



# Prayer Anthology

## Part One: The Dying

**The Art of  
Dying Well**

# Prayer Anthology

Part One is for people who are dying - including those who have received a terminal diagnosis.

## Our Lady of Guadalupe to Saint Juan Diego

Listen, put it into your heart, my youngest and dearest son, that the thing that frightens you, the thing that afflicts you, is nothing: do not let it disturb you. Am I not here, I who am your Mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Am I not the source of your joy? Are you not in the hollow of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms? Do you need something more? Let nothing worry you or disturb you.”

## Lucy Menzies

All her life she [Mechtilde of Magdeburg] had had a dread as to how her soul was to pass from her body. Now God said to her, It shall be thus: I draw My breath and thy soul will follow on to me as a needle to a magnet.

From the Introduction to: *The Revelations of Mechtilde of Magdeburg*

## Romanos The Melodist

“Curb your tears; accept me as your Mediatrix in the presence of Him Who was born from me, because the Author of Joy is the God generated before all ages. Remain calm; be trouble no longer: I come from Him, full of grace.”

Our Blessed Lady speaking in a hymn

## Donald Nicholl

No number of letters about me or for me, no telephone call – from the pope (!) or any other creature – can really help.

Only the presence of God here in this room can save anything from the wreckage of my body and the agonía of my spirit. And the Spirit of God does dwell in our hearts, especially in the love Dorothy and I have for one another.

No messages from outside can ultimately help, except in so far as they are themselves the work of the Holy Spirit.

Everything, everything depends on God. Tout est grace.

Even though I now look so haggard, I hope I may still bear witness to God’s unfailing presence by smiling at life and the persons who come my way. Above all, to smile at Dorothy, my friend and companion, my beloved wife, whom I love more dearly each day.

In: *The Testing of Hearts – Part III Testing Unto Death*



### Read and Pray

These prayerful reflections which have been chosen to help you hear God speaking to you.

## Saint Faustina

O my Lord, inflame my heart with love for You, that my spirit may not grow weary amidst the storms, the sufferings and the trials. You see how weak I am. Love can do all.

Notebook 1 (94)

## Prudentius

Let it be enough that we have spent our lives paying in full the bond we first gave to Caesar. Now is the time for giving to God what belongs to Him... The glorious service of the angels now calls us away.

## Blessed Columba Marmion, OSB

Our Lord is Master of His gifts and, without any merit on their part, He calls certain souls to more intimate union with Him, to share His sorrows and sufferings for the glory of His Father and the salvation of souls, Adimpleo in corpore meo quae desunt passionum Christi pro corpore ejus quod est Ecclesia: "I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His body, which is the Church." We are the body of Christ and members of His. God could have saved men without them having to suffer or to merit, as He does in the case of little children who die after Baptism. But by a decree of His adorable wisdom, He had decided that the world's salvation should depend upon an expiation of which His Son Jesus should undergo the greater part but in which His members should be associated. Many men neglect to supply their share of suffering accepted in union with Jesus Christ, and of prayers and good works. That is why our Lord chooses certain souls to be associated with Him in the great work of the Redemption. These are elect souls, victims of expiation and praise. These are dear to Jesus beyond all one can imagine.

Abandon yourself blindly into the hands of this Heavenly Father Who loves you better and more than you love yourself.

Sufferings are the price and the sign of true divine favours. ...Works and foundations built upon the Cross and upon sufferings are alone lasting.

The sufferings you have endured are for me a sign of the special benediction of the One Who, in His wisdom, chose to found all upon the Cross.

In: [Union with God](#)

## Blaise Pascal

Enter into my heart and soul, to bear in them my sufferings, and to continue to endure in me what remains to Thee to suffer of Thy passion, that Thou mayest complete in Thy members even the perfect consummation of Thy body, so that being full of Thee, it may no longer be that I live and suffer, but that it may be Thou that livest and sufferest in me, O my Saviour!

