

**PWP Synod Gathering Responsive Reading
Prayer of St Francis of Assisi**

Written by Connie Jorgensen from Indianola, Iowa, for this Gathering, 2016

**Lord, make me an instrument of Thy
peace.**

Lord, I mean, really use me.
Remove discord from my thought life.
Given to be right or kind—help me
always choose kind,
As discord only brings chaos, not the
peace we seek.

**Where there is hatred, let me sow
love.**

Lord, you have taught us,
That anger in our hearts,
Is as harmful to the soul as murder.
Hatred is deadly to me and others.

Where there is injury, pardon.

have I had my feelings hurt?
Of course—many times.
Sometimes my own thoughts cause me
injury.
Un-forgiveness harms my soul as well
as others.

Where there is error, the truth.

Help me not to turn a blind eye
To the many needs in our world.
Simply put—if there are wrongs,
Help me with courage to make them
right.

Where there is doubt, the faith.

Thank you, God, for doubt.
If everything were set in stone,
There would be no need for faith.
Faith strengthens me and pleases You.

Where there is despair, hope.

Having a bad day—week—year?
What we are experiencing is only
temporary.
Maybe we have looked away from
Christ.
Return our gaze and hope will return.

Where there is darkness, light.

Christ is the light of the world.
We may have Christ in our heart,
But if we keep the shades pulled,
His light is not allowed to shine on
others.

Where there is sadness, joy.

No matter how deep my sadness,
Be it pain, betrayal, emptiness, or loss,
The only reason I have ever felt
joylessness,
Is when I have turned my face away
from the Lord.

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.**

In other words, Lord.
Help me put you and others first,
And put myself last
So that I may truly glorify You.
In Christ's name---Amen

YOU ARE SPECIAL IN GOD'S EYES

"Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Habakkuk 3:18

A well-known speaker started off his seminar by holding up a \$20 bill. In the room of 200, he asked, "Who would like this \$20 bill?" Hands started going up.

He said, "I am going to give this \$20 to one of you but first, let me do this."

He proceeded to crumple the dollar bill up. He then asked, "Who still wants it?" Still the hands were up in the air. "Well," he replied, "What if I do this?" And he dropped it on the ground and started to grind it into the floor with his shoe. He picked it up, now all crumpled and dirty. "Now who still wants it?" Still the hands went into the air.

"My friends, you have all learned a very valuable lesson. No matter what I did to the money, you still wanted it because it did not decrease in value. It was still worth \$20.

Many times in our lives, we are dropped, crumpled, and ground into the dirt by the decisions we make and the circumstances that come our way. We feel as though we are worthless. But no matter what has happened or what will happen, you will never lose your value in God's eyes. To Him, dirty or clean, crumpled or finely creased, you are still priceless to Him.

Psalm 17:8 states that God will keep us, "as the apple of His eye."

To the world, you may just be somebody...but to somebody, you may be the world

UNFOLDING THE ROSE

A young, new preacher was walking with an older, more seasoned preacher in the garden one day and feeling a bit insecure about what God had for him to do, he was inquiring of the older preacher. The older preacher walked up to a rosebush and handed the young preacher a rosebud and told him to open it without tearing off any petals.

The young preacher looked in disbelief at the older preacher and was trying to figure out what a rosebud could possibly have to do with his wanting to know the WILL OF GOD for his life and for his ministry. Because of his high respect for the older preacher, he proceeded to TRY to unfold the rose, while keeping every petal intact...It wasn't long before he realized how impossible it was to do so. Noticing the younger preacher's inability to unfold the rosebud while keeping it intact, the older preacher began to recite the following poem...

UNFOLDING THE ROSE POEM

It is only a tiny rosebud,
A flower of God's design;
But I cannot unfold the petals
With these clumsy hands of mine.

The secret of unfolding flowers
Is not known to such as I.
GOD opens this flower so sweetly,
When in my hands they die.

If I cannot unfold a rosebud,
This flower of God's design,
Then how can I have the wisdom
To unfold this life of mine?

So I'll trust in Him for leading
Each moment of my day.
I will look to him for His guidance
Each step of the pilgrim way.

The pathway that lies before me,
Only my Heavenly Father knows.
I'll trust Him to unfold the moments,
Just as He unfolds the rose.

Walking With Jesus

The Bible tells us of the travels of Jesus and His followers. Traveling with Jesus was walking, except for brief periods by boat,

His early travels were to many villages and towns clustered near the Sea of Galilee. Place with the familiar names of Nazareth, Căna, Capernaum, and Bethsaida. Jesus spent much of His life in Nazareth. The province of Galilee would compare approximately in size to Turner County where I live.

It would be hard for us to picture what it was like traveling that 60-mile area back and forth in the dust of summer and mud in winter. They wore sandals – no hiking boots! They often slept on the ground with only their cloaks for beds.

In Luke 9:58 Jesus said, “Foxes have dens, and birds have nests; but the Son of Man doesn’t have a place to lay His head.” They were sometimes invited to eat with friends; but on one occasion they were so hungry on a Sabbath morning that they shelled grains of wheat by hand to eat.

Jesus and His followers traveled in great humility, without wordly goods or little shelter from the elements, and always with great caring for humankind. It would have been difficult for most of us to keep up with them!

We can walk with Jesus. We have been given a wonderful travel guide – the Bible. In the New Testament Jesus has provided us with a road map. Just in Matthew alone, we have the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Golden Rule.

Butterfly

A man found the cocoon of a butterfly. One day a small opening appeared; he sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through that little hole. Then it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared as if it had gotten as far as it could and it could go no farther. Then the man decided to help the butterfly, so he took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily. But it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings. The man continued to watch the butterfly because he expected that, at any moment, the wings would enlarge and expand to be able to support the body, which would contract in time. Neither happened! In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings. It never was able to fly.

What the man in his kindness and haste did not understand was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the butterfly to get through the tiny opening were God's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon.

Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our life. If God allowed us to go through our life without any obstacles, it would cripple us. We would not be as strong as what we could have been. And we could never fly.

Prayer: Lord, help us to realize that our struggles have a purpose. Help us get through them and guide us in our daily journeys. Help us remember you are always in control. Amen.

Beware of Terrorist Group in Church

Latest news reports are that five terrorist cell groups have been operating in many of our churches. They have been identified as: Bin Sleepin, Bin Arguin, Bin Fightin, Bin Complainin, and Bin Missin.

Their leader, Satan Bin Workin, trained these groups to destroy the Body of Christ. The plan is to come into the church disguised as Christians and do work within the church to discourage, disrupt, and destroy.

However, there have been reports of a sixth group. A tiny cell known by the name Bin Prayin is actually the only effective counter terrorism force in the church. Unlike other terrorist cells, the Bin Prayin team does not blend in with whoever and whatever comes along.

Bin Prayin does whatever is needed to uplift and encourage the Body of Christ. We have noticed that the Bin Prayin cell group has different characteristics than the others. They have Bin Watchin, Bin Waitin, Bin Fastin, and Bin Longin for their Master, Jesus Christ to return. NO CHURCH IS EXEMPT!

(However, you can spot them if you bin lookin and bin goin.)

* It can be found on line at: valwaldeck.com/beware-of-terrorist-groups-in-church/