

# **The Blessings Book**

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*The Blessings Book is designed to invite you & your family to begin the holidays with a blessing. We have so much to be thankful for in our lives, and the blessings we cherish in our lives remind us of the many diverse ways we express our thankfulness. We are thankful to God for family and for the love of friends and the inclusion of his light in our lives. Blessings to you and yours throughout this holiday season; and may the Blessings Book find a place in the coming year for the comfort that it may bring as well as the strength to help us in times of need.*

### **Prayer in Time of Sorrow**

*May you see God's light on the path ahead  
When the road you walk is dark.  
May you always hear,  
Even in your hour of sorrow,  
The gentle singing of the lark.  
When times are hard may hardness  
Never turn your heart to stone,  
May you always remember  
When the shadows fall-  
You do not walk alone.*

### **A Blessings Sampler**

Here is a sampling for those who may not have a “blessing” as a part of their family heritage (and maybe for some who want to add a new one):

**Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe, for you give us food to sustain our lives and make our hearts glad. Amen.**

**Bless us, O Lord, and these your gifts which we are about to receive from your goodness, through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above, then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord, for all God’s love. Amen.**

**Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, and let these gifts to us be blessed. Amen.**

**For health and strength and daily food, we praise your name, O Lord. Amen.**

**Give us grateful hearts, O God, for all your mercies, and make us mindful of the needs of others; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

God is great and good.

From Pastor John DeBevoise, PCPC  
Prayers reprinted from Book of Common Worship

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**A Prayer of Thanksgiving**  
**From President Abraham Lincoln**

Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the field of peaceful industry to the national defense have not arrested the plow, the shuttle, or the ship; the ax has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than theretofore. Population has steadily increased notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege, and the battlefield, and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom.

No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.

It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow-citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, [orphans](#), mourners, or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it, as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes, to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility, and union.

By the President: Abraham Lincoln  
William H. Seward, Secretary of State.

**The Serenity Prayer**  
**From Reinhold Niebuhr**

*God grant me the courage to face the things I can change, the serenity to accept those things that I cannot and the wisdom to always know the difference.*

Reinhold Niebuhr is the undisputed author of the Serenity Prayer. He is quoted in a 1950 interview regarding the origins of the prayer, saying in a humble manner:

*“..the prayer may have been spooking around for years, even centuries, but I don’t think so. I honestly do believe I wrote it myself.”*

Although the version printed above has come to be associated with Alcoholics Anonymous, Niebuhr had a longer version that was published dating from the 1930’s. Here is the longer version of the Serenity Prayer from Reinhold Niebuhr:

*God, give me grace to accept with serenity  
the things that cannot be changed,  
Courage to change the things  
which should be changed,  
and the Wisdom to distinguish  
the one from the other.  
Living one day at a time,  
Enjoying one moment at a time,  
Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,  
Taking, as Jesus did,  
This sinful world as it is,  
Not as I would have it,  
Trusting that You will make all things right,  
If I surrender to Your will,  
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life,  
And supremely happy with You forever in the next.  
Amen.*

**Bill Wallof's**  
**Prayer out of Egypt**

Lord Jesus, our Emmanuel Savior, you were born this happy morning. You came bringing light and life into our darkness. You came to your own people but they could find no room for you in their houses or hearts. Before you were a few days old your family became refugees fleeing before Herod's brutal paranoia. The Prince of Peace was hailed with violent rejection.

You walked the dusty roads of Galilee and Judea healing the sick, teaching the truth about your Father. You celebrated God's grace with people the Temple found unclean. Those in religious authority called you a drunkard and a glutton.

Ultimately, out of obedience, you allowed yourself to be edged out of this world on a cross alone and misunderstood.

No wonder you have a special place in your heart for the poor and the vulnerable. You were one of them. Today we see you in the faces of the least among men.

We pray for the world you love so. We pray that your presence be with those who this night will bring fear, not joy; for soldiers at war, for children who go to bed hungry and for parents who find themselves helpless to provide, for people whose lives have been shattered by economic forces beyond their control, for the sick in mind and body.

We pray for those souls who are hungry for something better than what this world can provide, for people who feel they need to be in control because of some past hurt or because they have never learned to trust. Teach us all how to trust and grant us faith that is genuine and never arrogant or exclusive. You know O Lord that we all stand in need of your mercy.

