



February 2014
Volume 87 Number 2

From the Clergy Associate for Family Ministries

February Message from the Clergy Associate for Family Ministries

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*¹

This prayer concludes the daily devotion for morning in our prayer book. What a wonderful way to start the day!

Today is a gift. How shall we embrace that truth in such a way to glorify God to our utmost?

Parenthood brings all sorts of complicated challenges—how do we get through the day without falling into sin on our own and in relation to our children? Whether in the direct form of relentless challenges to us and our authority as parents from our children themselves, or in the shape of worry about our children in the face of adversity that we cannot control. How do we prevent such challenges from crippling us in our mission to embrace the gift of today and our purpose to glorify God with all of our being?

To start, we can begin our day with prayer.

We do nothing without God. And the best way to strive for that to which we are called is by staying in touch.

There are many forms of prayer. During Lent, we will be exploring methods of contemplative prayer which may be new to some. In the meantime, I offer the prayer above, and then also the following prayer from a small book of Morning and Night Prayers by J. Philip Newell titled *Celtic Benediction*. The following prayers come from the pages assigned for Tuesday morning.

They strike me today because my most present challenge at the moment is guiding my children to see the best in people, even when in their own daily lives they encounter individuals who do not seek out or observe the best in their own beautiful little selves. The following prayers are richly fertilized with gratitude and hope and possibility.

¹ Book of Common Prayer, page 137

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession²

The world is alive with your goodness, O God,
it grows green from the ground
and ripens into the roundness of fruit.
Its taste and touch
enliven my body and stir my soul.
Generously given
profusely displayed
your graces of goodness pour forth from the earth.
As I have received
so free me to give.
As I have been granted
so may I give.

*Pray for the coming day
and for the life of the world.*

Closing Prayer³

I have tasted the fruit of the earth, O God.
I have seen autumn trees hang heavily with heaven's gifts.
I have known people pregnant with your spirit of generosity.
Let these be guides to me this day.
And may Mary who knew her womb filled with
your goodness
teach me the wisdom that is born amidst pain.
May I know that deeper than any fallowness in me
is the seed planted in the womb of my soul.
May I know that greater than any barrenness in the world
is the harvest to be justly shared.

May these prayers be a blessing to you as they are to me.

And although the twelve days of Christmas are passed, I cannot help but share the link below to SSJE (Society of Saint John the Evangelist) Brother Curtis Almquist's Christmastime sermon on the gift of memory. Whether you have children or teach children or simply have memories of being a child, may it, too, bless you. Enjoy.

<http://ssje.org/ssje/2012/12/25/the-gift-of-memory-br-curtis-almquist/>

Faithfully,
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² J. Philip Newell, *Celtic Benediction*, page 28

³ J. Philip Newell, *Celtic Benediction*, page 29