

Daily Prayers and Meditations

When you Awake out of your Sleep, Pray thus:

O most dear Father of our Saviour Jesus Christ, whom none does know but by thy gift, grant that to the manifold great benefits of thy goodness given to me, this which of all other is the greatest, may be added; that like as thou hast awakened my body from sleep, so thou wouldst thoroughly awake, yea, deliver my soul from the sleep of sin and the darkness of this world, and that which now is awakened out of sleep, be pleased, after death, to restore to life, for that is but sleep to thee, which is death to us. O God, I most heartily beseech and humbly pray thy goodness to make my body such a companion, or rather such a minister of godliness to my soul, in this present life, that in the life to come it may partake therewith everlasting happiness by Jesus Christ our Lord. Awake, thou that sleeps, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall show light unto thee. (Eph. v.)

Occasion to meditate

Here call to mind the great joy and blessedness of the everlasting resurrection; also remember to muse upon that most clear light and bright morning, and clearness of our bodies, after the long darkness they will have been in: all then shall be full of joy.

So soon as you behold the Daylight, Pray:

O Lord, thou greatest and most true Light, whence this light of the day and of the sun does spring! O Light, which does lighten every man that comes into this world! O Light, which knows no night nor evening, but are always a midday, most clear and fair, without whom all is most dark darkness by whom all are most resplendent! O thou Wisdom of the eternal Father of mercies! enlighten my mind, that I may only see those things that please thee and may be blinded to all other things. Grant that I may walk in thy ways, and that nothing else may be light and pleasant unto me. Lighten mine eyes, O Lord! that I sleep not in death, lest mine enemies say, "I have prevailed against him."

Occasion to meditate

Muse a little how much the light and eye of the mind and soul are better than those of the body; also that we care more for the soul's seeing well, than for the body. Think that beasts have bodily eyes, and therewith see, but men have eyes of the mind, and therewith should see

When you Arise, Pray:

Our first father tumbled down himself from a most excellent, high, and honourable estate into the mire of misery and deep sea of shame and mischief; but, O Christ, thou, putting forth thine hand, did raise him up; even so we, except we be lifted up by thee, shall lie still for ever. O good Christ, our most gracious Redeemer, grant that as thou dost mercifully now raise up this my body and burden, even so I beseech thee raise up my mind and heart to the light of the true

knowledge of the love of thee, that my conversation may be in heaven, where thou art. If thou risen with Christ, think upon those things that be above

Occasion to meditate

Think how foul and filthy Adam's fall was by reason of sin, and so the fall of every one of us from the height of God's grace; again, think upon the great benefit of Christ, by whose help we do daily arise from our failings.

When you Dress yourself, Pray:

O Christ, clothe me with thine own self, that I may be so far from making provision for my flesh to fulfil the lusts of it, that I may quite put off all my carnal desires, and crucify the kingdom of the flesh in me. Be thou unto me a garment to warm me from catching the cold of this world if thou be away from me, dear Lord, all things will forthwith be unto me cold, weak, dead, &c. But if thou art with me, all things will be warm, lively, fireside &c. Grant therefore, that as I compass this my body with this coat, so thou would clothe me wholly, but especially my soul, with thine own self. Put upon me as the elect of God, mercy, meekness, love, peace, &c.

Occasion to meditate

Call to mind a little how we are incorporated into Christ; again, how he clothes us, and nourishes us under his wings, protection, and providence, preserves us, &c.

When you are made Ready to begin the Day, Pray:

O God and merciful Father, thou knows and hast taught us somewhat to know, that the weakness of man is much, and that without thy grace and virtue he cannot do or think any good thing; have mercy upon me, I humbly beseech thee, who am thy most unworthy and most weak child. Oh! be gracious and tender towards me, enlighten me, that I may with pleasure look only upon good things; exhort me, that I may covet them; carefully lead me, that I may follow, and at length attain them. I, distrusting myself altogether, commend and offer myself wholly, soul, body, life, &c., into thy hands. Thy loving Spirit lead me forth unto the land of righteousness.

