

A Blessing for the Inner Journey

May you recognize in your life the presence, power, and light of your soul.

May you realize that you are never alone, that your soul in its brightness and belonging connects you intimately with the rhythm of the universe.

May you have respect for your own individuality and difference.

May you realize that the shape of your soul is unique, that you have a special destiny here, that behind the facade of your life there is something beautiful, good, and eternal happening.

May you learn to see yourself with the same delight, pride, and expectation with which God sees you in every moment.

(From *Anam Cara* John O'Donohue Harper Collins)

Words of Invitation from Jesus

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light." (Matthew 11:28-30 NLT)

Words of Jesus in Contentious Times

"You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the injury: 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say, do not resist an evil person!

If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also. If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too. If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles. Give to those who ask, and don't turn away from those who want to borrow.

"You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbour' and hate your enemy.

But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!

In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike.

If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that.

But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:38-48 NLT)

A Benediction

Now may the God of peace—who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, and ratified an eternal covenant with his blood—may he equip you with all you need for doing his will. May he produce in you, through the power of Jesus Christ, every good thing that is pleasing to him. All glory to him forever and ever! Amen. (Hebrews 13:20-21 NLT)



Touchstone

Prayers for Deck & Dock 2020

Prayers in Uncertain Days

If you are at all like me this past few months has tested your patience, your relationships and your faith. Some are overwhelmed and weary of Zoom calls from dawn to dusk. Others are feeling bored or not as useful as they'd like to be.

Most of us haven't learned a new language, painted the Sistine Chapel or written the play of the century – despite all the encouragement to do so from so-called wise ones.

We have lost friends and loved ones without a funeral to offer or receive comfort, share stories and memories. We haven't hugged our kids or grand kids in months.

But God is still present with us even when it doesn't feel like it.

Our fatigue from being too busy, or our torpor from not being busy enough are doorways of invitation from the Loving God who has come to us in Jesus.

An image I turn to in these moments is one I learned from my now 16-year-old grandson. I was babysitting him when he was about 18 months old. It was after supper and he was scrambling around the house and my job was to keep him safe. I thought "Well there is something about my relationship with him that is like the heavenly Father's relationship with me. He is giving me lots of space but keeps me from doing anything too self-destructive..." Eventually he got up on my lap with a beach ball on an elastic band. He was banging it in rapid fire fashion and then it got slower and slower. His hand hit my lap, and his head hit my chest, and he went to sleep. And I thought, "What a great picture of what some kinds of prayer are - that our prayer experience is just lying back on the Father's chest - and experiencing His love."

That's what I'm inviting you to do on occasions this summer when you have space and quiet – your hand isn't banging, and your breathing has slowed down enough to relax in a chair with your head back. Imagine the face of God smiling on you as you sit in the warmth of the sun. Begin with this blessing –

May the Lord bless you and protect you.
May the Lord smile on you
and be gracious to you.
May the Lord show you his favour
and give you his peace.
(Numbers 6:24-26 NLT)

Sit with that picture of God and imagine where you may have seen the Divine presence in your past day, week, or month.

A Psalm of Yearning (42)

Like the deer that yearns for running streams, so my soul is yearning for you, my God.

My soul is thirsting for God, the God of my life;

when can I enter and see the face of God?

My tears have become my bread, by night, by day, as I hear it said all the day long: "Where is your God?"

These things will I remember as I pour out my soul: how I would lead the rejoicing crowd into the house of God, amid cries of gladness and thanksgiving, the throng wild with joy.

Why are you cast down, my soul? Why groan within me? Hope in God; I will praise yet again, my saviour and my God.

My soul is downcast within me as I think of you,

from the country of Jordan and Mount Hermon, from the hill of Mizar.

Deep is calling on deep, in the roar of waters; your torrents and all your waves swept over me. By day the Lord will send forth loving kindness; by night I will sing to the Lord, praise the God of my life.

I say to God, my Rock: "Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning, oppressed by the foe?" With cries that pierce me to the heart my enemies revile me, saying to me all the day long, "Where is your God?"

Why are you cast down, my soul, why groan within me? Hope in God; I will praise yet again, my savior and my God. (Grail Translation)

A Prayer to Begin the Day

We hear the promise of Jesus: When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. We pray together for the fulfillment of that promise.

Father we come to you in praise, for the Heir of your majesty is the friend who shared our weakness, and his rising from the dead has made us heirs with him.

As we gather in him to worship you, we know that our prayer is heard, that your Spirit has new truth to quicken us with joy.

Let him declare to us the inward truths of Jesus: the words of our Saviour, to echo in our conscience, the face of our Saviour, to look into our heart, the wounds of our Saviour, to bring us forgiveness, the life of our Saviour, to strengthen our service.

In the Name of our Saviour, we come to you in adoration. Amen

These Moments are a Gift

Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession.

(James 1:17,18 NLT)