**Readings and Prayers for Other Occasions**

**Anxiety, apprehension, fear**

Almighty and merciful God, you are the only source of health and healing; you alone can bring calmness and peace. Grant to us, your children, a consciousness of your presence and a strong confidence in you. In our pain, our weariness, and our anxiety, surround us with your care, protect us by your loving might, and permit us once more to enjoy health and strength and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.346

O most loving Father, you want us to give thanks in all circumstances and to lay all our cares on you, knowing that you care for us. Grant that fears and anxieties in this mortal life may not hide from us the light of your immortal love shown to us in your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.739

**Bitterness, anger**

Lord God, when we are assaulted by the troubles of life, and the deep waters of anger threaten to overwhelm us, do not let us sink. In your great compassion, hear us and help us. Deliver us from anger's power over us. Lead us out of bitter silence and hurtful words so that we may speak the truth in love. Heal every heart set on vengeance, and show us the way to honesty and reconciliation; through the one who has shown us both impassioned zeal and forgiving love, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.740

**Discouragement, despair**

Lord Christ, you came into the world as one of us, and suffered as we do. As we go through the trials of life, help us to realize that you are with us at all times and in all things; that we have no secrets from you; and that your living grace enfolds us for eternity. In the security of your embrace we pray.337

God our comforter, you are a refuge and a strength for us, a helper close at hand in times of distress. Enable us so to hear the words of faith that our fear is dispelled, our loneliness eased, our anxiety calmed, and our hope reawakened. May your Holy Spirit lift us above our sorrow to the peace and light of your constant love; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.741

**Gratitude**

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we humbly thank you for your goodness to us and to all that you have made. We praise you for your creation and preservation, for keeping us and all things in your care, and for all the blessings of life. Above all we bless you for your immeasurable love in redeeming the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies that with thankful hearts we praise you, not only with our lips but in our lives, by giving ourselves to your service and by living in your gifts of holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit be all worship and praise, now and forever.270

**Guidance, protection**

*A prayer of Thomas à Kempis*

Write your blessed name, O Lord, upon my heart, there to remain so indelibly graven that no prosperity, no adversity, shall ever move me from your love. Be to me a strong tower of defense, a comforter in tribulation, a deliverer in distress, a very present help in trouble, and a guide to heaven through the many temptations and dangers of this life.742

Direct us, Lord God, in all our doings with your most gracious favor, and extend to us your continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name; and finally, by your mercy, bring us to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.154

O God, full of compassion, we commit and commend ourselves to you, in whom we live and move and have our being. Be the goal of our pilgrimage, and our rest by the way. Give us refuge from the turmoil of worldly distractions beneath the shadow of your wings. Let our hearts, so often a sea of restless waves, find peace in you, O God; through Jesus Christ our Lord.353

**Guilt**

God of mercy, compassion, and healing, you are more willing to forgive than we are to confess. The burden of guilt is heavy upon us. We thank you that you hear us when we pray, that you share our suffering and pain, and that you forgive our sins. Remind us that with you there is mercy, and make us to hear of joy and gladness. Show us your mercy, O Lord, and grant us your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Savior.743

God of all comfort, quiet our minds that we may make room for your healing forgiveness through Jesus Christ our Lord.744

**Isolation, loneliness**

Merciful God, our Father, in the stillness of our souls we listen for your voice to know again that you are God. Quiet our restless hearts with the knowledge that you stand within the shadows, keeping watch over your own. Rekindle our faith and light the lamp of hope within our hearts. Then deal with us as seems best to you, for where you lead we can confidently go with Jesus Christ our Lord.745

O Lord our God, you see and know and feel the pain of the world. Look upon us when we feel alone, and enfold us with your love, that in the midst of pain we may know your presence; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.746

Blessed Lord, in moments of pain we turn to you for strength; in times of loneliness we seek your loving nearness. Grant that your life and love and joy may flow through us for the healing of others in Jesus' name.747

**Shame**

Gracious God, as you made garments for Adam and Eve when they hid from you out of shame, so also through baptism you have dressed us in the garment of salvation. Help us to trust your acceptance and love for us in the midst of every circumstance, that we, clothed in the righteousness of Christ, may come before you without fear and may offer ourselves in service to your world; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.748

