

## Prayer & Reflections

We encourage you to learn more about prayer, reflection, and the many religious and spiritual traditions that inspire us to live the mission of the University of San Francisco through University Ministry programs.

[um@usfca.edu](mailto:um@usfca.edu)  
[usfca.edu/university-ministry](http://usfca.edu/university-ministry)  
415-422-4463  
Toler Hall



UNIVERSITY OF  
SAN FRANCISCO  

---

University Ministry

## Table of contents

Welcome to US!	2
Praying	3
This Place Where You Are Right Now	
Suscipe	4
Tefilat Haderech ( <i>Wayfarers' Prayer From the Jewish Tradition</i> )	
Archbishop Oscar Romero Prayer: A Step Along the Way	5
A Prayer for Our Earth	7
An Ashanti (West African) Prayer	8
A Prayer of Julian of Norwich	10
Prayer for Those Who Serve Sh'ma Yisrael	
Passages From Sacred Islamic Texts	11
From the Hadith Collection of Sahih Al-Bukhari, Volume 9, Report No. 84	
Our Lady of Guadalupe As spoken to St. Juan Diego	12
Fall in Love	13
Golden Chain Prayer A Buddhist Prayer	14
Some Centering Moment	15
You Have Called Me by Name	16
Isha Upanishad	17
Through the Silence of Nature	18
Personal Prayer of Pedro Arrupe, S.J	
Prayer for Justice	19
Discourse on the Psalms	20
Psalms 139	21
Help Thanks Wow: The Three Essential Prayers ( <i>Excerpt</i> )	23
Patient Trust	24
Daily Examen for Diversity	25
The First Principle and Foundation Spiritual Exercises	26



Apache Blessing	27
Gayatri Mantra A Hindu Mantra	
As Kingfishers Catch Fire	28
Miracles	29
Breathe	30
Beginners	31
Prayer for Radical Amazement	
Through the Silence of Nature	33
Listen to Your Life	
A Contemplation for Non-Believers ( <i>Excerpt</i> )	34
The Merton Prayer	35
Reflection on Ignatian Discernment	36
Prayer of Mother Teresa	37
Prayer for Community	38
Prayer for Migrants	
Kinship	39
Prayer for Guidance	40
Serenity Prayer	
Slow Me Down	41
Prayer for Peace	
Peace	42
Gaelic Blessing	44
Prayer for Exams	
The Suscipe of Catherine McAuley	45
Prayer of St. Teresa of Avila	
The Long Loneliness	46
The Ignatian Examen A method for reflecting upon your day	
The Summer Day	47
Acknowledgments	48
My Reflections	49



## Welcome to USF!

As a Jesuit Catholic university, USF cares about you as a whole person, and that includes your faith, religious, and spiritual life. We encourage you while you are in college to cultivate a loving and vibrant life of prayer and reflection—with whatever faith or spiritual tradition you may have—and offer you this book of prayer and meditation to get started.

Prayer and reflection are tools for discovering who we really are at the center of our being. Prayer is a portal inviting us to ask deep questions about life's meaning and purpose as we discern our professional vocations. Prayer give us images and symbols to use as we reflect on the gritty reality of the world around us. Prayer sustains us when we go through challenging times. And prayer unites us as one human community committed to peace, justice, and the flourishing of creation.

We encourage you to give yourself some time for prayer and reflection amidst your busy days. Allow yourself time every now and then to imagine God's loving gaze upon you. And in that loving gaze, discover the bold, courageous person you were born to be.

We look forward to joining you on the journey.

[University Ministry](#)

[usfca.edu/university-ministry](https://usfca.edu/university-ministry)

[New Student Programs at USF](#)

[usfca.edu/student-life](https://usfca.edu/student-life)



## 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*

## This Place Where You Are Right 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*

## 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.

*Saint Ignatius of Loyola*

## Tefilat Haderech (Wayfarers' Prayer From the Jewish Tradition)

Adonai shall guard your coming and your 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.



## Archbishop Oscar Romero Prayer: 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, Michigan, 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.*

## 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'*



## An Ashanti (West African) Prayer

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

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 Savior.

In you, our Lord the Holy Spirit, is marvelous 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

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.

*Qur'an 5:8*

## From the Hadith Collection of Sahih Al-Bukhari, Volume 9, Report No. 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 As spoken to St. Juan Diego

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.







