

Prayer Reflection in Time of Uncertainty

God of all knowing,
Things are moving so fast,
Everything I hold dear is changing,
Disappearing,
Being set aside.
We live in a time of short-term memory
and instant gratification.
I know the church is bigger than the bricks and mortar
and beloved statues of my own house of worship.
But this is my house.
It is the place my faith was shaped.
It is the keeper of my memories.
It is the table of communion and community.
It is the circle where our stories are told again and again.
The stories of our ancestors in faith ...
The ones who met God on mountains and in deserts.
Who lived in exile.
Who left their boats and families.
Who gathered in rented rooms and at the shores of the sea.
All done in faith, believed yet unseen, committed but not understood.
They too lived amid uncertainty.
They too felt fear and anger
and wondered whether they were forgotten, abandoned.
And yet they persevered over centuries, eons.
We are called to persevere, too.
If we are truly Christian,
then our mission is not about place, but people.
Like our ancestors, we may need to be church in new ways ...
Gathered on mountainsides or at sea shores ...
Or at the very least in houses not our own.
We may need to open our arms and our hearts ...
To welcome new people into our community,
to embrace the gifts and perspectives they will bring.
We may need to open the doors of community wherever that may be.

Prayer of St. Ignatius of Loyola

O Christ Jesus,
when all is darkness
and we feel our weakness and helplessness,
give us the sense of Your presence, Your love, and Your strength.

Help us to have perfect trust
in Your protecting love and strengthening power,
so that nothing may frighten or worry us,
for, living close to You,
we shall see Your hand,
Your purpose,
Your will through all things.
Amen.

Prayer of Thomas Merton

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 I will 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.
Amen.

Prayer of Faith in Time of Doubt

I don't even know what to say, Blessed Lord,
I am so confused.
I am caught in the midst of a violent crisis of faith,
so uncertain and doubtful.
I am going through a difficult time
in what touches the depth of my belief.
I am almost tempted to give in to impatience and despair.
Something within me cries out for you,
yet you seem not to be there.
I have broken away from many childhood beliefs.
I decided to let my faith
pass through the filter of my personal experience.
Suddenly, I found myself too far from you,
from security and certainty.
If I still turn to you, Blessed Lord,
it is because I have not yet lost the hope
of finding an exit door for my spiritual anguish.
I begin to realize that by myself
I will not be able to overcome life's ambiguities and contradictions.
I know the mystery of you continues,
and that my faith-existence is a challenge to be embraced.
The light of your occasional shadowy presence
makes me see that my crisis comes
from the depth of my maturity,
from the depth of my faith.
The irony, Lord;
there is a crisis of doubt only because there is faith.
Perhaps I have become too demanding and too positive.
Open my heart, Lord,
to the right attitude when confronted with questions of my faith.
Amen.

Prayer by Archbishop Oscar Romero

It helps, now and then, to step back and take the 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 another way of saying
that The Kingdom always lies beyond us.
No statement says all that should be said.
No prayer fully expressed 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 produced effects 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 that is not our own.
Amen.

Prayer in Times of Transition by Joseph P. Shadle

God of Love,
You are with us in every transition and change.
As we enter into this new era with excitement
and even some anxiety,
we recall your deep
compassion, presence, and abounding love.
We thank you
for the gifts, talents and skills
with which you have blessed us.
We thank you for the experiences
that have brought us to this moment.
We thank you for the work of others
that gives breadth and depth to our own work.
Be with us as we move forward,
rejoicing with you and supporting one another.
We ask this in your Holy Name.
Amen.

One Morning by Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

One morning
we will wake up
and forget to build that wall we've been building,
the one between us
the one we've been building for years,
perhaps out of some sense
of right and boundary,
perhaps out of habit.

One morning
we will wake up
and let our empty hands hang empty at our sides.
Perhaps they will rise,
as empty things sometimes do
when blown by the wind.
Perhaps they simply will not remember
how to grasp, how to rage.

We will wake up that morning
and we will have misplaced all our theories
about why and how
and who did what to whom,
we will have mislaid all our timelines
of when and plans of what
and we will not scramble
to write the plans and theories anew.

On that morning,
not much else will have changed.
Whatever is blooming will still be in bloom.
Whatever is wilting will wilt.
There will be fields to plow
and trains to load
and children to feed
and work to do.

And in every moment,
in every action,
we will feel the urge to say thank you,
we will follow the urge to bow.

Prayer in Time of Hope by Kathleen Felong

God of all creation,
Things are moving, changing.
Old ways are being re-examined,
set aside, to make room for new ways
of being church.
It is as you said,
“See I am making all things new.”
It feels like this change
has been a long time coming.
The church is bigger than bricks and mortar.
But it doesn’t always seem that way. In many of
our churches, more time —and money —
is spent on facilities than on formation.
This is my church, the place my faith was shaped,
the keeper of memories.
But, if I am honest, memories are not enough
to hold me or others if we don’t all feel connected
to the community or the communion.
Something has to be done. The paint is peeling,
the pews are empty. Fewer people are coming for
communion or community.
Everyone seems to agree that something
must be done, but no one
wants that something to arrive at their doorstep.
It is painful to watch, painful to experience —
especially for many whose roots go deep,
who want God and church to stay put.
But God will not be kept in a box. Or in a church.
God is bigger. Faith is bigger.
We, the church, must be bigger.
Big enough to change in order to survive,
to adapt in order to grow stronger. Big enough to
dare ourselves to create community in a new
way, to embrace others beyond our walls.
I have heard that catholic — small c — means
universal.
Maybe this is the time we embrace
what it means to be Catholic and catholic.
Maybe this is the time
to open our hearts,
open our minds,
open the doors of community,
wherever that may be.