Cogitations Proper to Begin the Day with

Think first that a man consists of a soul and a body and that the soul is from heaven, firm and immortal; but the body is of the earth, earthly, frail, and mortal. Again, think that by reason of sin, wherein you are conceived and born, the parts of the soul that understand and desire are so corrupt, that without especial grace to both soul and body, you can neither know nor love any good thing in God's sight, much less do good. Yet notwithstanding think, that you are regenerate by Christ's resurrection, whereof your baptism requires faith, and therefore have both body and soul something reformed both to know and love, and therefore to do some good in the sight of God through Christ, for whose sake our poor doings are accepted for good, the evil and infirmity cleaving thereto not being imputed through faith.

Think that by faith, which is God's seed, (for they which believe are born of God, and made God's children,) and which is given to those that are ordained to eternal life; think (I say) that by faith you receive more and more the Spirit of sanctification, through the use of God's word and sacraments, and earnest prayer, to illumine and enlighten your mind's understanding, judgment, and reason, and to bow, form, frame, and inflame your affections with love and power to that

which is good; and therefore use the means aforesaid accordingly. Think that, by this Spirit, you are through faith united to Christ as a lively member, and so to God, and, as it were, made one with him, and by love which springs out of this faith you are made one also with all that are of God. And so you have fellowship with God and all good men that ever were or shall be, in all the good that God and all his saints have or shall have.

Think that as, by faith and love through the Spirit, you are now entered into this communion, the blessedness whereof no tongue can express, so after this life you shall, first in soul, and in the last day in body also, enjoy for ever the same society most perfectly, which now is only begun in you. Think then of your negligence, that cares so little for this your happy estate. Think upon your ingratitude to God, making you, redeeming you, calling you, and so lovingly adopting you. Think upon your foolishness in fancying so much earthly and bodily pleasures. Think upon your deafness and blindness, who hear not God nor see him, though he calls you so diligently by his works, words, and sacraments. Think upon your frowardness, who will not be led of God and his Spirit.

Think upon your forgetfulness and inconsideration of your high estate, how your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, how your members are the members of Christ, how the whole world and all things are your own (1 Cor. iii. vi.) And therefore say unto your soul, O soul! arise, follow God, contemn this world, purpose well, and pursue it, long for thy Lord's coming, be ready and watch that he come not upon you unawares. And forasmuch as you must live to God's pleasure, consider the vocation and state of your life whereto God has called you, and pray to God for grace, knowledge, and ability to take the most profitable things in hand; to begin well, to go on better, and, best of all, to end the same to God's glory, and the profit of your brethren; and think that time lost wherein you speak or do not, or at the least think not, something to God's glory and your brethren's advantage.

When you go Forth out of Doors, Pray:

Now must I walk among the snares of death, which are stretched out by Satan and his mischievous ministers in the world, carrying with me a friend to them both, and a foe to myself, even this body of sin and sinful flesh. O grand Captain, Christ, lead me and guide me, I beseech thee; defend me from the plagues and subtleties whereby I am endangered. Grant that I may take all things that happen as I should do; only upon thee set thou mine eyes, that I may so go on forwards in thy wars so that by nothing I may be hindered, but rather forwarded, and may refer all things to thee accordingly. Show me thy way, O Lord, and teach me thy paths; consider how vainly the most part of men are occupied, how they trouble and cumber themselves diversely, how they meddle with many things, thereby much alienating their minds from the knowledge and cogitation of that which they should most esteem, and so become a hindrance and an offence to others.

Occasion to meditate

As in going abroad, you look that your apparel is seemly in the sight of men, so examine how seemly you appear in the sight of God.

When you are going any Journey, Pray:

This our life is a pilgrimage. From the Lord we came, and to the Lord we make our journey; howbeit we pass through thievish places, and painful, yea, perilous ways, which our cruel enemies have, and do prepare for us, who now are more than stark blind by reason of sin. O Christ! who art a most true Lodesman (pilot, editor) and Guide, and thereto most expert, faithful,

and friendly, do thou put out thine hand, open mine eyes, make thy highways known unto me, which way thou did first enter into out of this corruptible life, and hast fenced the same for us to immortality. Thou art the way, lead us to the Father by thyself, that we all may be one with him, as thou and he together are one. Show me thy way that I should walk in, for I lift up my soul unto thee. (Psalm cxliiii.)

