

PRAYERS
Relating to Dementia

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1

Lord,
In weakness or in strength
We bear your image.
We pray for those we love
who now live in a land of shadows,
where the light of memory is dimmed,
where the familiar lies unknown,
where the beloved become as strangers.
Hold them in your everlasting arms,
and grant to those who care
 a strength to serve
 a patience to persevere,
 a love to last,
 and a peace that passes human understanding.
Hold us in your everlasting arms,
today and for all eternity;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

2

For I am persuaded that neither height nor depth – nor anything else in the whole of creation, is able to separate us from the love of God.

So help me Lord, when the confusions and contradictions of dementia seem to threaten that persuasion; when the glorious intricacies of our brain seem to develop minds and directions of their own.

Strengthen our belief that each person is precious in your sight, no matter how strong or weak, healthy or sick, remembering or forgetful.

For nothing can separate us from your love.

3

“Remember now thy creator”
- if only all people could!

How do those whose hold on the past is slipping maintain a sense of belonging?

The truth is that our faith depends not upon us remembering you but upon you remembering us.

For those who wander from the pathway,

we rely upon the belief that there is nowhere we can travel to which is beyond your presence.

For all who rant and rave,

for all who lash out at others,

for all who step beyond our sense of what is acceptable,

we ask your blessing.

For all who sink into depression,

or are overwhelmed by a sense of grief,

we ask your peace.

“Remember now thy children”

– how good that you do!

4

Just as I am I come.

This is me Lord,

**I hope you can remember who I am
because I can't always put a name or face to me.**

This is me Lord,

**I hope you know what you are doing
because I can't always,
either for you or for me.**

This is me Lord,

**I hope you remember me
just as I am.**

**"Just as I am, though toss'd about
with many a conflict, many a doubt.
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come."**

5

**Despised and rejected,
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,
betrayed, falsely accused, marginalised, mocked and taken away to die.**

**Lord, you have been through it all
and that is why
I can bring my breaking heart to you,
for you understand,
and you understand
when I feel and think
that God has abandoned me.**

**"Be near me Lord Jesus
I ask you to stay
Close by me for ever
And love me, always."**

6

**Open my ears that I may hear
Open my eyes that I may see
Open my heart that I may have com passion
Open my mind that I may have understanding
Open my hands that I may touch
Open my arms that I may embrace
Open my imagination that I may try new things,
then Lord,
Open my mouth that I may speak**

7

**Lord, you will understand the grief of Mary
as she watched your pain and sadness
as your life drained away.
Be close to all who watch as
illness relentlessly saps the vitality and life
from those for whom they care.
In those shared experiences of caring and being cared for,
may there be also
the shared experiences of your presence
and your promises of peace.**

8

Questions questions questions
Lord there are so many questions
and so few answers.
And yet, within this crazy, frenzied situation
where everything seems to be going wrong
there may be moments of peace
and the emergence of an answer.
Not an answer to the questions that I ask
but to the questions I don't ask.
 All will be well
 All will be well
 All will be ultimately well
I didn't know that
I didn't ask that
and yet I dare to believe it.

9

Lord, you have placed us
in a world full of mystery and beauty,
a world in which conflict and violence
carelessness and pain
 so often hide your presence.
Help us to be sensitive to our inner being,
to recognise something of the awe
 of being human.
We give thanks for the religious traditions which seek to communicate something of you
and of your presence.
Help us to walk the way of faithfulness
whether we are in the light or in the shadows, with alert minds or experiencing the
depths of confusion.
May there always be those around us who can recognise and cherish our innermost
being;
Open our eyes and hearts
that we may recognise the same in others,
and in that sacred space, see something of you.

10

God was in Christ,
reconciling the world to himself.
May God also be in us,
continuing that work of reconciliation.
May we see Christ in people with dementia
as they seek to reconcile
their fragmenting understanding
with all the confusing activities
of the world around them.

