

All Saints' Day Prayer

Richard A. Rhem
November 1, 2009

O God,
to You we lift our souls,
to You we lift our hearts.

The Psalmist wrote of the deer panting for streams of living water and saw
himself mirrored in that thirst.

We, too, thirst for You, O Living God,
To know that You are;
To sense Your presence;
To rest in Your grace.

As your people gathered here in this place,
We would be still and know that You are God.
We bring our thanksgiving
In the conscious knowledge that all is grace

The order of creation –
We reset our clocks and watches
To catch a bit more light in the morning,
But Brother Sun and Sister Moon are affected not at all;
Summer and Winter, Springtime and Harvest
In passing parade proclaim Your great faithfulness.

You are a God we can count on,
Keeping this vast cosmos balanced on a razor's edge,
Just so, just right.

And we breathe;
Planets move in marvelous symphony;
Salmon swim upstream;
Birds migrate to warmer climes;
Trees, so recently so richly garbed
Now poke heavenward bony fingers,
Warning of winter storms gathering,
Their leafy coats of dazzling color
now lying shredded on the ground.

And we sense a certain melancholy, a gentle grieving,
For once again we are rushing headlong toward the end of another year.

Like sand streaming through our fingers
Is the passing of our lives,
And we seem paralyzed, failing to grasp it.

Where have the years of our lives gone,
O God,
Where have they gone?
And what will become of us?
Ah, Dear God,
Creator, Lover of this world
In all the wonder of its diversity,
There is no shadow of turning in You.

You, the eternal God,
From Whom we have life,
To Whom our life returns,
In You we trust, in You we rest.
All is grace.
We give You thanks through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

For these moments, let us quiet our minds,
Letting go of concerns that burden us,
Regrets that cripple us,
Fears that paralyze us,
Whatever is troubling us.

Let us image that which causes gratitude to rise in us –
The gift and grace of life;
The sources of our joy;
Those persons who make life rich.

Let us call to mind those images which have shaped us –
The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;
The Lord is my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the strength of my life,
Of whom shall I be afraid?
Come unto me, all you who are weary and heavy laden,
And I will give you rest.
Since God is for us, who can be against us?
Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers,
Nor things present, nor things to come,
Nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation
Will be able to separate us from the love of God
In Christ Jesus our Lord.
All will be well, all will be well,

All manner of things will be well.

O God,

Those words rise from our depths so naturally.

O God

It seems that, in moments like these
When we purposefully, intentionally turn to you
When we turn to whomever or whatever you are,
We do so almost with a sigh,

O God.

For we know we are now in the zone of Mystery.

There was something about Jesus when he prayed
That caused the disciples to plead,

Lord, teach us to pray.

We plead, as well,

O, God, teach us to pray.

Once, perhaps, we came as suplicants
To the Royal Throne of the Universe with requests
We must admit on reflection were very self-centered,
Reflecting a very small universe in which
Our hopes and fears loomed very large.
And still there are moments when we flee into your presence
Totally occupied with our own concerns –
Something that threatens us, or
Some experience that crushes us, or
Some potential happening that involves us in a loss
we fear would undo us.

And sometimes it is sheer joy, ecstasy, exhilaration
That bursts forth in a torrent of praise,
Shutting out everything else for the moment.
But, more and more, we look not out there,
But somehow within, into our own depths,
Sensing we are connected deep down, rooted in Being itself,
You being the inexhaustible Source and Ground of all that exists –
The good earth,
The starry heavens,
The oceans' tides
And ourselves, conscious, aware, groping for some clue
By which to know you, to rest in you,
No longer strangers, but at home in the universe,
At one with all that is.

Sacred Mystery of Being, of our lives,

it is so good, so familiar for us gathered here
to be gathered consciously in Your presence.
Such rich memories we share of days gone by.

O God,

how grateful we are for all we have shared,
for all we have experienced together –
grateful for friendship, for mutual trust, mutual caring, support and love.

On this All Saints' Day we remember those we've loved and lost awhile.
We are grateful, O God, for the confidence with which we live and die,
that to live is to live unto the Lord
and to die is to die unto the Lord
and therefore whether we live or whether we die,
we are the Lord's.

We are grateful, O great Mystery of life,
that we have been graced with a fundamental trust
that this cosmic dance into which our lives are woven
is not a tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury, signifying nothing,
but a universe whose grain is love,
whose end is life and light,
a cosmos exploding before our eyes
with marvels our forbears would not believe
and we can hardly begin to comprehend.

O God

Our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Grant us joy and peace as in You
We live and move and have our being,
Confident we will never walk alone.

Amen.