Or Pray thus:

Merciful Father, thou art wont to send to thy servants and men of simple hearts, thine angels to be their keepers, and, as it were, guides: as elder brethren, to watch over thy weak children; so did thou to Jacob, to Abraham's servant, to Joshua, &c. O good God! though we are much unlike unto them, so many are our sins, yet for thine own goodness' sake, send thine holy angels, to pitch their tents about us, from Satan and his slaves to hide and defend, to carry us in their hands, that we come not into further danger than thou throughout wilt deliver us from for thine own sake; óeven his angels are ministers for them that are heirs of salvation. (Heb. i.) Satan sleeps not, but seeks always to destroy us.

Occasion to meditate

Think how we are strangers from our country, from our home, from our original; I mean from God. Again, think upon our madness, that linger and loiter so willingly in this our journey and pilgrimage; also how foolish we are to fancy things which we cannot carry with us, and to contemn conscience, which will always be a companion to us, to our joy if it is good, but to our shame and sorrow, if it is evil and corrupt. Finally, how unnatural we are, that so little desire to be at our home, to be with our only Father, and Master, our fellows, friends, &c.

When you we about to Receive your Meat, Pray:

This is a wonderful mystery of thy work, O Maker and Governor of the world, that thou dost sustain the lives of men and beasts with these meats! Surely this power is neither in the bread nor food, but in thy will and word, by which word all things live and have their being. Again, how great a thing is it, that thou art able yearly to give sustenance to so many creatures; this is spoken of by thy prophets in thy praises. All things look up to thee, and thou gives them meat in due season; thou opens thine hand, and fills with thy blessing every living thing. These, doubtless, are wonderful works of thine almightyness. I therefore heartily pray thee, O most liberal Lord and faithful Father, that as thou by meat through thy word dost minister life to these our bodies, even so by the same word with thy grace do thou quicken our souls; that both in soul and body we may please thee till this our mortal body shall put on immortality, and we shall need no more any other food, but thee only, who then wilt be all in all. Taste, and see how good the Lord is; bless the Lord, O my soul, who feeds and fills thy mouth with good things.

Occasion to meditate

Think a little how great God's power is, that made us; also think how great his wisdom is to preserve us; but most of all, think how many things are given for our use, how wonderful it is to give us life, but most of all, to propagate to immortality the life of the soul by his beck alone. Last of all, think that God, by his providence for thy body, would have thee confirm thy faith respecting God's providence for thy soul.

In the Meal-time, Pray:

O most liberal Distributor of thy gifts, who gives all kinds of good things to use, thou being pure

give pure things, grant to me thy grace, that I misuse not these thy gracious gifts given to our use and profit. Let us not love them because thou dost give us these things, but rather let us love Thee, because thou gives them, and because they are necessary for us for a season, till we come unto thee. Grant us to be conversant among thy gifts soberly, purely, temperately, holily, because thou art such: so shall not we turn to the poison of our souls, that which thou hast given for the medicine of our bodies, but using thy benefits thankfully, we shall find them profitable both to soul and body .

Occasion to meditate

Think that the meats and drinks set before you, are given to you to use, and not to abuse; think they are given to profit and not to hurt you, think that they are not given to you alone, but unto others also, by you. In eating and drinking, think that you do but feed the worms. Remember the poor prisoners, the sick, &c., as though you were in their case. Think upon the food of your soul, Christ's body broken, and his blood shed. Desire the meat that lasts for ever, (John vi.) work for it; Christ's meat was to do his Father's will. (John iv.)

After your Meat, Pray thus:

By corporeal meats thou dost sustain our corporeal daily life, which otherwise is ready to perish, which surely is a great work, but yet this is much greater, more profitable, and more holy that thy grace, O Jesus Christ, keeps away from us the death of the soul. For this life we ought much to thank thee, and because thou prolongs it with thy good gifts, we most heartily praise thee; howbeit, this life is but the way to eternal life, which we beseech thee, for thy death's sake, that thou wilt give us; and so shall we not only give thee, as we can, thanks in time for temporal things, but also eternal thanks for eternal things. Oh! grant to us these our desires for thy mercy's sake. Amen.

Occasion to meditate

Think now that God has given thee this his blessing of meat, &c., and also time that thou might repent to seek his glory, and the advantage of thy brethren. Therefore go thereabout; but first pray for grace well to begin, and again consider how thou hast been partaker of other men's labours, as of the husbandman, the miller, the baker, the brewer, the butcher, the cook, &c. See therefore that thou art not a drone, but rather such a bee as may help the hive. If God have thus fed thy body, which he loves not, except for thy soul's sake, how can it be then, but that he will be much more ready to feed thy soul? Therefore take courage to thee, and go to him for grace accordingly.

