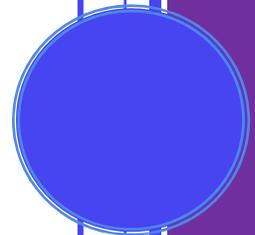
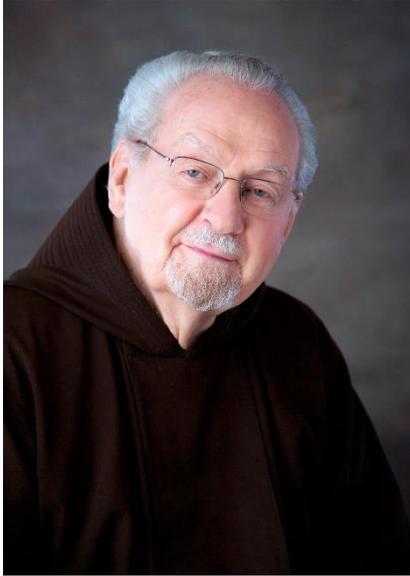


PRAYERFUL REFLECTIONS

Rev. Angelus M. Shaughnessy, OFM Capuchin





Matthew Edmund Shaughnessy, fourth son and ninth child of John and Anna Spang Shaughnessy, was born on November 16, 1929 in Rochester, PA. He was baptized on November 24, 1929 at St. Cecelia's Church in Rochester. For eight years he attended school there under the guidance of the Sisters of Divine Providence and graduated in 1943. Upon graduation, he entered St. Fidelis College and Seminary in Herman PA which was staffed by the Capuchin Franciscan Friars of the St. Augustine Province where he earned a Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Arts.

A talented and capable athlete in his youth, Father Angelus turned down an offer to play professional baseball as a left-handed pitcher for the Cleveland Indians to enter the Capuchin Novitiate in Cumberland, Maryland. On July 14, 1953, Father solemnly professed his perpetual vows as a Capuchin Friar.

Father's theological studies took him to Capuchin College in Washington, DC for four years where he received a Master's Degree in Religious Education. On June 4, 1955, Father Angelus was ordained to the priesthood at the hands of Bishop John McNamara in the crypt of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

In true Capuchin Franciscan tradition, Father Angelus has devoted his 61 years of priestly life to preaching the Crib, the Crucified, the Eucharist, the Church and Mary, the Mother of God. His message, simply stated, echoes John Henry Newman, "to live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often". He urges each listener to become a saint and offers practical guidance on how to attain that status.

Early in his career, Father served as the Director of the Secular Franciscan Order at St. Augustine Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. During that same period, he was Commissary Provincial for the St. Augustine Province. He also assisted at a local retreat house. Later, Father volunteered for missionary work in Papua, New Guinea where he was spiritual director and teacher in the Pontifical Seminary of Madang for eleven years. For the next three years, Father did pastoral work in the Mendi Diocese of the Southern Highlands. As a major part of his parochial ministry, Father and his parishioners built eleven permanent churches and three bush churches. While ministering to the needs of the Highlanders, Father was privileged to baptize 1,227 men, women, and children. It was there also that Father's fondness for swimming led to his mastery of walking in deep water for any distance - an unmatched record that was submitted to the *Guinness Book of Records* in London.

Upon returning to United States, Father facilitated hundreds of retreats across the country for a wide variety of participants. He concurrently maintained a rigorous schedule of parish missions and renewals, preached and directed retreats, accepted parish help-outs, days of recollection and appointments for personal individual counseling. He continued this work for nine more years while stationed at local parishes in the metropolitan Pittsburgh PA area.

In 2001 Father accepted a new challenge. He joined the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN) in Birmingham, Alabama where he served as Minister General to the Franciscan Missionaries of the Eternal Word for 6 years. Father cherished his apostolate at EWTN because he was able to celebrate Holy Mass for, preach to and reach out to more than 200 million households throughout the world.

In his effort to continue to reach as many people as possible, he has produced a library of CD and DVD as well as many publications that inspire, instruct and perpetuate the Catholic faith.

At the present time, Father is blessed to serve more than 1,500 Confraternities of Christian Mothers in United States, Africa and Guam as the National Executive Director of the Archconfraternity of Christian Mothers, under the patronage of Mary, Mother of Sorrows.

After circling the globe four times and traveling thousands of miles over barely navigable terrain, Father delights in characterizing his present ministry as " the good life - a taste of the hundredfold here on earth."

Although Father holds a Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Arts and a Master's Degree in Religious Education, he values above all his Baptismal Certificate which gained him entry into the Catholic Church.