So tonight we pray for your presence. May your Spirit hover over this world of such great need. Sustain us by resurrection power that brings forth life out of death. May your manger and your cross draw us closer to you that we might find peace for our souls.

We pray our prayers in the name of the one who came that we might have life in all its abundance, Jesus Christ our Lord whose birth we celebrate

Tonight. Amen

**From Bill Wallof,  
Dean of the Chapel Emeritus**

## Forever Young

May God bless and keep you always,  
May your wishes all come true,  
May you always do for others  
And let others do for you.  
May you build a ladder to the stars  
And climb on every rung,  
May you stay forever young,  
May you grow up to be righteous,  
May you grow up to be true,  
May you always know the truth  
And see the lights surrounding you.  
May you always be courageous,  
Stand upright and be strong,  
May you stay forever young,  
May your hands always be busy,  
May your feet always be swift,  
May you have a strong foundation  
When the winds of changes shift.  
May your heart always be joyful,  
May your song always be sung,  
May you stay forever young,

-Bob Dylan

*Submitted by Mary L Johnson*

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*Does anyone ask the blessing at your Thanksgiving meals?...This seems to me a nice Christian family tradition.*

*The following is a Thanksgiving Prayer that I like. Peter Marshall was the author.*

*- John DeBevoise*

***A Family Grace: Thanksgiving Dinner***

***Father, we around this table thank Thee:***

***For thy great gift of life,***

***That Thy love for us is not dependent upon any worthiness of ours,***

***For good health,***

***That we know neither hunger nor want,***

***For warm clothes to wear,***

***For those who love us best,***

***For having often chased away dark clouds,***

***For the zest of living,***

***For an answered prayer,***

***For kindly providences that have preserved us from danger and harm..***

We thank Thee that still we live in a land bountifully able to supply all our needs, a land which still by Thy Providence knows peace, whose skies are not darkened by the machines of the enemy, whose fields and woodlands are still unblasted by the flames of war, a land with peaceful valleys and smiling meadows still serene.

O help us to appreciate all that we have, to be content with it, to be grateful for it, to be proud of it-not an arrogant pride that boasts, but in a grateful pride that strives to be more worthy.

In Thy name, to whose bounty we owe these blessings spread before us, to Thee we give our gratitude. Amen.

-Peter Marshall

## Irish Blessings

May there always be work for your hands to do.  
May your purse always hold a coin or two.  
May the sun always shine on your window pane.  
May a rainbow be certain to follow each rain.  
May the hand of a friend always be near you.  
May God fill your heart with gladness to cheer you.

### **An Old Irish Blessing**

May love and laughter light your days  
And warm your heart and home.  
May good and faithful friends be yours,  
Wherever you may roam.  
May peace and plenty bless your world  
With joy that long endures  
May all life's passing seasons  
Bring the best to you and yours!

## **Bill Wallof's Christmas Prayer**

Prayer is God's Christmas gift to his people. It is a gift in that it is meant to be beneficial to the one who seeks God in prayer. Historically, prayer has provided clarity in times of confusion, energy to those who are exhausted and sanity when life turns insane. Prayer brings us closer to God's intent for our lives. No wonder Paul writes, "Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ." Note that prayer is much more than asking God for something (petition). It is an avenue for joy and thanksgiving.

Yet it seems to me that for many people, prayer is experienced as "spiritual burden", something we "should" do but don't find time to get around to it. It becomes a matter of "law" rather than "grace". It is characteristic of sin that we turn God's gracious gifts into burden. What is intended to bring life only increases our guilt. Think of what humankind has managed to do with other divine gifts: the environment, human sexuality, nuclear energy, etc. You make your own list. What God intends for our benefit we distort by our sin.

Martin Luther helps me when I find myself "too busy" to pray. He wrote, "I have so much business I cannot get on without spending three hours daily in prayer." Do you begin to see? Prayer is a natural part of our lives that is intended to renew and refuel us for the tasks ahead. Without prayer we will find ourselves running on empty and eventually coming to a stop or crashing. No wonder we find Jesus constantly in prayer as he sought to minister in Galilee and Judea.

Prayer not only energizes us for the tasks ahead, it also renews our minds, bodies and spirits. Something like a vacation, prayer gives us a necessary break. Have you ever thought of praying as a vacation in your day?