Cogitations for about the Midday time

As the body is now enlightened on all sides with light so see that thy mind may be. As God gives thee thus plentifully this corporeal light, so pray him that he will give thee the spiritual light. Think that as the sun is now most clear, so shall our bodies be in the day of judgement. As now the sun is come to the highest, and therefore will begin to draw downward, so is there nothing in the world so perfect and glorious, which, when it is at the full, will not decrease, and so wear away.

When you come Home again, Pray:

There is nothing, O Lord, more like to thy holy nature than a quiet mind; thou hast called us out of the troublesome disquietness of the world, into thy quiet rest and peace, which the world

cannot give, being such a peace as passes all men's understanding. Houses are ordained for us, that we might get into them from the injury of weather, from the cruelty of beasts, from disquietness of people, and from the toils of the world. O gracious Father, grant that through thy great mercy my body may enter into this house from outward actions, but so that it may become willing and obedient to the soul, and make no resistance there against; that in soul and body I may have a godly quietness, and peace to praise thee. Amen. Peace be to this house, and to all that dwell in the same.

Occasion to meditate

Think what a return, and how joyful a return, it will be to come to our eternal, most quiet, and most happy home; then all grief will be gone away; whatsoever here is pleasant and joyful, the same is nothing, but a very shadow in comparison, &c.

At the Sun's going Down, Pray:

Oh! how unhappy are they, O Lord, on whom thy sun goes down, and gives no light! I mean, thy grace, which is always clear as the midday. The midday is dark night unto them which depart from thee, in thee there never is night, but always daylight most clear. This corporeal sun has his courses, now up, now down; but thou, dear Lord, if we love thee, art always one. Oh! that this block and veil of sin were taken away from me, that the air might be always clear day in my mind.

Occasion to meditate

Think that as we are not sorry when the sun goes down, because we know it will rise again, even so let us not sorrow for death wherethrough the soul and body part asunder, for they shall soon return, and come together again. So long as the sun is up, wild beasts keep their dens, foxes their burrows, owls their holes, &c.; but when the sun is down, then they come abroad; so wicked men and hypocrites keep their dens in the gospel time; but it being taken away, then they swarm out of their holes like bees, as this day teaches.

When the Candles are lighted, Pray:

Most thick and dark clouds do cover our minds, except thy light, O Lord, dispels them. Thy sun, O most wise Worker, is as it were a firebrand to the world; thy wisdom, whereby light comes both to soul and body, is a firebrand (a torch, editor) to the spiritual world. After day, when the night comes, thou hast given for the remedy of darkness, a candle; after sin, for the remedy of ignorance, thou hast given thy doctrine, which thy dear Son has brought unto us. Oh! thou, who art the Author and Master of all truth, make us to see by both the lights, so that the dimness of our minds may be driven quite away: lift upon us thy joy in our hearts. Thy word is a lantern to my feet, and a light unto my paths.

Occasion to meditate

Think that the knowledge and wisdom that God has given unto us by candles this night, whereby we see those things in this night of our bodies, which are expedient for us, make us to wish much more for this doctrine of God; and when we get it, to esteem and diligently embrace it the more, that as all would be horror without candles so there is nothing but there confusion, where God's word takes not place.

When you Undress yourself, Pray:

This our life and weak-knit body, by reason of sin, will be dissolved by little and little, and so shall be restored to the earth whence it was taken, then will be an end of this vanity, which by our foolishness we have wrought to ourselves. O, most merciful Father, so do thou untie, unloose, and loose me, (for thou hast knit me together,) that I may perceive myself to be made unready and dissolved, and so may remember both of whom I was made, and also whither I go, lest I be taken unprepared to thy tribunal and judgment-seat.

Occasion to meditate

Put off the old man, with his lusts and concupiscence;--be content, with Joseph, to put off thy prison-apparel, that thou may put on new; óthink that we willingly put off our garments, which in the morning we shall put on again; and therefore as after the night of the world, we shall receive our bodies again, let us not unwillingly put them off when God by death shall call.

