, I declare that I forgive everyone and may everyone forgive me.

Peace

Peace is more than the
absence of war,

More than the maintenance
of balance of power
between enemies.

It is more than the firm hold of
a dictator that, for the moment,
involves no bloodshed. But
then, what is peace?

Peace is the result of justice.
When society is rightly ordered,
When people live as God
intends, then peace reigns.

Peace must be constantly
built up.

Human nature must be called
again and again to make peace.

But even this is not sufficient.
Peace comes, in the end,
from love.

When we love our neighbor,
even those who irritate us or
alienate us, then we give peace
its only chance. Unless people
willingly come together to share
their talents and bright minds,
peace cannot be achieved.

*From Gaudium et Spes,
Vatican II (1965)*





Prayer for Exams

God of Wisdom,

I thank you for the knowledge gained
and the learning experiences of the semester.

I come to you and ask you to illuminate my mind and heart.

Let your Holy Spirit be with me as I prepare for exams, guiding
my studies and giving me insight so that I can perform to the
best of my ability.

Grant me the strength to handle the pressure of these days, the
confidence to feel secure in my knowledge, and the ability to
keep a proper perspective through it all.

Help me to keep in mind what is truly important, even as I focus
my time and energy on these exams.

Finally, may I sense your peace in knowing that I applied myself
to the challenges of this day. Amen

Author unknown



Prayer of St. Teresa of Avila

Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing frighten you,
All things are passing away:
God never changes.
Patience obtains all things
Whoever has God lacks nothing;
God alone suffices.

May today there be peace within. May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be. May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith. May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you. May you be content knowing you are a child of God. Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love. It is there for each and every one of us.



The Long Loneliness

The only answer to this life, to the loneliness we are all bound to feel, is community. The living together, working together, sharing together, loving God and loving our brother and sister, and living close to them in community so we can show our love for God.

Dorothy Day

Prayer for Detachment (A Bahá'í Prayer)

O God, my God! Thou art my Hope and my Beloved, my highest Aim and Desire! With great humbleness and entire devotion I pray to Thee to make me a minaret of Thy love in Thy land, a lamp of Thy knowledge among Thy creatures, and a banner of divine bounty in Thy dominion.

Number me with such of Thy servants as have detached themselves from everything but Thee, have sanctified themselves from the transitory things of this world, and have freed themselves from the promptings of the voicers of idle fancies.

Let my heart be dilated with joy through the spirit of confirmation from Thy kingdom, and brighten my eyes by beholding the hosts of divine assistance descending successively upon me from the kingdom of Thine omnipotent glory.

Thou art, in truth, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the All-Powerful.

Abdu'l-Bahá

The Ignatian Examen: A Method for Reflecting Upon Your Day

Gratitude: Recall anything from the day for which you are grateful and give thanks.

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.

Sorrow: Recall any actions for which you are sorry.

Forgiveness: Ask for God's forgiveness. Decide whether you want to reconcile with anyone you have hurt.

Grace: Ask for the grace you need for the next day and an ability to see God's presence more clearly.

Adapted by James Martin, S.J.

Prayer for Generosity

Lord Jesus, teach me to be generous;
teach me to serve you as you deserve,
to give and not to count the cost,
to fight and not to heed the wounds,
to toil and not to seek for rest,
to labor and not to seek reward,
except that of knowing that I do your will.
Amen.

St. Ignatius of Loyola



Prayer for LGBTQIA+ Acceptance

God of many names who is beyond all names, God of compassion and justice,

May we understand that we are part of the beloved community, for you created us all in your image.

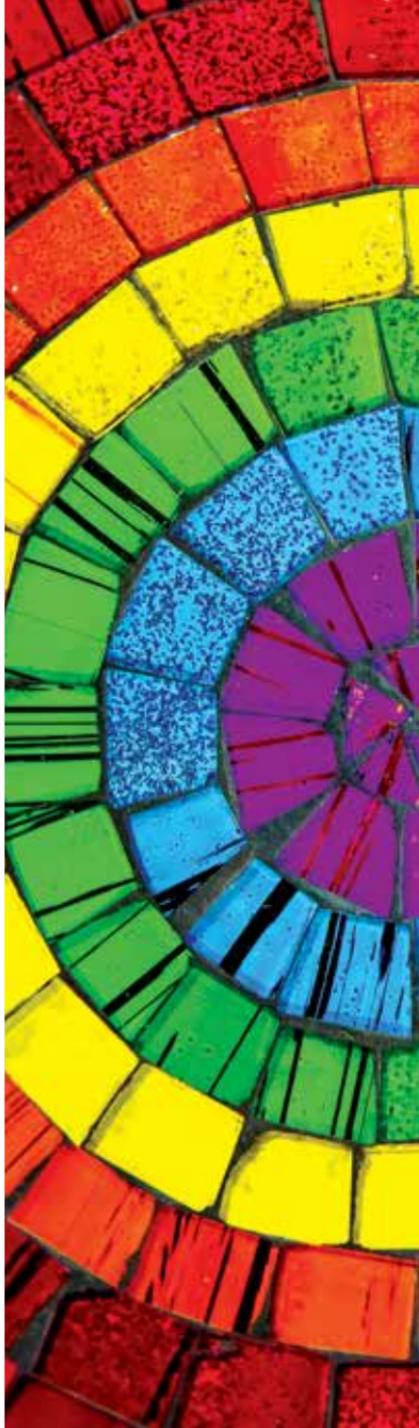
May this also be true for those of us who feel ostracized because of our sexual orientation and gender identities, whom our churches and faith traditions have often marginalized and rejected.