And that thus having some small part in Thy sufferings, Thou wilt fill me entirely with the glory that they have acquired for Thee, in which Thou wilt live with the Father and the Holy Spirit through ages upon ages. So be it.

[Prayer to Ask of God the Proper Use of Sickness, XV](#)

## Saint Thomas More

Mistrust Him, Meg, I will not, though I feel myself faint. Yea, though I should feel my fear even at the point to overthrow me too, yet shall I remember how St Peter with a blast of wind began to sink for his faint faith, and shall so as he did, call upon Christ and pray Him to help.

Nothing can come but that which God wills. And I make myself very sure that whatever that be, seem it never so bad in sight, it shall indeed be best.

[In a letter to his daughter, Margaret](#)

## Blessed Charles de Foucauld

Father,  
I abandon myself into your hands;  
do with me what you will.  
Whatever you may do, I thank you:  
I am ready for all, I accept all.

Let only your will be done in me,  
and in all your creatures -  
I wish no more than this, O Lord.

Into your hands I commend my soul:  
I offer it to you with all the love of my heart,  
for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself,  
to surrender myself into your hands without reserve,  
and with boundless confidence,  
for you are my Father.

## Saint Pio of Pietrelcensa (Padre Pio)

O Lord, we ask for a boundless confidence and trust in Your divine mercy, and the courage to accept the crosses and sufferings which bring immense goodness to our souls and that of Your Church. Help us to love You with a pure and contrite heart, and to humble ourselves beneath Your cross, as we climb the mountain of holiness, carrying our cross that leads to heavenly glory. May we receive You with great faith and love in Holy Communion, and allow You to act in us, as You desire, for Your greater glory. O Jesus, most adorable heart and eternal fountain of Divine Love, may our prayer find favour before the Divine Majesty of Your Heavenly Father. Amen.

## Blessed Columba Marmion OSB

Make of them [my sufferings] an occasion for my salvation and my conversion. Let me henceforth desire health and life only to employ them and end them for thee, with thee, and in thee. I ask of thee neither health, nor sickness, nor life, nor death; but that thou wilt dispose of my health and my sickness, my life and my death, for thy glory, for my salvation, and for the utility of the Church and of thy saints, of whom I hope by thy grace to form a part. Thou alone knowest what is most expedient for me: thou art the sovereign master, do what thou wilt. Give to me, take from me; but conform my will to thine; and grant that in humble and perfect submission and in holy confidence, I may be disposed to receive the orders of thy eternal providence, and that I may adore alike all that comes to me from thee.

...[H]oly abandonment is one of the purest and most absolute forms of love; it is the height of love; it is love giving to God, unreservedly, our whole being, with all its energies and activities in order that we may be a veritable holocaust to God: when the spirit of abandonment to God animates a monk's [a Christian's] whole life, that monk [Christian] has attained holiness. What in fact is holiness? It is substantially the conformity of all our being to God; it is the amen said by the whole being and its faculties to all the rights of God; it is the fiat full of love, whereby the whole creature responds, unceasingly and unfalteringly, to all the divine will: and that which causes us to say this amen, to utter this fiat, that which surrenders, in a perfect donation, the whole being to God is the spirit of abandonment, a spirit which is the sum total of faith, confidence and love.

“And going out they found a man of Cyrene, named Simon, him they forced to take up His Cross.” Jesus is exhausted. Although He be the Almighty, He wills that His sacred humanity, laden with all the sins of the world, shall feel the weight of justice and expiation. But He wants us to help Him carry His Cross. Simon represents us all, and Christ asks all of us to share in His sufferings; we are His disciples only upon this condition: “If any man will come after Me, let him ... take up his cross, and follow Me.” The Father has decreed that a share of sorrow shall be left to His Son's mystical body, that a portion of expiation shall be borne by His members: *Adimplebo ea quae desunt passionum Christi in carne mea pro corpore ejus, quod est Ecclesia.* Jesus wills it likewise and it was in order to signify this Divine decree that He accepted the help of the Cyrenean.