When you Enter into your Bed, Pray:

The day now ended, men give themselves to rest in the night, and so, this night finished, we shall rest in death. Nothing is more like this life than every day; nothing is more like death than sleep; nothing more like to our grave than our bed. O Lord, our Keeper and Defender, grant that I now, lying down to rest, being unable to keep myself, may be preserved from the crafts and assaults of the wicked enemy; and grant further, that when I have run the race of this life, thou would of thy mercy call me unto thyself, that I may always live and watch with it's thee. Now, good God, give me to take my rest in thee, and bring to pass that thy gracious goodness may be, even in sleep, before mine eyes; that when sleeping, I be not absent from thee, but may have my dreams to draw me unto thee, and so both soul and body may be kept pure and holy for ever. I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest.

Occasion to meditate

Think that as this troublesome day is now past, and night is come, and so rest, bed, and pleasant sleep, which makes the most excellent princes and poorest peasants alike; even so after the tumults, troubles, temptations, and tempests of this life, they that believe in Christ have prepared for them a heaven and rest, most pleasant and joyful. As you are not afraid to enter into your bed, and to dispose yourself to sleep; so be not afraid to die, but rather prepare yourself for it; think that now you are nearer your end by one day's journey, than you were in the morning.

When you feel Sleep to be Coming, Pray:

O Lord Jesus Christ, my Watchman and Keeper, take me to thy care; grant that while my body is sleeping my mind may watch in thee, and be made joyful by some sight of that celestial and heavenly life wherein thou art the King and Prince, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Thy angels and holy souls are most happy citizens. Oh! purify my soul, keep clean my body, that in both I may please thee, sleeping and waking, for ever. Amen.

A most fruitful prayer for the dispersed Church of Christ, very necessary to be used by the godly in these days of affliction

O most omnipotent, magnificent, and glorious God and Father of all consolation; we here assembled do not presume to present and prostrate ourselves before thy mercy-seat in respect

of our own worthiness and righteousness, which are altogether polluted and defiled; but in the merits, righteousness, and worthiness of thy only Son Jesus Christ; whom thou hast given unto us as a most pure and precious garment to cover our pollution and filthiness withal, that we might appear holy and justified in thy sight through him. Wherefore in obedience to thy commandments, and confiding in thy promises, contained in thy holy word, that thou wilt accept and grant our prayers presented unto thee in the favour of thy only Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, either for ourselves or for the necessity of thy saints and congregation; we here, congregated together, do with one mouth and mind most humbly beseech thee, not only to pardon and forgive us all our sins, negligences, ignorances, and iniquities, which we, from time to time, incessantly do commit against thy divine majesty, in word, deed, and thought; such is the infirmity of our corrupted nature; but also that it would please thee, O benign Father, to be favourable and merciful unto thy poor afflicted church and congregation, dispersed throughout the whole world, which in these days of iniquity are oppressed, injured, despised, persecuted, and afflicted for the testimony of thy word, and for obedience to thy laws. And especially, O Lord and Father, we humbly beseech thee to extend thy mercy and favourable countenance upon all those that are imprisoned or condemned for the cause of thy gospel, whom thou hast chosen for thee, and made worthy to glorify thy name. That it may please thee to give them such constancy as thou hast given to thy saints and martyrs in time past, willingly to shed their blood for the testimony of thy word; or else mightily to deliver them from the tyranny of their enemies, as thou delivered the condemned Daniel from the lions, and the persecuted Peter out of prisons to the exaltation of thy glory, and the rejoicing of thy church.

Furthermore, most beneficent Father, we humbly beseech thee to stretch forth thy mighty arm unto the protection and defence of those that are exiled for the testimony of thy verity, because they would not bend their backs, and incline their necks under the yoke of antichrist, and be polluted with the execrable idolatries and blasphemous superstitions of the ungodly. That it would please thee not only to feed them in strange countries, but also to prepare a resting place for them, as thou hast done from time to time for thine elect in all ages; whereby they may unite themselves together in the sincere ministration of thy word and sacraments, to their singular edification. And in due time restore them home again to their land, to celebrate thy praises, promote thy gospel, and edify thy desolate congregation.