I would suggest that one's prayer life can also provide for "play" or "fun" in the most profound sense of the words. It is a time to dance with God in praise and thanksgiving. I have been accused of being deadly serious about prayer. I plead guilty. Part of my "growing up" is learning how to play, to be light hearted, to have fun....Prayer provides a context for the experience of joy.

This Christmas season may we enjoy God and his gift of prayer. "*Joy to the world, the Lord has come.*" - Bill Wallof

## **Prayer from Mother Theresa**

At the end of our lives we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received, how much money we have made or how many great things we have done. We will be judged by: “I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was naked and you clothed me. I was homeless and you took me in.”

**Hungry not only for bread—  
but hungry for love.  
Naked not only for clothing—  
but naked of human dignity and respect.  
Homeless not only for want of a room of bricks—  
but homeless because of rejection.  
This is Christ in distressing disguise.**

Mother Theresa of Calcutta

Lord: Teach us to be a true instrument of thy peace, as the saints that have lived before us, teach us to live our lives with the selflessness and courage of modern-day saints like Mother Theresa. Teach us to walk in the path of righteousness, and not to fear evil as we walk through the valley of the shadows of death. Teach us to think of those who are hungry and those who are homeless. And to see Christ among us in distressing disguise.

And then to **act** as one of Christ’s disciples, as Christ directed us to do.

Amen.

**Blessing on the Feast of St. Francis**

God bless the cow that gives us milk  
God bless the lamb that gives us wool  
God bless the hen that gives us eggs  
God bless the pig that pays the rent  
God bless the horse that we may ride  
God bless the cat that catches mice  
God bless the dog that herds the sheep  
God bless the geese for our feather beds  
God bless the lark for her morning song  
God bless the swan upon the pond.  
God bless all friends of fur and feather  
And St. Francis protect them in all weather.

Bless us oh Lord, You who are  
the peace of all things calm  
the place to hide from harm  
the light that shines in dark  
the heart's eternal spark  
the door that's open wide  
welcoming all to come inside.  
We ask this blessing  
God be willing.

### **Pastor John's Prayer for the Homeless**

Let us remember to pray for each other, pray for our homes, and pray for all those who have no place to call home.

“Dear God, thank you for this house and the home you have built here. Thank you for the dinner table, the beds we tucked our children in, the yard that was mowed and the kitchen floor mopped.

Thank you, God, for your love which has filled life with the laughter and tears, scrapes and bruises, meals and embraces shared under this roof.

We are blessed to have lived here. Comfort those people who have no house and must endure hardships we have never known. Keep them safe and secure in the shelter of your care. Amen.

May God bless your home.

-Reverend John DeBevoise

PCPC

### **Jesus on the subject of Prayer**

Matthew 6:5-15

*And when you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get.”*

## **Prayer for Thanksgiving Day**

Creator God, we give you thanks,  
For the light and the dark.  
For the sun and the moon.  
And for the earth on which we live.  
For the food that we share  
And the people we share it with  
We are thankful.  
For the people who created this meal  
The cooks and the kitchen  
The farmers and field hands  
The truck driver and grocery store workers  
We are thankful  
And for the soil, and sun, and water  
We are thankful.  
For all that is around us  
For all that is to come  
We are thankful.  
May all of these things we have  
Be things we learn to share.  
Amen.

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I am grateful for ancient words that come alive once more.

“Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout O Israel!

I am thankful for the music of the heart  
and for the music of the human voice.

As I praise you this day,

I am grateful for the rich beauty of the songs sung  
and the warm impulses with which I respond.

I will praise your name, O Lord, with a song.

I will magnify you with thanksgiving.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*–Prayer submitted by Nicole Partin*

## **An Advent Blessing**

May...  
the spirit of Christmas which is *Peace*...  
the gladness of Christmas which is *Hope*...  
the adoration of Christmas which is *Joy*...  
and the heart of Christmas which is *Love*...  
be yours now and tomorrow.

## **Blessing for the New Year**

May the new year bring  
The warmth of home and hearth to you.  
The cheer and goodwill of friends to you,  
The hope of a childlike heart to you.  
The joy of a thousand angels to you,  
The love of the Son and God's peace to you.