**During pregnancy**

Almighty God, your wisdom abounds in the glory of creation and is beyond our understanding. Your love for us and all creatures is as gentle as a father's and as tender as a mother's. We give you thanks for creating new life. Our hearts are filled with joy and expectation. We proclaim your greatness and ask your sustaining care for name/s of parent/s, that all of us may grow in wisdom and grace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.749

**A difficult pregnancy**

Lord Jesus Christ, you shared the pain and uncertainty of human life. Stay with name/s of parent/sand keep watch with *them* during this time of pregnancy. Enfold *them* in your strong embrace, and give safe passage especially to mother and *child/ren* along the difficult path that lies ahead. May all who wait and watch come to know that the hopes of theirhearts and the pains of birth have not been in vain, and may they come to rejoice in the gift of new life. Into the shelter of your arms we commend them, and resting in your mercy we pray.750

**Infertility**

Gracious God, from ancient days your people have looked to you for the blessing of children--among them Sarah and Abraham, Rachel and Jacob, Elizabeth and Zechariah. Hear the prayers of your servants name and name, whose desire for a child reflects their love for each other. Guide their choices as they seek the blessings of family life, and give them your peace in the face of disappointments, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.751

**Before childbirth**

O God, the creator and sustainer of life, graciously preserve and protect name during childbirth, and safely bring forth in health and wholeness the infant whom you have created; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.752

O Lord our God, creator of all that exists, we thank you for the joy of watching new life begin and for the privilege of sharing with you in your continuing creation. In your mercy grant that these blessings may continue to us and even to our children's children, that generations yet unborn may bless your holy name; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.321

**Birth of a child**

Almighty God, giver of life and love, bless name/s of parent/s and their newborn child *[*name*].* Grant them wisdom and devotion in their life together, that each may be to the other a strength in need, a counselor in perplexity, a comfort in sorrow, and a companion in joy. So knit their wills together in your will and their spirits in your Spirit, that they may live together in love and peace all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.753

O God, like a mother, like a father, you tend your children with care. With awe and thanksgiving we praise you for the birth of this child *[*name*]* toname/s of parent/s. Watch over them and bless this new life. Hold us all in the arms of your compassion and love; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.754

**Adoption of a child**

Merciful God, because of your love for us in Jesus Christ we have become brothers and sisters, daughters and sons in your family, the church. We thank you for the love which welcomeschild's name into this household. As you have blessed name/s of parent/swith this child, give *them* the joy of caring for *her/him*, and increase our joy as members of your family in Jesus Christ our Lord. 322

Faithful God, like a compassionate father you give your children a home in which to dwell; like a loving mother you gather us into your household. We give you thanks for the child who has come to bless this *family* and for the *parents* who *have* taken this child to be *their* own. By the power of your Holy Spirit, fill name/s of parent/s with trust, understanding, and affection; and, through this child in our midst, enable us better to know the mystery that we are all your children by adoption; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.755

**Choosing adoption for a child**

God, whose nature is always to have mercy, look in love on name/s*,* who *are* choosing adoption for *their* child, and for those who will receive this child into their lives. Keep all of them in your good care, and give them peace in their hearts; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.756

**Foster care**

God of justice, protector of orphans and the poor, we give you thanks for the generosity of name/s*,* who *have* opened *their* arms to children in need of a home. Bless this household and make it a place of laughter and love, of safety and security for your *child/ren* name/s*.* May the love of *this/these* foster *parent/s* so nurture and protect *them*, that *they* may heal and grow in body, mind, and spirit, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, in whose name we pray.757

**The care of children**

Almighty God, with a mother's love and a father's care you have blessed us with the joy and responsibility of children. As we bring them up, give us gracious love, calm strength, and patient wisdom, that we may teach them to love whatever is just and true and good, following the example of Jesus Christ, our Savior. 329

**Young persons**

God of all good gifts, your Son gathered children into his arms and blessed them. Help us to understand our youth as they grow in years and in knowledge of your world. Give us compassion when they face temptations and experience failures. Teach us to encourage their search for truth and value in their lives. Help us to appreciate their ideals and sympathize with their frustrations; that with them we may look for a better world than either we or they have known; through Jesus Christ our Lord. 330