And also, O Lord, thou who hast said, thou wilt not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, be merciful, we beseech thee, unto all those who, through fear and weakness, have denied thee, by dissimulation and hypocrisy. That it may please thee to strengthen their weak knees, (thou who art the strength of them that stand,) and to lift up their feeble hands, that their little smoke may increase into a great flame, and their bruised reed into a mighty oak, able to abide all the blustering blasts and stormy tempests of adversity; that the ungodly may no longer triumph over their fate, which, as they think, they have utterly quenched and subdued; stir up thy strength in them, O Lord, and behold them with that merciful eye wherewith thou didst behold Peter, that they, rising by repentance, may become the constant confessors of thy word, and the sanctified members of thy church to the end; that when as by thy providence thou purposes to lay thy cross upon them, they do no more seek unlawful means to avoid the same, but most willingly be contented with patience to take it up and follow thee, in what sort soever it shall please thee to lay the same upon their shoulders, either by death, imprisonment, or exile; and that it will please thee not to tempt them above their power, but to give them grace utterly to despair of their own strength, and wholly to depend upon thy mercy.

On the other side, O Lord God, thou righteous Judge, let not the ungodly, the enemies of thy truth, continually triumph over us, as they do at this day; let not thine heritage become a reproach and common laughing-stock unto the impudent and wicked papists, who, by all possible means, seek the utter destruction of thy little flock, by shedding the blood of thy saints for the testimony of the word; seeking by most devilish and damnable practices to subvert thy truth. Confound there, O God, and all their wicked counsels, and let them be taken in the same

pit they have dug for others; that it may be universally known that there is no counsel nor force that can prevail against the Lord our God. Break, O Lord, the horns of those bloody bulls of Bashan; pull down those high mountains that elevate themselves against thee; and root up the rotten race of the ungodly, that they being consumed in the fire of thine indignation, thine exiled church may, in their own land, find place of habitation.

O Lord, deliver our land, which thou hast given us for a portion to possess in this life, from the invasion and subduing of strangers. Truth it is we cannot deny, but that our sins have justly deserved this great plague, now imminent (threatening; the nation had great cause at that time to fear lest it should be brought under the yoke of Spain, editor) and approaching, even to be given over into the hands and subjection of that proud and brutish nation, that neither know thee nor fear thee, and to serve them in bodily captivity who have refused to serve thee in a spiritual liberty. Yet, Lord, forasmuch as we are assuredly persuaded by thy holy word, that thine anger does not last for ever towards those that earnestly repent, but instead of vengeance thou dost show mercy, we most penitently beseech thee to remove this thy great indignation bent towards us, and give not over our land, our cities, towns and cattle, our goods, possessions and tithes, our wives, children, and our own lives, into the subjection of strangers. But rather, O Lord, expel them from our land, subvert their counsels, dissipate their devices, and deliver us from their tyranny, as thou delivered Samaria from cruel Benhadad, and Jerusalem from blasphemous Sennacherib.

Give us, O Lord, such princes and rulers, such magistrates and governors, as will advance thy glory, erect thy gospel, suppress idolatry, banish all papistry, and execute justice and equity. Water again, O Lord, the vine of England with the moisture of thy holy word, lest it utterly perish and wither away. Build up again the decayed walls of thy new Jerusalem; thy congregation in this land, lest the ungodly attribute our confusion, not unto our sins, as the truth is, but unto our profession in religion.

Remember, O Lord, that we are a parcel of thy portion, thy flock, the inheritors of thy kingdom, the sheep of thy pasture, and the members of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Deal with us therefore according to the multitude of thy mercies, that all nations, kindreds, and languages, may celebrate thy praises in the restoring of thy ruined church to perfection again. for it is thy work, O Lord, and not man's, and from thee do we with patience look for the same, and not from the fleshly arm of man, and therefore to thee only is due all dominion, power, and thanksgiving, now in our days and for evermore. Amen.

Another Prayer

Pray in every place, lifting up your hands. 1 Tim. ii.

