



Touchstone

Prayers for Advent 2020

Groaning & Hoping

You know that this is a period where we all are feeling unsettled and have experiences of grief and loss while living in the pandemic.

The whole world is groaning under it and we need the Spirit's help to engage life with hope and purpose.

I like the idea that when we groan, the Spirit takes those groans to the Father and makes sense of that which we can't articulate.

I've included some scripture and some prayers to assist us in our conversations with God, both articulate and otherwise.

Prayer for ourselves comes easily but we are also called to pray for those who are struggling and suffering in ways much beyond our own experience.

May we find God's presence and peace in these days before Christmas. We live in the hope that Christ promises ultimate reconciliation of the world to God.

The Presence of God

In the whirling wheels of the world,

You are with us.

When the day takes its toll,

You are with us.

In the clamour of strife,

You are with us.

When the world turns sour,

You are with us.

Make us aware, dear God
of the eye that beholds us,
the hand that holds us,
the heart that loves us,
the Presence that enfolds us.

(Prayer Rhythms for Busy People, Ray Simpson)

Peace

The prophets said someone was coming
to be the hero all the people needed
to save them, and to champion the weak,
to teach the world about justice
and to bring us all peace.

Isaiah said:

To us a child is born:

we have a son.

He will carry his own throne

on his shoulders.

What are we to call him?

Wonderful! Counsellor! Mighty God!

The Forever Father!

And for always the Prince of Peace!

*(Celtic Daily Readings, from the Northumbria
Community)*

Help Even In Our Groaning

But with eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will. (Romans 8:20,21,26,27 NLT)

Zechariah's Words

'By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.' (Luke 1.78-79 NRSV)

God of promises,
Sometimes we wait generations
for the dawn from on high;
sometimes only years.
We wait for justice and hope
and light and kindness
to mingle in the tangle of our days.
And we age while we hope.
So may we age and hope
with tenderness and truth.
Because you are tender and true
even though we sometimes wonder.
Amen.

*(Daily Prayer With the Corrymeela Community,
Padraig O Tuama)*

An Advent Prayer

Beloved lover of humankind,
Soften our hearts so that we too may have
compassion for those who suffer, so that we
too may give gladly of our time and treasure to
those in need.

May nothing we do be done in strife, but in
confidence and peace.

May nothing we do be done in foolish pride,
but in lowliness of mind let us esteem others
as greater than ourselves.

May we esteem the needs of others as greater
than our own. May we look with kindness and
compassion on their burdens.

May our hearts become as tender wombs
prepared to receive your grace, that in due
time may we bring forth the joyful fruit of your
Spirit.

May this mind be in us, which was also in
Christ Jesus: That being God he made himself
impoverished, and took upon himself the form
of a servant, humbled himself and was
obedient unto death – yet a death that has
brought all to life.

May we suspect our own power to say yes to
whatever God asks of us .. in the name of the
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

(Scott Cairns from *God With Us*, Greg Pennoyer)

A Cry from the Heart

Lord, you keep us waiting for signs of hope.
You keep us looking for ways
in which you come.

The pain of the world,
the anguish of the people
cry out to you.

Come, Lord Jesus, come.

(From *Celtic Prayers for Life Today*. Ray Simpson)