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THE KISS OF CHRIST

Lo, there He hangs –
Ashen figure pinioned against the wood.
God grant that I might love Him
As I really know I should.

I draw a little closer
To feel His love divine,
And hear Him gently whisper
“Ah, precious child of mine –

If now I would embrace you,
My hands would stain you red.
And if I leaned to whisper,
My thorns would pierce your head.”

‘Twas then I learned in sorrow
That love demands a price;
‘Twas then I learned that suffering
Is but the kiss of Christ.

(This is variously attributed to Fr. John H. Hampsch, CMF or Caryll Houselander and maybe others. If anyone knows for certain who wrote this, I would be happy to know so I can give proper credit.)

GROWTH IN FAITH TOGETHER

Almighty, eternal, just and merciful God, Give
us little ones the grace to do for You alone
What we know You want us to do and
Always to desire what pleases You.
Inwardly cleanses, interiorly enlightened and
Inflamed by the fires of the Holy Spirit, May
we be able to follow
In the footsteps of your beloved Son,
Our Lord, Jesus Christ, and, by Your grace alone
May we make our way to You, Most High,
Who live and rule in perfect Trinity and simple Unity,
And are glorified God Almighty,
Forever and ever. Amen.

COMMUNION PRAYER

SOUL OF CHRIST, SANCTIFY ME My soul, enlighten my intellect with divine wisdom, confirm my will to Your will, give me a ready memory and a keen comprehension of the truth

BODY OF CHRIST, SAVE ME Yours was a perfect human body. Through this Holy Communion, Eucharistic Response, let me participate in Your vigorous health. Grant me a well-balanced outlook on life, and understanding acceptance of misfortune and a ready recognition of the blessings You bestow on me. I beg freedom from pain, worry, anxiety, a vigorous heart, strength of muscle, good digestion and restful sleep so that I may be able to do Your work expected of me.

BLOOD OF CHRIST, INEBRIATE ME Send enriching blood coursing unhindered through my body and cleansing it of all impurities, for it is the stream of life and health.

WATER FROM THE SIDE OF CHRIST, STRENGTHEN ME Wash my soul of sin, cleanse my body of disease, arthritis and all malfunctions.

O, GOOD JESUS, HEAR ME Give me a vivid awareness of Your presence and love, of Your protection and guidance and a growing devotion in my prayer life.

WITHIN THY WOUNDS, HIDE ME May the example of Your sufferings console and strengthen me in my sufferings, as I unite my sacrifices with Your sacrifice on the cross for my sins and the sins of others.

AND BID ME COME TO THEE Keep clearly before me my final goal, my true goal, my glorious destiny so I may successfully fulfill the mission for which You created me, made me as I am and placed me here and now.

THAT WITH THEY SAINTS, I MAY PRAISE THEE I place myself under the protective care of my patron saints, my saintly deceased family members and my Guardian Angel, so that someday I shall meet them all in heaven with You.

FOR ALL ETERNITY Take me home when my journey here below is done, so that I may receive the merits of a good life, of prayers, Masses and Communion and fulfilled obligations. Then I will see You face-to-face, and live with You in the bliss of happiness and peace with You forever.

~ Fr. Gabriel Giles, OFM Capuchin

CHRIST CRUCIFIED

His brow is rent,
He thinks of you.

His eyes are glazed,
He looks for you.

His face is drawn,
He yearns for you.

His voice is weak,
He calls for you.

His hands are pierced,
He beckons you.

His feet are torn,
He seeks for you.

His heart is opened
Wide for you.

His blood is shed
For love of you.

For all of this,
What will YOU do?

~ Fr. Leonard Edward Feeney, S.J. (2.18.1897 – 1.30.1978)

IN HIS IMAGE

I slipped His fingers I escaped His feet.
I ran and hid for Him I feared to meet.

One day I passed Him, fettered on a tree.
He turned His head and looked and beckoned me.

Neither by seed or strength could He prevail.
Each hand and foot was pinioned by a nail.

He could not run nor clasped me if He tried,
but with His eyes, He bade me reach His side.

“For pity sake,” thought I, “I’ll set you free.”
“Nay, take this Cross,” said He, “and follow Me.”

This yoke is easy.
This burden light.
Not hard, nor grievous
If you wear it right.

And so did I follow Him who could not move,
An uncaught captive in the hands of Love.”

~ Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen (1895 – 1979)

I FORGIVE

The condition of our forgiveness before God is our willingness to forgive those who have injured us and our families.