In: [Christ in His Mysteries](#)

## Caryll Houselander

Very often, as people die, they are little children again, calling to their mothers to come to them in this strange darkness; thus it is that many fulfil the condition for entering the kingdom of Heaven. Suffering their desolation with the child's undiluted capacity for suffering but with death robbed of its terror by the child's capacity for perfect trust.

In: [The Reed of God](#)



### Reflections

Some of the reflections are from the Bible, others come from experts in spiritual matters, like the saints or great spiritual writers. Yet others are from people who are experts in suffering.

## Olivier Clement

Christ reveals Himself fully to unbelievers at the moment of their death, flooding them with sweetness and splendour. Doubtless He has to wait about through years of hardening and spiritual insensitivity before He can rediscover the vulnerable and astonished child... Little by little, through the tears there comes a smile, something familiar to the child, but forgotten by the adult.

## Saint Francis de Sales

Let us often say: "Everything passes, and after the few days of this mortal life, an infinite eternity will come." Little does it matter whether we have conveniences or inconveniences here, provided that for all eternity we are happy.

## Saint Therese of Lisieux

Lord, in your eyes time is as nothing, a day as a thousand years. Thus You can prepare me in a single moment to appear before You.

## Saint John Chrysostom

Let no one fear death: The Saviour's death has set us free. When it held Him chained, He struck it down. When He descended to Hell, He plundered it.

In: A Paschal Homily

## Saint Claude de la Colombiere

Since I have been ill I have learned that we cling to ourselves with many imperceptible threads, and if God did not free us from them we should never do so ourselves: we do not even see them. Illness was a thing absolutely necessary for me; without it I do not know what I should have become. I am sure it is one of the greatest mercies God has shown me. If only I had profited by it, it would have sanctified me.

Spiritual Notes 1674

## Dom Paul Delatte OSB

There will be incomparable advantages in this meeting with the Lord: on that day we will be true...How much illusion in our lives is there? We can consult and ask questions on this subject, but aren't there certain unrecognized, unknown elements in the depths of our heart? Isn't there a little posing, and as a result of external pressures, aren't there some deep-seated inaccuracies we do not succeed in getting rid of during our life? It is only by tranquil self-abandonment into the hands of the Lord and of authority, it is only by perfect obedience that we will succeed in eliminating all kinds of posing, of inaccuracy, of illusion; an infinitesimal trace of it may remain in the soul, but that will correct itself. There are some who during their life are never what they are; the illusion within them is such that it persists until the moment of their death, and includes it. I believe the judgment of God was created

exactly in order to make us absolutely true, absolutely accurate; on that day we shall stand in the truth of our being.

Death, accepted in all its vulgar aspects, death accepted thus, is certainly an act of perfect charity. I believe in my soul and my conscience that death accepted joyfully, with a general tranquillity in the will of the Lord, cleanses our soul like a Solemn Profession; nothing, absolutely nothing, is left; we have given everything. Until then we have given promises; it is easy to give one's life imaginarily, allegorically, by promise; to give one's life in reality is something else. To give one's life in that way, to abandon oneself tranquilly into the hands of the Lord, to accept all the circumstances of death, whatever they may be; I believe that this is an act of perfect charity and that, in the soul that joyfully abandons itself into the hands of the Lord, there remains absolutely nothing except what the Lord has given it: faith, hope, charity, the gift of self-abandonment.

