

Susan Palo Cherwien gives us these intimate words of remembrance to help individuals and groups raise up to God some of the emotions we are experiencing during the global pandemic. If using with two or more people, the reflection could be read by one person and the prayer by a second person. It would be appropriate to allow some silence between the reflection and the prayer. Ritual actions, such as lighting a candle and speaking the names of loved ones, could be incorporated, as well as personal words of remembrance, and music.

Remembering Those Who Have Gone Before Us

Reflection

Nothing in God's creation
disappears without a trace.

Fall leaves dance down
from branches
return to earth

and become new soil
drawn up into the roots
of the trees,

becoming new branches,
new leaves,
new form.

Everything is becoming,
Becoming new.
"Behold I make all things new,"
says God.

(Rev. 21:5)

Nothing in God's creation
disappears without a trace.

New stars flare into being.
Old stars fade and die,
their energy returning
to the universe in new form.

Nothing in God's creation
disappears without a trace.

The traditional Orthodox icon
of Easter
shows the Risen Christ
straddling the abyss of death
reaching out with wounded hands
to raise Eve,
to raise Adam,
to raise all of humanity
in a resurrection like his.

"Behold, I make all things new,"
says God.

Lives flare into being,
flower, fade,
and return to the earth.

They are held ever
in the hands of the resurrected Christ,
who reaches out in love,
raising them to new life,
new form,
becoming, becoming—
like the leaves in the autumn wood
like the radiant stars
in the night sky.

Prayer

*Creative and Compassionate God,
blessed are you for the seasons of days and of lives,
for the ebb and flow of oceans,
for the daylight and the dusk,
for the spring and the winter
of days and of lives;
implant in us an unshakable awareness
of the beauty
that you have planted in all things that you have made,
implant in us a peaceful trust
in the unceasing love
in which you hold all things together;
that we may in wonder and in love
live out all our blessed days
upon this earth,
grateful, and filled with mercy and courage
for all that lies ahead.
May you with the Christ
and the Spirit
be praised
in all that we think
and speak
and embody
in this precious life.
Amen*

Remembering Those Who Have Gone Before Us: Reflection and Prayer by Susan Palo Cherwien.
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Susan Palo Cherwien gives us these intimate words of gratitude and hope to help individuals and groups raise up to God some of the emotions we are experiencing during the global pandemic. If using with two or more people, the reflection could be read by one person and the prayer by a second person. It would be appropriate to allow some silence between the reflection and the prayer. Ritual elements, such as individuals expressing people and things they are grateful for, or pausing to take notice of the miracles noted in the reflection, could be incorporated, as could music and gesture or dance.

Celebrating the Gift of Life and Its Possibilities with Each New Day

Reflection

Do you ask for miracles?
Look to the dawn.
The earth turns
And once again the light of the sun
shines on our side of the world
A new day begins.
Listen to our breath.
The sun is shining
On the leaves of the trees
And the leaves are breathing
Breathing out oxygen
And our breathing
Takes in the gift from the trees.
Our brain fires
We are alive.
Our eyes open
And we feel the new day
On our magnificent skin.
Do you ask for miracles?
We never give a conscious thought to it
And yet our heart beats
in synchrony with our breathing
And the heart sends
a river of life
pulsing through our bodies
Bringing water
And the salt of the sea
to our whole body.
Our ears awaken
We breathe deeply
Our hearts beat
We arise and sense the dawn.
Every day is a miracle.
Every day is a gift from the Creator.
Every breath is a miracle.
Every heartbeat,
every touch, sound, smell, taste.

O bless the Creator, O my soul.
bless life, bless the dawn.
And all that is within me—
my thoughts, my senses,
my heartbeat, my breathing—
all that is within me,
Bless God's Holy Name.

Prayer

O All-Loving and Vulnerable God,
blessed are you,
for you have created all things in connection to,
and in relationship with,
everything else in this world;
in you all things live and move
and have their being;
you have made us for communion
with all that exists,
our family of the trees, the rocks, the clouds
our family of the animals
our family of all humans;
you have made us for communion
and connection
with all people,
those dear to us, and those unknown,
those embraced by us, and those from whom we turn our face;
draw us into your loving heart, O God,
that we may celebrate with all who celebrate,
and mourn with all who mourn,
blessing you always for the abundance of our daily lives,
blessing you always for the extraordinary companions
you have given us for this journey,
through Christ and your Spirit.
Amen

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