O mighty King, and most high almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who mercifully governess all things which thou hast made, look down upon the faithful seed of Abraham, the children of thy chosen Jacob, thy chosen people I mean, consecrated unto thee by the anointing of thy Holy Spirit, and appointed to thy kingdom by thy eternal purpose, free mercy, and grace, but yet, as strangers, wandering in this vale of misery, brought forth daily by the worldly tyrants like sheep to the slaughter. O Father of all flesh, who, by thy divine providence, changes times and seasons, and most wonderfully disposes kingdoms; thou did destroy Pharaoh, with all his horses and chariots, puffed up with pride against thy people, and thou did lead forth safely, by the hands of thy mercy, thy beloved Israel through the high waves of the raging waters. Thou, O God, the Lord of all hosts and arms, did first drive away from the gates of thy people the blasphemous Sennacherib, slaying of his army an hundred fourscore and five thousand, by thy angel in one night, and afterwards by his own sons, before his own idols, did kill the same blasphemous idolater, showing openly to all heathens thy provident power towards thy despised little ones Thou did transform and change proud Nebuchadnezzar, the enemy of thy

people, into a brute beast, to eat grass and hay, to the horrible terror of all worldly tyrants. And as thou art the Father of mercies, and God of all consolation, so of thy wonderful mercy thou did preserve those thy servants in Babylon, who with bold courage gave their bodies to the fire, because they would not worship any dead idol; and when they were cast into the burning furnace, thou did give them cheerful hearts to rejoice: and sing psalms, and saved unhurt the very hairs of their heads, turning the flame from them to devour their enemies. Thou, O Lord God, by the might of thy right arm, which governs all, did bring Daniel, thy prophet, safe into light and life out of the dark den of the devouring lions, where, by false accusations, he was shut under the earth to be destroyed by those raging beasts; but thou turned their cruelty upon his accusers repaying the wicked upon their own pates. Yea, Lord, who passes all wonders, and art far above man's power to perceive therein thy working, thou did cause the huge and great dragon of the seas, that horrible Leviathan and Behemoth, the mighty fish, to swallow up and devour thy servant Jonah, to keep him three days and three nights in the dungeon of his belly, the dark hellish grave to a living man; thou did cause that great monster to carry him to the place that thou had appointed, and there to cast him up safe and able to do thy message.

Now also, O heavenly Father, beholder of all things, to whom only belongs vengeance, thou sees and considers how thy holy name is dishonoured by the wicked worldlings and blasphemous idolaters; thy sacred word refused, forsaken, and despised; thy Holy Spirit provoked and offended; thy chosen temple polluted and defiled: tarry not too long, therefore, but show thy power speedily upon thy chosen household, which is so grievously vexed, and so cruelly handled by thy open enemies.

Avenge thine own glory, and shorten these evil days for thine elect's sake. Let thy kingdom come of all thy desired, and though our lives have offended thy majesty, as we do confess unfeignedly, O Lord, that we have all sinned, our kings, princes, priests, prophets, and people all we, together with our parents, fathers, and mothers, have most grievously, infinitely passing all measure and number, with our hard flintish hearts, our dissolute and careless lives, without shame and repentance for sin, have offended, transgressed, trespassed, sinned, and committed most horrible wickedness, so that we have worthily deserved the uttermost of thy plagues and terrible vengeance. Yet for thine own glory, O merciful Lord, suffer not the enemy of thy Son Christ, the Romish antichrist, thus wretchedly to delude and draw from thee our poor brethren, for whom thy Son once died, that by his cruelty, after so clear light, they should be made captives to dumb idols and devilish inventions of popish ceremonies thereunto pertaining. Suffer him not to seduce the simple sort with his fond (foolish, editor) opinion, that his false gods, blind mumbling, feigned religion, and his foolish superstition, give him such conquests, such victories, such triumphs, and such a high hand over us. We know most certainly, O Lord, that it is not their arm and power, but our sins and offences, that have delivered us to their fury, and have caused thee to turn away from us. But turn again, O Lord, let us fall into thy hands; otherwise (seeing thy justice must punish us) let us fall into thy hands as David chose, by dearth, famine, or pestilence, or what way thou likes; lest these vain idolaters rejoice at the miserable destruction of those men whom they make proselytes, and apostates from thy doctrine. But, holy Lord, thy holy will be fulfilled. This is thy righteous judgment to punish us with the tyrannical yoke of blindness, because we have cast away from us the sweet yoke of the wholesome word of thy Son our Saviour. Yet consider the horrible blasphemies of thine and our enemies; they call a cake (the consecrated wafer used at the Romish sacrament, editor) their God, their Christ, and altogether they know nothing of thy power. They say in their hearts, There is no God, who either can or will deliver us; wherefore, O heavenly Father, the Governor of all things, the Avenger of the cause of the poor, the fatherless, the widow, and the oppressed, look down from heaven with the face of the fatherly mercies, and forgive us all former offences; and for thy Son Christ's sake have mercy upon us, who by the force and cruelty of wicked and blasphemous idolaters without just causes, are haled and pulled from our own houses, are slandered slain, and murdered as rebels and traitors, like persons pernicious, pestiferous, seditious, pestilent, and full of mortal poison contagious to all men. Whereas we meddle no further than against the hellish powers of

