

Prayer

Following the Meditation for Marvin Bottema

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Eternal God, Source, Guide and Goal of all that is,
from You we receive life as a gift
and to You our life returns.
In the Psalmist's poetic expression,
You send forth your breath, your Spirit,
and they are created.
You take away their breath, they die.

We find our comfort in life and in death
that we are not our own but belong to you, a faithful God,
Whose steadfast love embraces us
on this fascinating and fragile human pilgrimage.
And thus we find it most natural at such a time as this,
in such a place as this,
to lift up our hearts in worship, to bow in Your presence
before the mystery of life and the reality of death.
We worship, for we are aware of the wonder of creation,
its beauty and its terror, its loveliness and its pain.
We turn to You, O God, giver of life and Ground of all being.
We rest in You, we trust where we do not know.
In You we hope and to You we commend those we've loved and lost awhile.

Finally home,
our beloved father, grandfather, great grandfather,
brother, friend, your faithful servant, Marvin Bottema.
Finally home in a grand reunion—
his beautiful Thelma, Gerrit and Johanna, Neil and Alice,
and the others who have been part of this remarkable family,
a family rooted in a wonderful community of village and church
where ties of love, mutual care and strong tradition
created the good life – the good life we have all received
as a gift of Your Grace, O God,
a gift we treasure, a gift we pray we pass on
as it has been entrusted to us.

We give thanks for the privilege of living in the aroma of your Grace
as it was manifested in his life.

The kitchen was the sanctuary –
gathered around the kitchen table, the liturgy varied
according to who came through the door.
And no matter who showed up
one could find their picture plastered on the refrigerator.
There was always coffee and chocolate chip cookies –
unless John had been there earlier.
Precious times.
Our loved one, now parted from us,
was not, as it were, the chairman.
On any given day on any given topic, anyone might take the lead.
Nonetheless, his was the presence that mattered,
the presence that bound all together in the bundle of life and love.

We celebrate this life, this one who kept us together
when his beloved Thelma entered your light eternal, O God.
Summer holidays in the yard,
Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, crunched into the family room.
And miss him though we will, grieve his absence,
still we know it was time.
He was tired, he was ready, he faced his end with equanimity,
receiving the benediction in full assurance.

O God, there is no denying our loss.
Where love looms large, loss is large as well.
Where bonds of love are tight,
when broken, grief and loss are painful.
All of that we own, we acknowledge, without denial.

And in such a time as this, in such a place as this,
Gracious God, we are grateful above all
that the end is not broken health and dreams unfulfilled,
swallowed up in death,
but rather the confidence that
to live is to live unto the Lord,
and to die is to die unto the Lord,
so then, whether we live or die,
we are the Lord's.

Receive our thanksgiving, O God.
Grant the comfort of Your Spirit,
renew our hope and lead us on
in the confidence that nothing can ever separate us
from Your love in Christ Jesus our Lord,
Who taught us to pray, saying,

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.
Amen.*