Heal us individually and institutionally of all homophobia and transphobia so that our traditions may reflect your love for us all, and we may become communities of life, celebration, affirmation, support, and love.

You gave Noah and all of humanity the rainbow as a symbol of your covenant with all of creation.

When we see rainbow flags may we be reminded of your desire for us to be the rainbow people of God, celebrating our common humanity, unity and community in all of our diversity.

Donal Godfrey, S.J.





Twilight People

As the sun sinks and the colors of the day turn, we offer a blessing for the twilight, for twilight is neither day nor night, but in-between. We are all twilight people. We can never be fully labeled or defined. We are many identities and loves, many genders and none. We are in between roles, at the intersection of histories, or between place and place. We are crisscrossed paths of memory and destination, streaks of light swirled together. We are neither day nor night. We are both, neither, and all.

May the sacred in-between of this evening suspend our certainties, soften our judgment, and widen our vision. May this in-between light illuminate our way to the God who transcends all categories and definitions. May the in-between people who have come to pray be lifted up into this twilight. We cannot always define; we can always say a blessing. Blessed are You, God of all, who brings on the twilight.

*Rabbi Reuben Zellman,
Siddur Sha'ar Zahav (2010)*

The Summer Day

Who made the world?

Who made the swan, and the black bear?

Who made the grasshopper?

This grasshopper, I mean —
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,

who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down —
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.

I don't know exactly what a prayer is.

I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.

Tell me, what else should I have done?

Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?

Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?

Mary Oliver

Acknowledgements

The prayers and reflections in this book were gathered from various sources. Students and staff at USF contributed some of their favorite prayers, and we looked to past publications that serve as important prayer resources for our community. Here are some of our favorites:

- *Living the Mission: A Book of Meditations, Prayers and Insights from the University of San Francisco Community*, 2013.
- Boyle, Gregory, S.J. *Barking to the Choir: The Power of Radical Kinship*. Simon & Schuster, 2018.
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We encourage you to learn more about prayer, reflection, and the many religious and spiritual traditions that inspire us to live the University of San Francisco mission through University Ministry programs.

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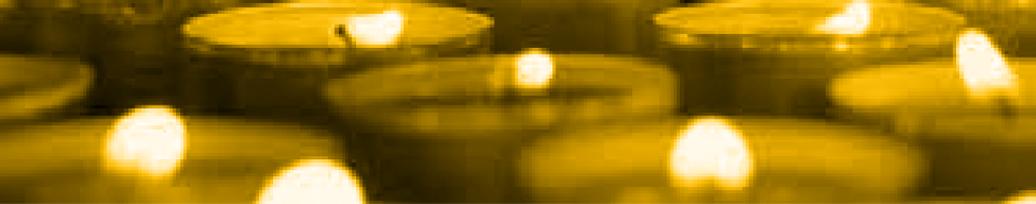
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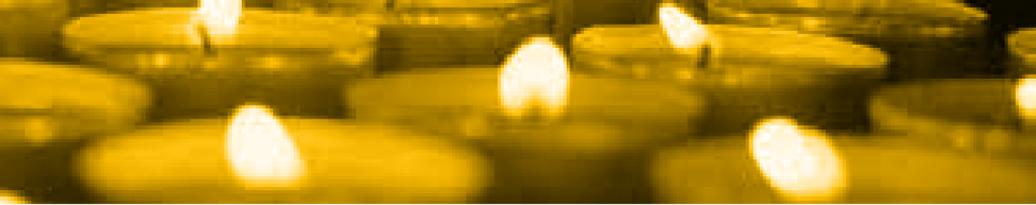
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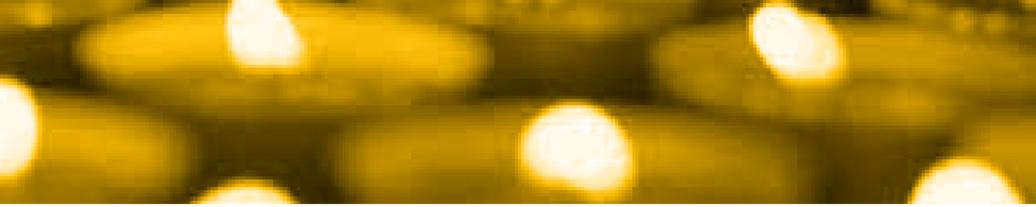
My Reflections



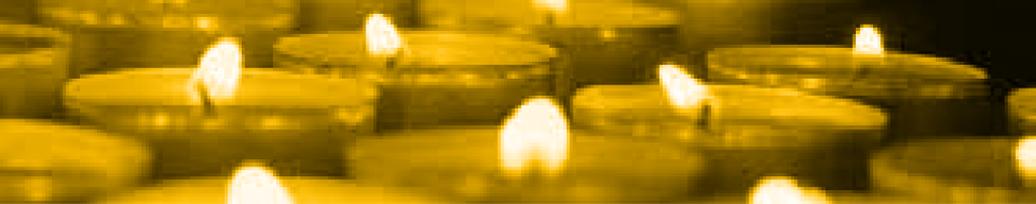














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