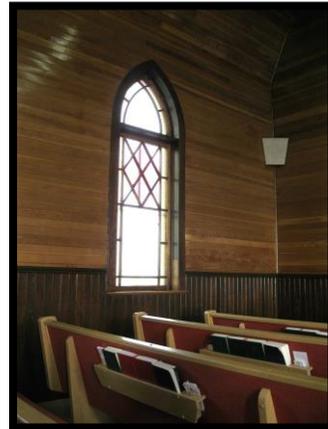


Mental Illness Awareness Week Prayer

The Challenge of Changes

October 3, 2017



As we gather on this National Day of Prayer for Mental Illness Recovery and Understanding, we bring before the Lord all the challenges and changes of our lives. Together, we look to Jesus as we face a world of constant change, holding on to his love each day, finding in Christ strength, light, and consolation.

Any thoughts shared or prayers offered are gifts to the community, not to be discussed, commented on, or shared.

Song: “Change My Heart, O God” (Roby Duke)

Introduction: In the serenity and peace that only the love and touch of Jesus can bring, we welcome you to this prayer service. We gather as people with very diverse lives, and with profound gratitude, we thank God for everyone who prays with us today as we, in our togetherness, more clearly reflect the image of God - the “imago Dei”. Today as we are all confronted with the challenges of a rapidly changing world, we can be encouraged by these words of Pope Francis:

The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness, and loneliness. With Christ, joy is constantly born anew.

Opening Prayer: *Serenity Prayer* (Reinhold Niebuhr) - Full version – pray aloud, in unison

God grant me the serenity
To accept the things, I cannot change;
Courage to change the things I can;
And wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
Taking, as He did, this sinful world
As it is, not as I would have it;
Trusting that He will make all things right
If I surrender to His Will;
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life
And supremely happy with Him
Forever and ever in the next.
Amen.

Reflection: What can I change? What must I accept? How do I know the difference?

Each day, challenges – sometimes seemingly insurmountable – come to us. Sometimes, steps must be taken to change the situation. Sometimes, when things seem about to fall apart, there are no steps that can be taken. Sometimes, everything around us is in a state of flux, constantly changing, topsy-turvy, from day to day or even from one minute to the next.

What challenges come your way – and how do you change or accept them?

(A period of quiet meditation, followed if desired by an invitation for individuals to respond to the question. This should be done in an atmosphere of respect, so that each person should have a minute or so to speak, and that what is shared is to be treated as a gift to the group, without comment or discussion.)

(Allow ample time.)

Summary: As we come together today we see and feel the chaos of change all around us. Physical, mental, emotion pain, the severe weather, confrontational politics, violence in our streets, and social injustice touches all of us in some way. Yet Jesus is unchanged. In the Letter to the Hebrews, we are assured: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (13:8). Even as our lives change, Jesus is unchanged, in His love for us, in His mercy for us and in His promise to always be with us. No matter what changes we face, we only need to trust in Jesus.

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 43:1-2, 4, 19

Intercessions: *Bringing together all our needs and concerns, let us pray:*

Response: "Lord, hear our prayer"

For all humanity, that God may be close in moments of sadness, loneliness, fear, anxiety, and mistrust, blessing all with comfort, strength, and inspiration, let us pray to the Lord.

For all who are in despair, struggling with difficult thoughts that come with depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, or delusions, that they may find hope and clarity, let us pray to the Lord.

For all whose lives are shattered by violence, suicide, or the dangers of stigma, unrealistic fear, and hatred, that they may find compassionate understanding and love, let us pray to the Lord.

And for those concerns we hold in the silence of our hearts ... Lord hear our prayer [*or invitation may be given for intercessions to be prayed aloud*]
(allow plenty of time).

And now let us we join together in the prayer our Lord Jesus taught us ...

The Our Father

Closing Song: "Prayer of St. Francis" (Sebastian Temple)



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