## Fall in Love

Nothing is more practical than finding God that is, 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, our spirits refreshed, and we move back into  
the traffic of our daily round.  
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 of 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.*

## Isha Upanishad

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, solitary 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. OM. 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

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.*

## Discourse on the Psalms

The desire of one's heart constitutes one's prayer. There is a hidden anguish which is inaudible to us.... If your desire lies open to the one who is your God and who sees your secret, God 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.

*Saint Augustine*



## 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.

## 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*



## 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*

## 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.

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





## 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.

## 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 *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.

*Gerard Manley Hopkins*



## 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*

## 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.

*Saint Augustine*

## 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 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*

## 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*



## Through the Silence of Nature

Through the silence of nature, I attain divine peace.  
O sublime nature, in the 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 my silence I hear Thy cry.  
My heart is tuned to the quietness, that the stillness  
of nature inspires.

*Islamic Prayer*

## 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.

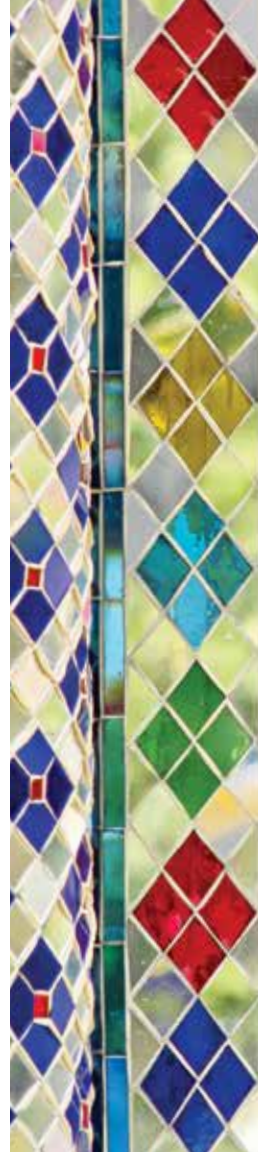
*Frederick Buechner*

## 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 of Mother Teresa

People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered. Forgive them anyway.

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

If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies. Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and sincere, people may cheat you. Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight. Create anyway.

If you find serenity and 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.

*Saint Teresa of Calcutta*

## 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 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.

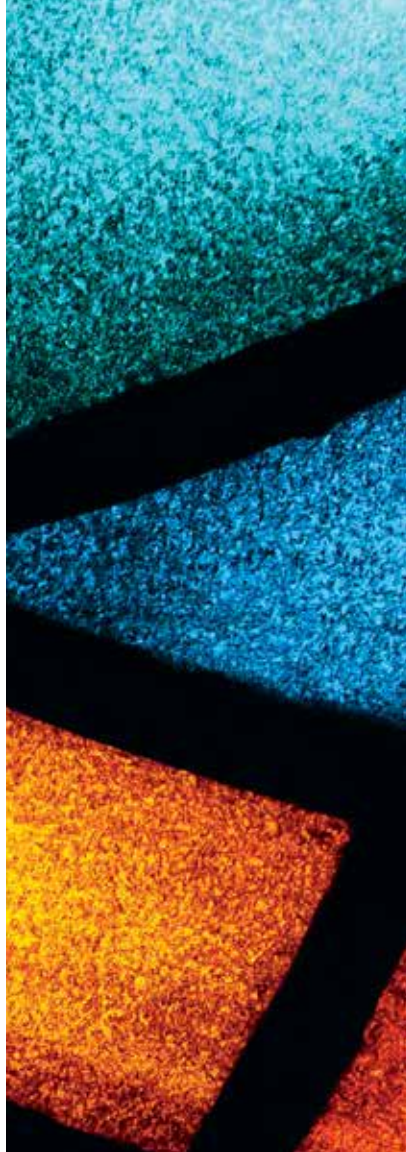
Give us the strength to stand with and for your inclusive love, faith to believe, another world is necessary and possible. Let it begin with us. Amen.

*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.