- ♥ I forgive my mother and father for not being perfect for neglecting me because of their own problems...for not loving me enough.
- ♥ I forgive my brothers and sisters for all the competition, for not helping me when I needed it...for not loving me enough.
- ♥ I forgive my spouse for unreal expectations, for taking me for granted...for not loving me enough.
- ♥ I forgive my daughters and sons for not being exactly like me, for learning the hard way...for not loving me enough.
- ♥ I forgive myself for my selfishness, for the stupid things I did in the past...for not loving me enough.
- ♥ I forgive God for not making me perfect, for not making everyone just like me, for giving me a free will which I often abuse...for not loving me enough.
- ♥ I forgive anyone who may have physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, financially, sexually hurt me...for not loving me enough.

The bottom line with everybody in this world: friend or foe, family or non-family, spouse or non-spouse...nobody, but nobody can ever meet our expectations; therefore, we must learn to forgive.

I ask God to forgive me as much as I forgive others and I promise God to try to live faithfully and to create a community of loving people.

“We can believe what we choose.
We are answerable for what we choose to believe.”

“In a higher world, it is otherwise, but here below to live is to change
and to be perfect is to have changed often.”

~ *Essay on the Development of Doctrine*, John Henry Cardinal Newman (1801 -1890)

YET HE WENT ON...

When I get depressed, when I have a hard time continuing to do good, when I feel alone and nobody else seems to be on my side, I reflect on this...

- † Jesus from his childhood had the deadliest of enemies. Yet, He went on.
- † Jesus was ignored and passed over for thirty years. Yet, He went on.
- † Jesus had the very worst interpretations put on His very kindest actions. Yet, He went on.
- † Jesus had all His words warped, twisted, falsely reported, magnified, minimized, made to mean the very opposite by men set expressly to catch Him. Yet, He went on.
- † Jesus had no support from those in authority, only suspicion, heckling, condemnation. Yet, He went on.

- † Jesus was worn to death by labor, now by excessive loneliness, now by the pressure of the crowd. Yet, He went on.
- † Jesus knew very little gratitude. Yet, He went on.
- † Jesus had none to share His burden, none with whom he could talk. Yet, He went on.
- † Jesus was slighted, even laughed to scorn when He gave His very best. Yet, He went on.
- † Jesus had sententious and wise friends who made mistakes He made, and what He ought to do and how He ought to do it. Yet, He went on.

- † Jesus was deserted by everyone, even His best friends who were scandalized in Him, disappointed in Him. Yet, He went on.
- † Jesus was betrayed by one He most trusted, betrayed for a paltry price, betrayed with a kiss, betrayed to a rabble of ruffians. Yet, He went on.
- † Jesus was denied by one on whom He most relied. Yet, He went on.
- † Jesus was hanged as a common malefactor. Yet, He went on.
- † Jesus endured the sense of utter desertion, even by God, His Father. Yet, He went on.

- † Jesus was never without those who hated Him, really vindictively hated Him, who plotted against Him, maligned Him behind His back, did all they could to ruin Him and in the end He knew they would succeed. Yet, He went on.

- † Jesus saved others, Himself He would not save. Yet, He went on.

- † Jesus is passed over and condemned by generation after generation. Yet, He went on.

From *A Short Life of Our Lord* by Archbishop Alban Goodier, S.J. (1869 – 1939)

THE CRUCIFIX: THE BOOK OF LIFE

- † If you would like to love God,
look at the Crucifix!
- † If you hope for eternal happiness,
look at the Crucifix!
- † If you wonder how much God loves you,
look at the Crucifix!
- † If you wonder how much God wants you in heaven,
look at the Crucifix!
- † If you wonder how God tries to prevent you from the yawning jaws of hell,
look at the Crucifix!
- † If you wonder how much God will help you to save your immortal soul,
look at the Crucifix!
- † If you wonder how much you should forgive others,
look at the Crucifix!
- † If you wonder how much your faith demands of you, in humility, poverty, charity,
meekness and every virtue,
look at the Crucifix!
- † If you want to know what unselfishness and generosity are,
look at the Crucifix!
- † If you wonder how far your own unselfishness should go to bring others to Christ,
look at the Crucifix!
- † If you want to understand the need for self-denial and mortification,
look at the Crucifix!
- † If you wish to live well,
look at the Crucifix!
- † If you wish to die well,
look at the Crucifix!

~ Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274) St. Thomas Aquinas said that he learned more from the crucifix than from all the books of theology that he read. Small wonder!

THUS SPEAKS CHRIST OUR LORD

You call Me Master and obey Me not.
You call Me Light and seek Me not.
You call Me the Way and walk with Me not.
You call Me Wise and follow Me not.
You call Me Fair and love Me not.
You call Me Rich and ask Me not.
You call Me Eternal and seek Me not.
You call Me Gracious and trust Me not.
You call Me Noble and serve Me not.
You call Me Prince and honor Me not.
You call Me Just and fear Me not.
If I condemn you, blame Me not.