darkness, against the spiritual craftiness in heavenly things, which would deny the will of our Christ unto us. We contend no further than for our Christ crucified, and the only salvation by his blessed passion, acknowledging none other God, none other Christ or Saviour, but only the ever-living Lord and our most merciful Father, and thy dear Son our Saviour, who is in the same glory with thee in the highest heavens. Therefore, O Lord, for thy glorious name's sake, for Jesus Christ's sake, be whom thou hast promised to grant all righteous requests, make the wicked idolaters all wonder and stand amazed at thy almighty power, use thy wonted strength to the confusion of thine enemies and to the help and deliverance of thy persecuted people. All thy saints do beseech thee therefore the young infants which have somewhat tasted of thy sweet word, by whose mouth thou hast promised to make perfect thy praises, whose angels always behold thy face, who, besides the loss of us their parents, are in danger to be compelled and driven without thy great mercies, to serve dumb and insensible idols, do cry and call to thee. Their pitiful mothers with lamentable tears, lie prostrate before the throne of thy grace. Thou, Father of the fatherless, Judge of the widows, and Avenger of all the oppressed, let it appear, O Lord omnipotent, that thou dost hear, and in due season avenge and punish all wrongs offered to all thy little ones that do believe in thee. Do this, O Lord, for thy name's sake. Arise up, O Lord, and thine enemies shall be scattered and confounded. So be it, O Lord, most merciful, at thy time appointed.

A Godly Prayer to be read at all Times

Honour and praise be given to thee, O Lord God Almighty, most dear Father of heaven, for all thy mercies and loving kindness showed unto us, in that it has pleased thy gracious goodness freely and of thine own accord to elect and choose us to salvation before the beginning of the world. And the like continual thanks be given to thee for creating us after thine own image; for redeeming us with the precious blood of thy dear son, when we were utterly lost; for sanctifying us with thy Holy Spirit in the revelation and knowledge of thy holy word; for helping and succouring us in all our needs and necessities; for saving us from all dangers of body and soul; for comforting us so fatherly in all our tribulations and persecutions; for sparing us so long, and giving us so large a time for repentance. These benefits, O most merciful Father, like as we acknowledge to have received them of thy only goodness, even so we beseech thee, for thy dear Son Jesus Christ's sake, to grant us always thy Holy Spirit, whereby we may continually grow in thankfulness towards thee, be led into all truth, and comforted in all our adversities. O Lord strengthen our faith, kindle it more in fervour and love towards thee, and our neighbours, for thy sake. Suffer us not, dearest Father, to receive thy word any more in vain; but grant us always the assistance of thy grace and Holy Spirit, that in heart, word, and deed we may sanctify and worship thy holy name. Help to amplify and increase thy kingdom, that whatsoever thou sends we may be heartily well content with thy good pleasure and will. Let us not lack that, O Father, without which we cannot serve thee, but bless thou so all the works of our hands, that we may have sufficient, and not be chargeable but rather helpful unto others. Be merciful, O Lord, to our offences, and, seeing our debt is great, which thou hast forgiven us in Jesus Christ, make us to love thee and our neighbours so much the more. Be thou our Father, our Captain, and Defender in all temptations; hold thou us by thy merciful hands, that we may be delivered from all inconveniences, and end our lives in the sanctifying and honour of thy holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord and only Saviour. Amen.

Let thy mighty hand and outstretched arm, O Lord, still be our defence; thy mercy and loving kindness in Jesus Christ thy dear Son our salvation; thy true and holy word our instruction; thy grace and Holy Spirit our comfort and consolation unto the end and in the end. Amen.

O Lord, increase our faith.



John Bradford

John Bradford (1510–1555) was an English Reformer and martyr, who was prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

Discipleship, Spirituality, Reading, John Bradford, Prayer