11

Lord, as I move into an uncertain future
provide me with those who can be the
Christ-light for me.
Enfold me within the worshipping community
and help me to rest in the faith that
although I may well forget you,
your love will never allow you to forget me.
Thank you, for that good news, that Gospel message which will sustain my inner being,
even though I may be unable to remember
from whom such love and mercy flow.

12

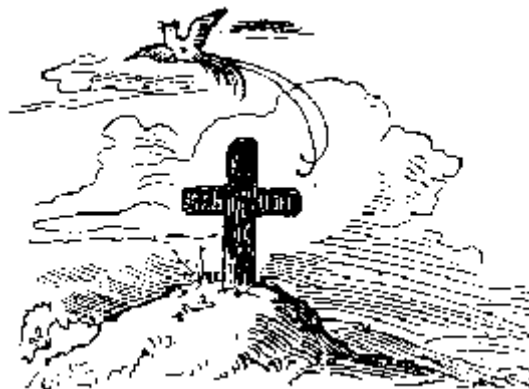
I am no longer my own but yours.
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing, put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you or laid aside for you,
exalted for you or brought low for you;
let me be full, let me be empty,
let me have all things, let me have nothing;
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
you are mine and I am yours
So be it.
And the covenant made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven.

13

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide
The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O thou who changest not, abide with me.

Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes
Shine through the gloom
and point me to the skies.
Heaven's morning breaks,
and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.



14

Lord, as we hold before you
people with dementia
We are confronted by mystery and sadness,
by ambiguity and confusion.
We pray for all who are engaged in research
looking for ways to prevent or slow down this condition, and
We pray for all who seek to provide
imaginative and creative patterns and structures of caring.
May all who live with this disability
find that they are understood and supported,
cherished and cared for, and
may those who look on,
and endeavour to stand alongside them,
find encouragement and strength.
We give you thanks that people with dementia
remain accepted and loved by you, and
We ask that their souls may be
nourished and enlightened by the
presence and power of your Spirit.

15

We'll give a voice
to those who have not spoken
We'll find the words
for those whose lips are sealed,
We'll make the tunes
for those who sing no longer
Vibrating love alive in every heart.
We'll share our joy
with those who still are weeping
Chant hymns of strength
for hearts that break in grief
We'll leap and dance the resurrection story
Including all within the circles of our love.

16

O Lord, support us all the day long of this troublous life, until the shades lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over and our work is done. Then Lord, in thy mercy, grant us safe lodging, a holy rest and peace at the last; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

17

I asked God for strength
that I might achieve;
I was made weak
that I might humbly learn to obey.
I asked for help
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 all things
that I might enjoy life;
I was given life
that I might enjoy all things.
I was given nothing
that I asked for;
But everything that I had hoped for.
Despite myself,
my prayers were answered;
I am among all (wo)men the most richly blessed.

Bibliography

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- 2 Goldsmith M. **In a Strange Land** pg .37 4M Publications 2004
- 3 Goldsmith M op cit pg.49
- 4 Goldsmith M op cit pg.72 - based on the hymn by Charlotte Elliott (1789-1871)
- 5 Goldsmith M op cit pg. 82 - From the hymn 'Away in a manger' probably by John Thomas McFarland (1851-1913)
- 6 Goldsmith M op cit pg.98
- 7 Goldsmith M op cit pg.120
- 8 Goldsmith M op cit pg 136
- 9 Goldsmith M op cit pg 149
- 10 Goldsmith M op cit pg 176
- 11 Goldsmith M op cit pg 176
- 12 Covenant Prayer of the Methodist Church
- 13 Henry F Lyte, 1874
- 14 Goldsmith M op cit pg 208
- 15 June Boyce-Tillman
- 16 From the Book of Common Prayer
- 17 Christine Boden used this adaptation of a prayer on the dedication page of her book *Who will I be when I die?*

POEMS

The following is a selection of poems that we have found suitable:

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