~ Engraved on an old slab in the Cathedral of Lubec in Germany

THE PELICAN

Consider the pelican, a noble bird who returning exhausted to its nest from a long and fruitless search for food sees its chicks crowding around to catch the fish it will disgorge. The pelican sees their gaping mouths, hears their frantic gabbling. For a moment the pelican stands as though listening to some secret inner command.

Then, suddenly it raises its beak about the young, arching its neck backward for the strike. It is not the babies that it would harm, but itself. The pelican punctures its own breast, ripping open its flesh until at last it stands astride the nest offering its own flesh as food before it dies.

It seems as though the Creator has placed within all creatures not only a strong hunger, but also a strong desire to respond to the cries of hunger. That is why Christ is called the Pious Pelican in the hymn of St. Thomas Aquinas. Christ feeds us with His flesh that we might go out and feed others.

I AM

I was regretting the past
and fearing the future.
Suddenly my Lord was speaking:

“My name is I am.” He paused.

I waited. He continued.

“When you live in the past with all its mistakes and regrets, it is hard. I am not there.

My name is not I was.

When you live in the future with its problems and fears, it is hard. I am not there.

My name is not I will be.

When you live in this moment, it is not hard. I am here.

My name is I am.”

~ Helen Mallicoat (1913 – 2004)

THE LIVING SPIRIT

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 never may know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. Somehow I am necessary for His purposes, as necessary in my place as an Archangel in his—if, indeed, I fail, He can raise another, as He could make the stones children of Abraham. Yet I have a part in this great work; I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. 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 and serve Him in my calling.

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. My sickness, or perplexity, or sorrow may be necessary causes of some great end, which is quite beyond us. He does nothing in vain; He may prolong my life, He may shorten it; 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 the future from me—still He knows what He is about.

~ *Meditations and Devotions*, John Henry Cardinal Newman (1801 -1890)

We are by nature what we are; very sinful and corrupt, we know; however, we like to be what we are, and for many reasons it is very unpleasant to us to change. We cannot change ourselves; this too we know full well, or, at least, a very little experience will teach us. God alone can change us; God alone can give us the desires, affections, principles, views, and tastes which a change implies: this too we know; for I am all along speaking of men who have a sense of religion. What then is it that we who profess religion lack? I repeat it, this: a willingness to be changed, a willingness to suffer (if I may use such a word), to suffer Almighty God to change us.

We do not like to let go our old selves; and in whole or part, though all is offered to us freely, we cling hold to our old selves. Though we were promised no trouble at all in the change, though there were no self-denial, no exertion in changing, the case would not be altered. We do not like to be new-made; we are afraid of it; it is throwing us out of all our natural ways, of all that is familiar to us. We feel as if we should not be ourselves any longer, if we do not keep some portion of what we have been hitherto; and much as we profess in general terms to wish to be changed, when it comes to the point when particular instances of change are presented to us, we shrink from them, and are content to remain unchanged.

But when a man comes to God to be saved, then, I say, the essence of true conversion is a surrender of himself, an unreserved, unconditional surrender; and this is a saying which most men who come to God cannot receive. They wish to be saved, but in their own way; they wish (as it were) to capitulate upon terms, to carry off their goods with them; whereas the true spirit of faith leads a man to look off from self to God, to think nothing of his own wishes, his present habits, his importance or dignity, his rights, his opinions, but to say, "I put myself into Thy hands, O Lord; make Thou me what Thou wilt; I forget myself; I divorce myself from myself; I am dead to myself; I will follow Thee."

~ *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, John Henry Cardinal Newman (1801 -1890)

I PRAYED; GOD ANSWERED

I asked God for strength, that I might achieve.
I was made weak, that I might learn humbly to obey.
I asked for health, that I might do greater things.
I was given infirmity, that I might do better things.
I asked for riches, that I might be happy,
I was given poverty, that I might be wise.
I asked for power, that I might have the praise of men.
I was given weakness, that I might feel the need for God.
I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life.
I was given life, that I might enjoy all things.
I got nothing that I asked for, but everything I had hoped for.
Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered. I
am, among all men, most richly blessed.

WHO CAN DOUBT THE REAL PRESENCE?

On the evening of the last day of his October 1995 visit to the United States, Pope John Paul II was scheduled to greet the seminarians at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore. It had been a very full day, beginning with Mass at the Oriole Park in Camden Yards, followed by a parade through the downtown streets, a visit to the Basilica of The Assumption, the first cathedral in the country, lunch at a local soup kitchen, run by the Catholic Charities, a prayer service at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in the north Baltimore area, and finally a quick stop at St. Mary's Seminary.

