

## Prayers and Reflections

### Journeying

#### Come Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit,  
fill the hearts of your faithful,  
and enkindle in us the fire of your love.  
Send forth your Spirit and we shall be created,  
and you shall renew the face of the earth.  
Amen.

#### **Intervention by Cardinal Basil Hume, Archbishop of Westminster at the Synod of Bishops on 14 October 1980**

I heard a voice speaking, and it spoke of the Church, and I saw in my dream a vision. It was a vision of the Church. I saw a fortress, strong and upstanding. Every stranger approaching seemed to those who defended it to be an enemy to be repelled; from that fortress the voices of those outside could not be heard. Then I had another vision. It was of a pilgrim, a pilgrim through history and through life. That pilgrim was the Church. The pilgrim was hastening towards the vision, towards all Truth. But it had not yet reached it. It limped along the road. But meanwhile there were sign-posts to show the way, or rather they told you that this or that road was not the right one. The pilgrim is always in search, I reflected, and that can be painful. The leaders, too, of the pilgrimage are often themselves not always clear. They must sometimes co-agonize with the other pilgrims. Co-responsibility will always involve co-agonizing. The fortress was a temple, but the pilgrims lived in a tent. It is sometimes better to know the uncertainties of Abraham's tent than to sit secure in Solomon's temple.

### Listening

When you talk, you are only repeating what you already know.  
But if you listen, you may learn something new.  
*The Dalai Lama*

The ultimate benefit of genuine listening:  
you honour the other person.  
*Source unknown*

Humility in listening must correspond to courage in speaking. I told the young people in the pre-Synod Meeting: "If you say something I do not like, I have to listen even more, because everyone has the right to be heard, just as everyone has the right to speak".  
*Pope Francis at the Opening of the Synod of Bishops  
(3 October 2018)*

Teach me to listen, O God, to myself.  
Help me to be less afraid to trust the voice inside –in the deepest part of me.  
Teach me to listen, Holy Spirit, for your voice –  
in busyness and in boredom, in certainty and doubt, in noise and in silence.  
Teach me, Lord, to listen.  
Teach me to listen, O God, to those nearest me,  
my family, my friends, my co-workers.  
Help me to be aware that no matter what words I hear, the message is:  
"Accept the person I am. Listen to me".  
Teach me to listen, my caring God, to those far from me –  
the whisper of the hopeless, the plea of the forgotten, the cry of the anguished.  
Amen.  
*Fr John Veltri SJ*

## **Discernment**

### **It's Christ's Church –not ours**

#### **Matthew 16:13-19**

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he put this question to his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets'. 'But you,' he said 'who do you say I am?' Then Simon Peter spoke up, 'You are the Christ,' he said 'the Son of the living God'. Jesus replied, 'Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So I now say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.'

## **Reflection**

"Remember, it's Christ's Church, not ours. Jesus founded the Church, died for the Church, sent his Spirit to the Church, and will someday return for his Church. As the owner of the Church, he has already established the purposes, and they're not negotiable. Our duty is to understand the purposes Christ has for the Church and to implement them."

*(Rick Warren in 'The Purpose Driven Church' © 1995 Rick Warren)*

In his biography of St Francis of Assisi, St Bonaventure tells the story of Francis entering the little dilapidated chapel of San Damiano. As he prayed before the crucifix, he heard a voice say: "Francis, rebuild my church, which has fallen into disrepair." At first, Francis took this literally, physically restoring the ruined chapel. Later, he came to understand his mission in a more spiritual sense: to recall the Church to the radical simplicity of the Gospel and to the image of Christ in the poor.

## **Newman Prayer**

God has created me to do him some definite service;  
he has committed some work to me  
which he has not committed to another.  
I have my mission –  
I may never know it in this life,  
but I shall be told it in the next.

I am a link in a chain,  
a bond of connection between persons.  
He has not created me for nothing.  
I shall do good. I shall do his work.  
I shall be an angel of peace,  
a preacher of truth in my  
own place while not intending it  
– if I do but keep his Commandments.

Therefore I will trust him.  
Whatever, wherever I am,  
I can never be thrown away.  
If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve him;  
in perplexity, my perplexity may serve him;  
if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve him.  
He does nothing in vain.  
He knows what he is about.  
He may take away my friends.  
He may throw me among strangers.  
He may make me feel desolate,  
make my spirits sink,  
hide my future from me  
– still he knows what he is about.

## **Mission**

### **Prophets of a future not our own**

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 another 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 programme  
accomplishes the Church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives  
includes everything.

That is what we are about.

We plant a seed that will one day 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 effects  
far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything,  
and there is a sense of liberation  
in realising 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.

*Bishop Kenneth Edward Untener*

*(often attributed to St Óscar Romero)*

## **The Church as a Field Hospital**

The thing the Church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the Church as a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else. Heal the wounds, heal the wounds ... And you have to start from the ground up.

*(Pope Francis, interview with Antonio Spadaro SJ, August 2013.)*

## **The Grail Prayer**

Lord Jesus  
I give you my hands to do your work  
I give you my feet to go your way  
I give you my eyes to see as you do  
I give you my tongue to speak your words  
I give you my mind that you may think in me  
I give you my spirit that you may pray in me  
Above all, I give you my heart  
that you may love in me  
your Father and all mankind  
I give you my whole self that you may grow in me  
so that it is you Lord Jesus  
who live and work and pray in me. **Amen**

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The prayers and reflections above are taken from  
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## **St Theresa of Avila**

Christ has no body but yours.  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours.  
Yours are the eyes  
with which He looks compassion on this world.  
Yours are the feet  
with which He walks to do good.  
Yours are the hands  
with which He blesses all the world.  
Yours are the hands.  
Yours are the feet.  
Yours are the eyes.  
You are His body.  
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.