Lord God of our ancestors, we thank you for what you have done and will continue to do with our daughters and sons. Walk with them in life, and keep the evil one from obstructing their path. You see all; you know where the water is deep. Keep them from danger. Order their steps and guide their feet while they run the race of faith. May the good work that you have begun in them be brought to completion at the day of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. 331

**Families**

Triune God, whose will it is that humans live in community, bless family life everywhere and fill all homes with respect, joy, laughter, and prayer. Strengthen the commitment of husbands and wives to one another, that they may mirror your covenant faithfulness; pour out your Spirit on parents, that through them their children may taste your unconditional love; and empower all family members to live in your grace and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. 332

**Those who live alone**

Faithful God, you care for us day by day, and with you as our companion we are never alone. Grant to each one of your children fulfillment in life, confidence in your steadfast love, and support in the community of your people; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.758

Gracious God, none who trust in your Son can be separated from your love. Give to those who live alone peace and contentment in their solitude, hope and fulfillment in their love of you, and joy and companionship in their relations with others; through Jesus Christ our Lord. 333

**Physical and developmental disabilities**

Giver of all grace, we pray your peace, which surpasses all understanding, for those who live with physical and developmental disabilities. Sustain them always with your compassion and strength. Grant that we, together with the whole church, may honor their gifts and welcome their contributions. Use their perspectives to help shape the society in which we live, that it may more fully reflect your promised future. We ask this in the name of the one who brings wholeness and comfort to people in body, mind, and spirit, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.759

**Vocation in daily life**

O God, give us grace to set a good example to all among whom we live, to be just and true in all our dealings, to be strict and conscientious in the discharge of every duty; pure and temperate in all enjoyment, gracious and generous and courteous toward all; so that the mind of Jesus Christ may be formed in us and all may know that we are his disciples; in whose name we pray. 328

*A prayer of John Donne*

Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening, into the house of God and gate of heaven, that we may dwell in that place where there is no cloud nor sun, no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light; no noise nor silence, but one equal music; no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession; no foes nor friends, but one equal communion and identity; no ends nor beginnings, but one equal eternity. Keep us, O Lord, so awake in the duties of our callings that we may sleep in your peace and wake in your glory to an unending possession of that realm which your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, has purchased for us with the price of his own blood.760

**Difficulty in vocational life, unemployment**

O God, the heavens declare your glory and tell of your work in creation. From you come the gifts of our bodies and minds, our skills and abilities, and the opportunities to use these gifts in sustaining our lives and in helping our neighbors. We pray for those whose livelihood is insecure; for those who are bearing heavy burdens and stressful times at work; for those whose work is tedious or dangerous; for those who have experienced failures at work; for those who have lost a job; and for all who face any difficulty in their lives of labor. Surround them with your never-failing love; free them from restlessness and anxiety; keep them in every perplexity and distress; and renew them in facing the opportunities and challenges of daily life and work; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.761

God of justice, we remember before you those who suffer want and anxiety from lack of work. Guide the people of this land so to use our wealth and resources that all people may find suitable and fulfilling employment and receive just payment for their labor; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 305

**Entering retirement**

Gracious God, we thank you for the work and witness of your servant name, who has enriched this community and brought gladness to friends and family. Now bless and preserve *her/him* at this time of transition. Day by day, guide *her/him* and give *her/him* what is needed, friends to cheer *her/his* way, and a clear vision of that to which you are now calling *her/him*. By your Holy Spirit be present in *her/his* pilgrimage, that *she/he* may travel with the one who is the way, the truth, and the life, Jesus Christ our Lord. 327

**The elders of the community**

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, maker of heaven and earth. From everlasting you are God, our dwelling place in all generations. You are the source of holy wisdom, and the fountain of all truth. We give thanks to you for the elders among us. We are graced by their wisdom and seasoning. We are touched by their knowledge and faith. Bless them, O God, as they are a blessing to us. Pour out your Spirit, that our elders may continue to dream dreams and testify to the Light of their salvation, Jesus Christ. May we find inspiration in their years of faithfulness. May we follow their example by serving you with steadfastness and singleness of heart; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. 334