[Retreat, 1894](#)

Death, It isn't an event, an accident. Eternal life is completely independent of death. Eternal life has already begun for us. As soon as there is no separation, no dissociation between God and the soul, what can it matter to see our prison of clay fall away? Eternal life, that is to say the true life of the soul with God, is independent of physical life, and does not notice the shock we call death. God and the soul do not notice it. It is something that does not make a stir, for, since God and the soul are together and cannot be separated by anything, God holding the soul close, the soul embracing God, God belonging to the soul, the soul belonging to God, what does all the rest matter? If the foundation of eternal life is a total belonging of the soul to God, of God to the soul, if nothing can break the continuity of that essential kiss, the rest counts for nothing... It is precisely because we have entered into the depths, into the intimacy and tenderness of this life of the Lord, that there is no longer any death for us, simply eternal life, which has already begun now.

The soul withdraws gently; external things enter into the mist of a sort of eclipse for it; it feels drawn elsewhere, it becomes aware of an infinite fatigue.... And then it goes by an unknown way toward God. Don't hold on to it, don't try to bring it back; it is already closer to God than to creation. Leave it alone to follow its path. This is not the time to make it attend to earthly things. Leave it. The hour has come when the Lord will loose its bonds. It will be quite simple. Let the Lord just show Himself, He Who, until this hour, has remained unnoticed in the inner sanctuary He created for Himself within us by baptism. Let Him show Himself, and it will be all over! The soul will be His alone, in His arms, for ever.

[Conferences on the Spiritual Life, 1899](#)

Death is, for me, a region of tenderness and confidence, the region of the filial spirit par excellence.... With my baptism alone, I should have gone to God with confidence, as to a Father, to a Mother; and in fact I am going to Him with my soul entirely bathed with, penetrated by the beauty and the Blood of His Son. The soul, when it has passed through death, does not cease to bear God within it; death does not change anything in our relationship with God.

[Conferences on the Spiritual Life](#)

## Saint Gertrude of Helfta

...She spent an almost sleepless night. This made her so weak that, all her strength failing, she offered that weakness to the Lord, according to her usual custom, to His eternal glory and for the salvation of the whole world.

As she saw the words of the prayer for sleep He taught her, it seemed to her as though they were so many steps ascending to bring her close to the Lord. Then the Lord showed her at His right side a very lovely sitting place that had been prepared there, saying to her, "Come, my chosen one, repose on my heart and see how my un-resting love may be your rest."

While she was thus sweetly reclining on the Lord's heart, source of all sweetness, she could distinctly hear its most sweet beating. She said to the Lord: "O my sweetest love, what are these heartbeats saying to me now?" "They are saying this, that when someone who is tired and destitute of strength through keeping vigil prays to me that I might give him rest for my glory and to restore his strength, and I do not grant this, then, if he takes hold of patience and humbly bears his weakness, I shall the more graciously accept that from him."

### Prayer

By the most tranquil sweetness in which You have reposed from all eternity in the bosom of God the Father, and by the loveliest rest that You took in the womb of the Virgin, Your Mother, where You stayed quietly for nine months, and the most glad delight You deign to find in all souls that love You, I pray You, most merciful God, not for my convenience but for Your eternal glory, deign to grant me some rest so that my wearied limbs may recover their strength.

In: [The Herald of Divine Love](#)

## Abbess Cecile Bruyere OSB

Death seems to me to be the easiest, the simplest of all the acts of our life: the most complete and the most joyful gift of ourselves to God. Doesn't a child fall asleep with confidence in its father's arms, even if it has offended him? Isn't it simpler to let God sort out our lives than to rack our brains?

## Dom Prosper Gueranger OSB

One must admit that it is a great joy to be a Christian! For thus we depart to go to God, and our departure, although it causes our friends great sorrow because it will be a long time before they see us again, does not break their hearts. It is a farewell, but a farewell until we meet again.... Still, death is bitter, and still the days are long once we are left alone, and whoever has no tears is not beloved by God. There is one nature that God has made and that He desires, and one nature that sin has made and that must be sacrificed to God. The world knows only the second, because its heart is of clay, but Christians can, and must, know the other, because they desire all that God desires... How many millions of heartbroken souls during the last six thousand years have sought peace and courage in the thought of the One Who separates only to unite eternally; and look and see whether



the waters of this consoling river are less abundant or less pure for all that. Far from it. God reveals to us, in sorrow, one of His adorable faces, which He has no need to show us when everything smiles for us. Blessed are those who suffer! Blessed are those who weep! That is what He said; and in saying it, in guaranteeing it with His divine Word, He was thinking of you, He said it for you and for all who were to weep and suffer in this world where He suffered and wept Himself.