*Saint Francis of Assisi*

## 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.*

## 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.

*Saint Francis of Assisi*

## 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?

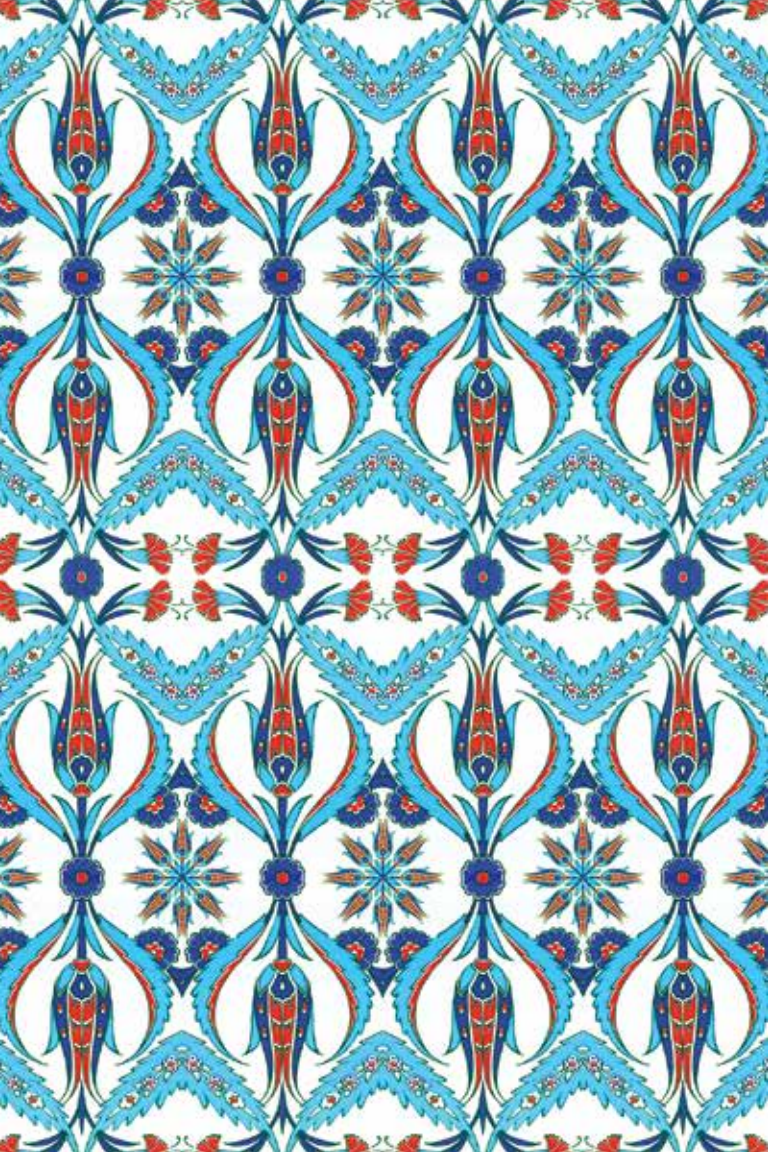
Peace is the result of justice.  
When society is rightly ordered,  
When people live as God intends,  
then peace reigns.  
Peace must be constantly built up.  
Human nature must be called again  
and again to make peace.

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*





## 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 rains fall soft upon your fields,  
and until we meet again,  
may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

## 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*



## The Suscipe of Catherine McAuley

My God, I am yours for time and eternity.  
Teach me to cast myself entirely  
into the arms of your loving Providence  
with a lively, unlimited confidence in your compassionate, tender pity.  
Grant, O most merciful Redeemer,  
That whatever you ordain or permit may be acceptable to me.  
Take from my heart all painful anxiety;  
let nothing sadden me but sin,  
nothing delight me but the hope of coming to the possession of  
You my God and my all,  
in your everlasting kingdom. Amen.

## 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*

## 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.*



## 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

## Acknowledgments

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

Boyle, Gregory, S.J. *Barking to the Choir: The Power of Radical Kinship*. NY: Simon & Schuster, 2018.

*Earth Prayers: 365 Prayers, Poems, and Invocations from Around the World*. Edited by Elizabeth Roberts and Elisa Amidon. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991.

Harter, Michael. *Hearts on Fire: Praying with Jesuits*. Chicago: Loyola Press, 2005.

Lamott, Anne. *Help Thanks Wow: The Three Essential Prayers*. NY: Penguin, 2010.

*Living the Mission: A Book of Meditations, Prayers and Insights from the University of San Francisco Community*. USF Press, 2013.

Martin, James, S.J. *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2012.

Oliver, Mary. *New and Selected Poems, Volumes I and II*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2004.

*Published with the support of the Loyola House Jesuit Community and New Student Programs.*



## My Reflections

