

# The Messenger

I often pray this prayer at funerals:

*O God, who gave us birth,  
you are ever more ready to hear  
than we are to pray.  
You know our needs before we ask,  
and our ignorance in asking.  
Give to us now your grace,  
that as we shrink before the mystery of death,  
we may see the light of eternity.  
Speak to us once more  
your solemn message of life and of death.  
Help us to live as those who are prepared to die.  
And when our days here are accomplished,  
enable us to die as those who go forth to live,  
so that living or dying, our life may be in you,  
and that nothing in life or in death will be able to separate us  
from your great love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*

“...As we shrink before the mystery of death.” I don’t know who wrote that line or who coined that phrase originally, but this captures it. I do shrink before the mystery of death. When we encounter death, we shrink a bit. We feel our smallness. Our finitude. We know our life has limits, borders, boundaries. Paul even declares in Acts 17 that God sets the appointed times and places we inhabit. Our earthly lives indeed have a beginning, a middle, and an end. We don’t like to think about it, especially that “end” part. But it’s true. Our days are numbered.

But even as we shrink before death, these are moments when we also get a glimpse into the light of God. Death proudly acts as if it has the last word, but then Jesus Christ comes along and says a powerful, “No!” to death. Our Lord faced death, he died, was buried, and then on the third day was raised to eternal life. How many of us, when facing the death of a loved one, have glimpsed the light of eternity in those moments?

On Sunday, November 7, we will name these saints of ours who lived their lives like those who are prepared to die and have gone forth to live eternally. They shine brightly in heaven. We remember them, and we are thankful. God, help us live our lives in just that way, as people who are prepared to die. And when our days here are accomplished, enable us to die as those who go forth to live!

Polly Mohr  
Connie Adams  
Nancy Clark  
Billie Sexton  
Jeanne Bledsoe  
Melinda Gray

Bill Montgomery  
Louise Grisenthwaite  
Hatsie Kinsley  
Howard Ekey  
Frances Boone  
Stanley Gray

Lawrence Price  
Pheraby Smith  
Jane Chapman  
Homer Lassiter  
Jim Goodwin

Grace and Peace,  
Tom