**Entering a long-term care facility**

O Lord God, look with mercy on all whose increasing years bring them isolation, distress, or weakness. Provide for them homes of dignity and peace; give them understanding helpers and the willingness to accept help; and, as their strength diminishes, increase their faith and their assurance of your love. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.762

O Lord God, look with mercy on all who are experiencing illness or injury so that they require assistance in daily living. Provide for them homes of dignity and peace; give them understanding helpers and the willingness to accept help; and, when they are brought low by discouragement or weakness, increase their faith and their assurance of your love. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.763

**A birthday**

O God, our times are in your hand. Look with favor, we pray, on your servant name as *she/he* begins another year. Grant that *she/he* may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen *her/his* trust in your goodness all the days of *her/his* life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.764

**Friendship**

Pour into our hearts, O God, the Holy Spirit's gift of love, that we may share the joy of friendship, human and divine, revealed in the love of Jesus Christ, who lays down his life for his friends and in whose name we pray.765

**Broken relationship**

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may move every human heart; that the barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; and that, with our divisions healed, we might live in justice and peace; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 304

**Separation or divorce**

God of compassion and grace, in your steadfast love accompany name/s. As you ever work to restore and renew your people, overcome bitterness with your joy, hatred with your love, brokenness with your life; and give us hope through the death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 326

**With children at the time of separation or divorce**

God of comfort, your *child/ren* name/s look to you in this time of change and confusion. Hold them close when *they are* afraid about the future. Chase away the darkness with the light of your love. Give *them* the courage of Christ to face each new day. By your Spirit help *their* parents to make sound decisions, to show respect for each other, and to love name/s unconditionally. We pray in the name of Jesus, our Savior and our brother.766

**A missing person**

Lord Jesus, our shepherd, in the waters of holy baptism you have found us by your grace and have generously poured out on us your new and abundant life. Bring name safely home and back into our midst once again. In any danger, protect *her/him.* In any conflict, give reconciliation. In any fear, give *her/him* your peace, for your love's sake.767

**Suffering abuse or violence**

Holy One, you do not distance yourself from the pain of your people, but in Jesus you bear that pain with all who suffer at others' hands. With your cleansing love bring healing and strength to name; and by your justice, lift *her/him* up, that in body, mind, and spirit, *she/he* may again rejoice. In Jesus' name we pray.339

God of liberation, you saw your people as slaves in Egypt and delivered them from captivity; you see works of violence and weep. Relieve the suffering of all who *are experiencing/have survived* abuse or violence *[especially* name/s*].* Grant *them* peace of mind and a renewed faith in your protection and care. Protect us all from the violence of others; help us to bring offenders to justice; keep us safe from the weapons of hate; and restore us to tranquility and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.768

**Those who abuse**

Judge of all the earth, God of justice, we bring before you all who abuse others. Turn the hearts of the violent from the way of evil. Bring them to full awareness of the damage they do, to true repentance, and to amendment of their lives, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.769

**Military or other national service**

Almighty God, we commend to your gracious care and keeping all the men and women of *our armed forces,* and all who serve this country at home and abroad. Defend them day by day with your heavenly grace; strengthen them in their trials and temptations; give them courage to face the perils that surround them; and grant them a sense of your abiding presence wherever they may be; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. 294

Lord God of grace and power, stretch forth your almighty arm to strengthen and protect all those in the armed forces of our country. In the day of battle, watch over them; when peace prevails, guard them from evil; and in good time, bring them safely home. Give them courage and loyalty, and grant that they may serve without reproach; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.770

**Imprisonment**

God of justice and mercy, your Son declared release to the captives as a sign of God's reign and promised paradise to the repentant thief on the cross. Give strength and perseverance to your servant name and *her/his* *family/friends*. Make known to them the gracious power of forgiveness through your Son's death and resurrection, that they may support each other throughout this time of separation; and sustain them with the promise of Jesus Christ, through whom all things are made new, and in whose name we pray.771