The schedule was tight so the plan was to simply greet the seminarians while they stood outside on the steps. But Pope John Paul II made his way through their ranks and into the building. His plan was first to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. When his wishes were made known, security personnel quickly flew into action ahead of the Pope. Their activities included a sweep of the building, paying closest attention to the chapel where Pope John Paul II would be praying. For this purpose, highly trained dogs were used to detect any persons who might be present.

The dogs are trained to locate living people in collapsed buildings after earthquakes and other disasters. These intelligent and eager canines went through their rounds in the halls, offices and classrooms quickly, and were then sent into the chapel. They went up and down the aisles and past the pews, and finally into the side chapel where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. Upon reaching the tabernacle, the dogs sniffed and whined and pointed, refusing to leave; they were convinced that they discovered SOMEONE there and firmly remained, their attention riveted to the tabernacle, until called out by the handlers.

The dogs were right; they found a REAL LIVING PERSON in the tabernacle!

THE STORY OF A SON

A wealthy man and his son loved to collect rare works of art. They had everything in their collection, from Picasso to Raphael. They would often sit together and admire the great works of art. When the Viet Nam conflict broke out, the son went to war. He was very courageous and died in battle while rescuing another soldier. The father was notified and grieved deeply for his only son. About a month later, just before Christmas, there was a knock at the door. A young man stood at the door with a large package in his hands. He said, "Sir, you don't know me, but I am the soldier for whom your son gave his life. He saved many lives that day, and he was carrying me to safety when a bullet struck him in the heart and he died instantly. He often talked about you, and your love for art. The young man held out his package. "I know this isn't much. I'm not really a great artist, but I think your son would have wanted you to have this."

The father opened the package. It was a portrait of his son, painted by the young man. He stared in awe at the way the soldier had captured the personality of his son in the painting. The father was so drawn to the eyes that his own eyes welled up with tears. He thanked the young man and offered to pay him for the picture. "Oh, no sir, I could never repay what your son did for me. It's a gift." The father hung the portrait over his mantle. Every time visitors came to his home he took them to see the portrait of his son before he showed them any of the other great works he had collected.

The man died a few months later. There was to be a great auction of his paintings. Many influential people gathered, excited over seeing the great paintings and having an opportunity to purchase one for their collection. On the platform sat the painting of the son. The auctioneer pounded his gavel. "We will start the bidding with this picture of the son. Who will bid for this picture?" There was silence. Then a voice in the back of the room shouted, "We want to see the famous paintings. Skip this one." But the auctioneer persisted, "Will someone bid for this painting? Who will start the bidding? \$100, \$200?"

Another voice shouted angrily, "We didn't come to see this painting. We came to see the Van Goghs, the Rembrandts. Get on with the real bids! "But still the auctioneer continued, "The son! The son! Who'll take the son?" Finally, a voice came from the very back of the room. It was the longtime gardener of the man and his son. "I'll give \$10 for the painting." Being a poor man, it was all he could afford. "We have \$10, who will bid \$20?" "Give it to him for \$10. Let's see the masters." "\$10 is the bid, won't someone bid \$20?" The crowd was becoming angry. They didn't want the picture of the son. They wanted the more worthy investments for their collections. The auctioneer pounded the gavel. "Going once, twice, SOLD for \$10!

A man sitting on the second row shouted, "Now let's get on with the collection!" The auctioneer laid down his gavel, "I'm sorry, the auction is over." "What about the paintings?" "I am sorry. When I was called to conduct this auction, I was told of a secret stipulation in the will. I was not allowed to reveal that stipulation until this time. Only the painting of the son would be auctioned. Whoever bought that painting would inherit the entire estate, including the paintings. The man who took the son gets everything!" God gave His Son 2,000 years ago to die on a cruel cross. Much like the auctioneer, His message today is, "The Son, the Son, who'll take the Son?" Because you see, whoever takes the Son gets everything.

COME, HOLY SPIRIT

Replace the tension within us with a holy relaxation.
Replace the turbulence within us with a sacred calm.
Replace the anxiety within us with a quiet confidence.
Replace the fear within us with a strong faith.
Replace the bitterness within us with the sweetness of grace.
Replace the darkness within us with a gentle light.
Replace the coldness within us with a loving warmth.
Replace the night within us with your light.
Replace the winter within us with your spring.
Straighten our crookedness.
Fill our emptiness.
Dull the edge of our pride.
Sharpen the edge of our humility.
Light the fires of our love.
Quench the flames of our lust.
Let us see ourselves as you see us
That we may see You as You have promised,
And be fortunate according to Your word to hear:
“Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.”