[Letter to Madame Swetchine, 1833](#)

## John W. Kiser

Brother Pierre had left Atlas in 1951 to found a Cistercian Monastery in his native Cameroon. Before he died, Br. Pierre described his cancer as ‘his last and blessed calling, for life is given to man so that, little by little, he can get accustomed to God, and at the end feel himself at home, immersed in God.’

[In: The Monks of Tibhirine](#)

## Guido Gezelle

Fetch me, raise me up!  
 Undo my earthly bonds;  
 Tear me by the roots!  
 Transplant me... let me go...  
 Let me hasten to where Summer reigns  
 And glorious Sunlight shines.

## Andrew Robinson

O Lord, my God, I thank you and praise you for the intensity of despair and love which I have experienced over the last few days. I thank you for the hope and the strength to cope with my small sufferings, and with being in the presence of great suffering. O God, have mercy on me a sinful and weak man. My inadequacy, in the face of the cross, is truly apparent, and above all I ask for your grace and mercy in this respect.

“O Lord, I cried to you for help and you, my God, have healed me.”

I trust and hope in you, my God. I pray, Lord, that you will come to my aid, that you will heal me, that I may know true happiness and joy with you and be in perfect harmony with your love. Heal me, Lord, heal me! That I may, in union with the angels and saints, recognise and praise your name for ever. Pour out your love, too, on your children, Lord, that we may sing together of your love for us, now and forever. Amen

“Heal me, Lord, that I may be at one with you, that either way I may accept suffering for love of you and neighbour, with peace and joy. As I continue on my journey to you, I feel at times that this prayer is being answered more and more, not in a smooth progression, but with lots of ups and downs. Keep me with you, Lord, that I may ‘walk the walk, for without you I am lost. I ask this in the name of your Son who lights up the path and leads me on as the example to follow and the friend to be with.”

My illness has played a substantial part in my journey to God, to peace and to freedom. The journey is by no means easy, but when you come towards the light at the end of the tunnel, and you feel its warmth, you taste its peace and freedom, you hear the noise of the crowds of angels cheering you on in praise of God, who draws us to the light.

As you get closer and closer to the finish line you feel the exhilaration, you begin to smile and shed a tear of joy, one final push and you cross the line. You enter that light in all its glory... Death is that moment of transition when, please God, I will be fully reunited to the Father and enter into that peace, freedom and happiness which I have tasted in this life, because God has made that which was impossible for me, possible.

In: [Tears at Night. Joy at Dawn. Journal of a Dying Seminarian](#)

## Janet Erskine Stuart

These thoughts came to me about your great journey, and I thought I would write them, for I am afraid of not saying them quite steadily.

Supposing that when you were small, say ten or twelve, you had been told that you were going to Rome, alone; much as you would have loved to go to Rome, yet the thought of picking your way across Europe by yourself would have given you a kind of, *saisissement*, and you would have wondered how you would manage a hundred details of it- getting tickets, on the sea, at the frontiers, among strangers, in long tunnels, not sure of the language, etc., etc., and yet all the time you would be glad to go.

And then, if someone had said to you that you had not understood the message, that it was that you were to go to Rome alone with your Father-how the whole thing would have cleared up and become lovely, and to everything that came into your mind you would answer: 'Father will see about it.' It is exactly like that.

God will see to everything, everything, and you have only to *vous laisser faire*, leave everything to His forethought and care, and think only of the loveliness of it.

In: [The Life and Letters of Janet Erskine Stuart by Maud Monahan](#)



### Acknowledgement

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