**Time of conflict, crisis, disaster**

God, our refuge and strength, you have bound us together in a common life. In all our conflicts, help us to confront one another without hatred or bitterness, to listen for your voice amid competing claims, and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect; through Jesus Christ our Lord. 285

We pray to you almighty God, in this time of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. You are our refuge and our strength, a very present help in time of trouble. Do not let us fail in the face of these events. Uphold us with your love, and give us the strength we need. Help us in our confusion, and guide our actions. Heal the hurt, console the bereaved and afflicted, protect the innocent and helpless, and deliver any who are still in peril; for the sake of your great mercy in Jesus Christ our Lord.772

**Creation**

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, who in your self-emptying love gathered up and reconciled all creation to the Father. Innumerable galaxies of the heavens worship you. Creatures that grace the earth rejoice in you. All those in the deepest seas bow to you in adoration. As with them we give you praise, grant that we may cherish the earth, our home, and live in harmony with this good creation, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.320

**Seedtime, harvest**

Most gracious God, according to your wisdom the deep waters are opened up and clouds drop gentle moisture. We praise you for the return of planting and harvest seasons, for the fertility of the soil, for the harvesting of the crops, and for all other blessings that you in your generosity pour out on all people. Give us a full understanding of your mercy, that our lives may show respect and care for your creation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. 317

**Animals, pets**

We give thanks to you, O God, for animals that live in our homes, on farms, in the wild, and in havens of refuge. Make us ever aware of our responsibility to these, your creatures. Help us to be faithful in caring for them, through the one in whom all creation is made new, Jesus Christ our Lord.773

Hear our prayers, O God, for our friends, the animals--especially for animals that are suffering; for all that are frightened or lost, or deserted or hungry; and for all those animals that must be put to death. We ask for them your providing care; and for those who deal with them, we ask a heart of compassion, gentle hands, and kind words. Help us to be true friends to animals, that through us they may know the blessing of the merciful; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.774

**Praying at meals**

Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, and let *thy/your/these* gifts to us be blessed.

Blessed be God, who is our bread; may all the world be clothed and fed.775

Give us grateful hearts, O God, for all your mercies, and make us mindful of the needs of others; through Jesus Christ our Lord.776

Blessed are you, O Lord God, ruler of the universe, for you give us food to sustain our lives and make our hearts glad; through Jesus Christ our Lord.777

Bless, O Lord, your gifts to our use and us to your service; for Christ's sake.778

Every good and perfect gift comes from you, O God. Bless this food, and help us to receive it with thankful hearts. By your Spirit nourish our love for one another and for our neighbor in need; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.779

The eyes of all wait upon you, O Lord, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.780

Lord God, heavenly Father, bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bountiful goodness, through Jesus Christ our Lord.781

May your gifts refresh us, O God, and your grace give us strength, now and forever.782

Give thanks to the Lord, for the Lord is good, for God's mercy endures forever.783

We give thanks to you, Lord God our Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord for all your benefits, you who live and reign forever.784

**Praying at meetings**

Loving God, in holy baptism you have gathered us together across all human divisions and reconciled us to yourself in one body through the cross. Strengthen us now by your presence, that our thoughts and actions may be rooted and grounded in your love for us; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.785

Almighty God, you have called us to labor in your vineyard, and without you we can do nothing. Grant your gracious presence at this meeting, that what we do will build up your whole church. Let your Holy Spirit govern and direct us, that we may consult together peacefully, pleasing you with all that we say and do; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.786

Almighty God, you have built your church upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. Grant that the people of this congregation may be joined together as a holy temple, a place where you dwell. Send your Holy Spirit upon us that, guided by your word and strengthened by your sacraments, we may plan and do things that will be for the good of your church and the glory of your name; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.787

Almighty God, you have given your Holy Spirit to the church to lead us into all truth. Bless with the Spirit's grace and presence those who participate in this *council/congregation, etc*. meeting. Keep *us/them* steadfast in faith and united in love, that *we/they* may manifest your glory and prepare the way of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.788

Almighty God, your Holy Spirit equips the church with a rich variety of gifts. Grant that we may use them to bear witness to Christ in lives that are built on faith and love. Make us ready to live the gospel and eager to do your will, so that we may share with all your church in the joys of eternal life; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.279

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