O GOD OF PEACE

I turn aside from an unquiet world,
seeking rest for my spirit,
and light for my thoughts.
I bring my work to be sanctified,
my wounds to be healed,
my sins to be forgiven,
my hopes to be renewed,
my better self to be quickened.

O Thou, in whom there is harmony, draw me to Thyself and silence the discords of my wasteful life. Thou who art one in all, and in whom all are one, take me out of the loneliness of self, and fill me with the fullness of Thy truth and love. Thou whose greatness is beyond my highest praise, lift me above my common littleness and my daily imperfections; send me visions of the love that is in Thee and of the good that may be in me.
Amen.

~ St. Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430)

TWO SEAS IN PALESTINE

There are two seas in Palestine.

One is fresh, and fish are in it. Splashes of green adorn its banks. Trees spread their branches over it and stretch out their thirsty roots to sip of its healing waters. Along its shores, the children play as children played when He was there. He loved it. He could look across its silver surface when He spoke His parables.

The River Jordan makes this sea with sparkling water from the hills. So it laughs in the sunshine. And men build their houses near to it, and birds their nests; and every kind of life is happier because it is there.

The River Jordan flows south into another sea. Here there is no splash of fish, no fluttering leaf, no song of birds, no children's laughter. Travelers choose another route, unless on urgent business. The air hangs heavy above its water, and neither man nor beast nor fowl will drink.

What makes this mighty difference in these neighbor seas? Not the River Jordan. It empties the same good water into both. Not the soil in which they lie; not in the country round about.

This is the difference.

The Sea of Galilee receives, but does not keep the Jordan. For every drop that flows into it another drop flows out. The giving and receiving go on in equal measure.

The other sea is shrewder, hoarding its income jealously. It will not be tempted into any generous impulse. Every drop it gets, it keeps.

The Sea of Galilee gives and lives.

This other sea gives nothing. It is named Dead.

There are two kinds of people in this world. There are two seas in Palestine.

Lord, give me a generous heart!

COMMUNION

The Body of Christ.

The ciborium is in my hands, before me a line of hungry souls.

The Body of Christ.

Hands reaching out to take the saving Bread.

The body of Christ.

Received

- By small, dirty hands
- And clean, soft hands
- By hands with fingers twisted at wrong angles to the palm,
- By hands with painted nails and diamond rings,
- By hands of men with clouded eyes
- And arrogant young boys
- And girls with glorious smiles;
- By hands of sick and sad and sorrowing,
- By hands of joy and hope,
- By hands of now and then and yet to come;
- And a mother, whose hands are occupied with child, trustingly opens her mouth to receive

The Body of Christ.

The line continues, as it has and will.

The strength for now, the foretaste of eternity.

This is the body of Christ.

These people, too, are the Body of Christ.

~ Hallie Flanagan Wolfe

CHRIST HAS NO BODY

Christ has no body now but yours,

No hands, no feet on earth but yours,

Yours are the eyes through which he looks with 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 but yours,

No hands, no feet on earth but yours,

Yours are the eyes through which he looks with compassion on this world.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

~ Teresa of Avila (1515–1582)

GOD SENT US A SAVIOR

If our greatest need had been information,
God would have sent us an educator.

If our greatest need had been technology,
God would have sent us a scientist.

If our greatest need had been money,
God would have sent us an economist.

If our greatest need had been pleasure,
God would have sent us an entertainer.

But our greatest need was forgiveness,
So God sent us a Savior.

PRAYER ON FINDING GOD AFTER A LONG SEARCH

Too late have I loved You,

O Beauty so ancient, O Beauty so new.

Too late have I loved You!

You were within me but I was outside myself and there I sought You!

In my weakness I ran after the beauty of the things You have made.

You were with me, and I was not with You.

The things You have made kept me from You –

the things which would have no being unless they existed in You!

You have called, You have cried and You have pierced my deafness.

You have radiated forth, You have shined out brightly and You have dispelled my blindness.

You have sent forth Your fragrance and I have breathed it in, and I long for You.

I have tasted You, and I hunger and thirst for You.

You have touched me, and I burn for Your peace.

~ Confessions of St. Augustine, X, 27, 38, St. Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430)

WHAT CANCER CANNOT DO

Cancer is so limited. . . It

cannot cripple Love. It

cannot shatter Hope.

It cannot dissolve Faith.

It cannot destroy Peace.

It cannot kill Friendship.

It cannot suppress Memories.

It cannot silence Courage.

It cannot invade the Soul.

It cannot steal eternal Life.

It cannot conquer the Spirit.

It cannot, has not, will not, lessen the power of the Resurrection!

AND GOD SAID NO

I asked God to take away my pride. And God said "No".
He said it was not for Him to take away, but for me to give up.

I asked God to make my handicapped child whole. And God said "No".
He said her spirit was whole, her body was only temporary.

I asked God to grant me patience. And God said "No".
He said patience is a by-product of tribulations. It isn't granted, it is earned.

I asked God to give me happiness. And God said "No".
He said He gives me blessings, happiness is up to me.

I asked God to spare me pain. And God said "No".
He said suffering draws me apart from worldly cares and brings me closer to Him.

I asked God to make my spirit grow. And God said "No".
He said I must grow on my own. But He will prune me to make me fruitful.

I asked for all things that I might enjoy life. And God said "No".
He said He will give me life, that I may enjoy all things.

I ask God to help me love others, as much as he loves me.
And God said "Ah, finally you have the idea...the right idea!"

~ Claudia Minden Weisz (the mother of a child with Rett Syndrome)

THE SPIRIT SPEAKS

I have never once deviated
In my love for you.
From the moment you were conceived
I have loved you with a love
Changeless
Endless
Irrevocable.

There has never been a day, an hour,
an instant
When I was not with you
Loving you.
I nurtured you as a seed
Enfolded you as a child
Strengthened you as man.

I was an invisible shield over your head
Though you knew it not.
I am still that invisible shield!
With infinite care I attend your wounds,
Govern your heartbeat
Remove the wastes that do not belong.

I sleep not at night.
When you close your eyes
Yielding at last more fully to my care
I go to work
And heal, as far as I can
The ravages of your insane, inexplicable
self-activity.

You imagine in your blindness
That you can love or not
As you choose,
Condemn, criticize, hate
As you choose.
Fortunately for you I have no such choice.
I am true always to the solemn dictate of
love.

I respect to the last the covenant I made
When I came into the world.
Yet I know too that you cannot survive
If you continue to fight against me,
Ignoring my government
Preferring strange impulses of your own
choosing.
Rejecting me you reject love.

This is why you are always looking for love
But never find it.

Just when you think you have it
Love
Like a bird
Flies away.

Your songs, art, literature, all sing
This vain and fruitless quest
For a love that will never change
A love that will never die
A love that is ever new.

Turn to me
Acknowledge me
Accept me
Love me
And you will know such love
Here and now.

Together we will restore the world
To order and to beauty.

~ Origin Unknown

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

Lord, I believe in you: increase my faith.
I trust in you: strengthen my trust.
I love you: let me love you more and more.
I am sorry for my sins: deepen my sorrow.

I worship you as my first beginning,
I long for you as my last end,
I praise you as my constant helper,
And call on you as my loving protector.

Guide me by your wisdom,
Correct me with your justice,
Comfort me with your mercy,
Protect me with your power.

I offer you, Lord, my thoughts: to be fixed on you;
My words: to have you for their theme;
My actions: to reflect my love for you;
My sufferings: to be endured for your greater glory.

I want to do what you ask of me:
In the way you ask,
For as long as you ask,
Because you ask it.

Lord, enlighten my understanding,
Strengthen my will,
Purify my heart and make me holy.

Help me to repent of my past sins
And to resist temptation in the future.
Help me to rise above my human weaknesses
And to grow stronger as a Christian.

Let me love you, my Lord and my God,
And see myself as I really am:
A pilgrim in this world,
A Christian called to respect and love
All whose lives I touch,
Those under my authority,
My friends and my enemies.

Help me to conquer anger with gentleness,

Greed by generosity,
Apathy by fervor.
Help me to forget myself
And reach out toward others.

Make me prudent in planning,
Courageous in taking risks.
Make me patient in suffering, unassuming in prosperity.

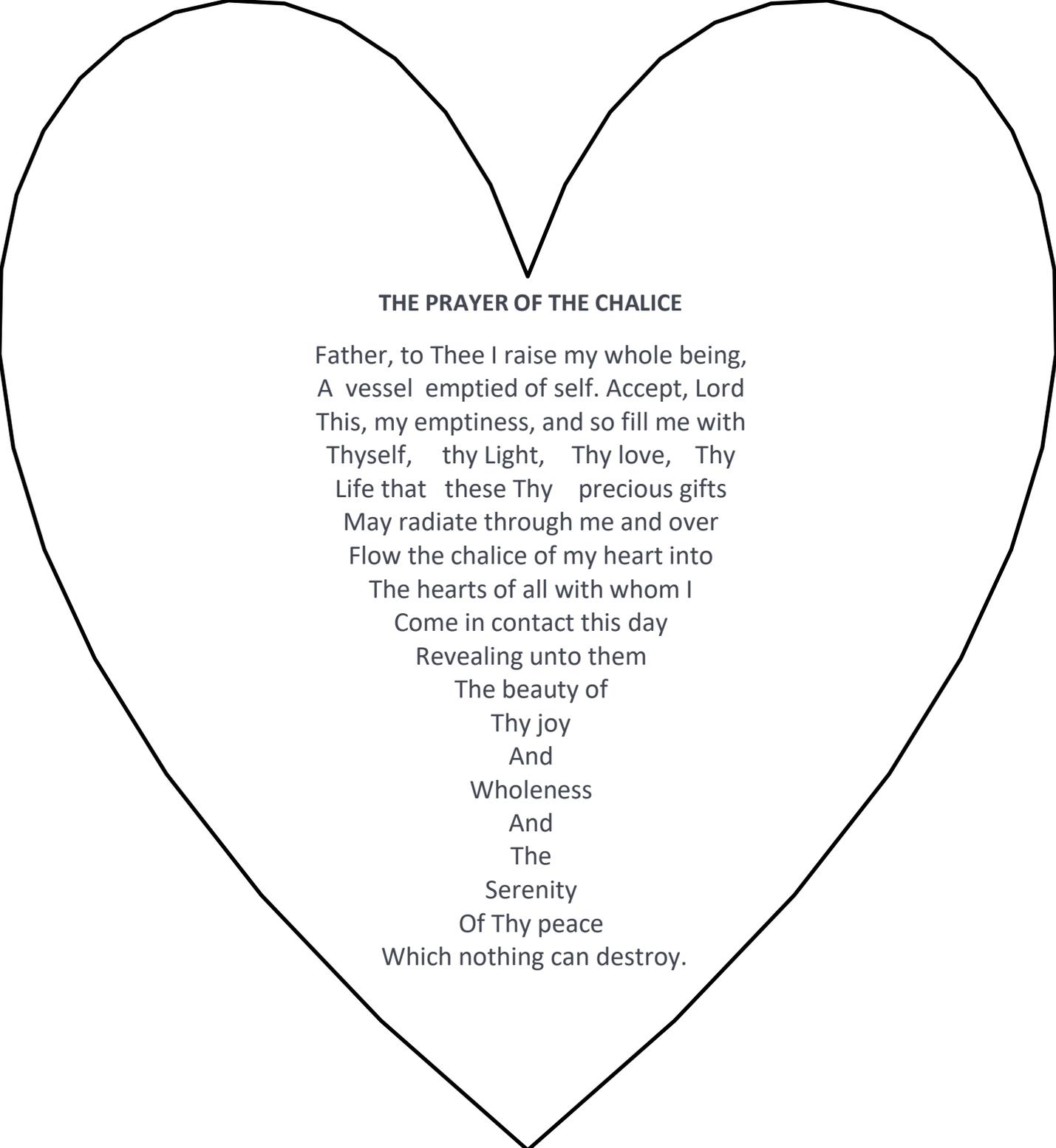
Keep me, Lord, attentive at prayer,
Temperate in food and drink,
Diligent in my work,
Firm in my good intentions.

Let my conscience be clear,
My conduct without fault,
My speech blameless,
My life well-ordered.
Put me on guard against my human weaknesses.
Let me cherish your love for me,
Keep your law,
And come at last to your salvation.

Teach me to realize that this world is passing,
That my true future is the happiness of heaven,
That life on earth is short,
And the life to come eternal.

Help me to prepare for death
With a proper fear of judgment,
But a greater trust in your goodness.
Lead me safely through death
To the endless joy of heaven.
Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

~ Pope Clement XI (1649 – 1721)



THE PRAYER OF THE CHALICE

Father, to Thee I raise my whole being,
A vessel emptied of self. Accept, Lord
This, my emptiness, and so fill me with
Thyself, thy Light, Thy love, Thy
Life that these Thy precious gifts
May radiate through me and over
Flow the chalice of my heart into
The hearts of all with whom I
Come in contact this day
Revealing unto them
The beauty of
Thy joy
And
Wholeness
And
The
Serenity
Of Thy peace
Which nothing can destroy.

PEACE PRAYER OF SAINT FRANCIS

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

THE BLESSING OF ST. FRANCIS

The Lord bless you and keep you.

May He show His face to you and have mercy on you.

May He turn His countenance to you and give you peace.

May the Lord bless you!

Book of Numbers 6: 24-26.