

Day of Prayer for Dementia

Friday 19th March 2010



“I am very pleased to commend the Day of Prayer for Dementia on 19th March. It is a way of highlighting the daily struggle that many people experience just to keep going on life’s path and it is a good opportunity for us to ask Our Lord to strengthen them on their pilgrimage of faith. It is also a way of encouraging each of us to be a support and understanding friend to those who experience dementia and those who take care of them.”

Archbishop Bernard Longley



A Carer’s Prayer

I felt so angry today, Lord. The disability of my loved one wore me down and I nearly hit her.

I felt the level of my frustration rising; I felt controlled and manipulated; the confusion in my heart was tearing me apart.

I felt overwhelmed by the mixed messages of this awful journey, “do people understand what they do, what they say, or are they the victims of this awful disability?”

Today Lord, I felt a victim. I know Lord, the deep, heart wrenching pain I so often feel in the presence of Kate and today Lord, I wanted to lash out.

I was tired and almost lost control. Once again I felt that my best efforts were not enough. I felt alone and frightened by the intensity of my rage and I almost gave way to my anger.

For so long now, every emotion and feeling has felt crucified by what I see before me, the cup of my patience is ebbing away.

The words, “it is always on your terms” had left my lips before I had censored what I said; But for once, I thanked God for Kate’s deafness. She had not heard my cutting remark. Stripped naked by my shame, I felt my vulnerability as I had failed to respond with love.

The loss of control I was feeling was a tiny mirror image of the loss that she and many with a dementia suffer so many times each day, uncertainty, powerlessness, fear, despair, anguish, then I heard your words, “be angry, but do not sin.”

I drew a breath and quietly walked away.

Please touch us Lord and heal the pain of our breaking hearts.

Dry the tears that are too deep to share with anyone only You.

Pour the oil of Your anointing over our spirits so that through You we may be made whole.

Deepen my trust to depend on You to cope.

Like Your apostle Paul, may I feel the power of Christ over me, that I may respond in love and be an agent of healing to all whom You have called me to serve.

I make this prayer in Your name, O my Lord. Amen.



Care of the elderly

We pray for all who struggle with the care of loved one with a dementia, young or old.
We place their pain, frustration, grief, exhaustion and fear before You.
We place the tears that are shed as a loved one becomes ever more frail into the offertory chalice and pray that these tears may be transformed into a blessing of peace.

A blessing born when one knows that one has faithfully cared each step of the way.
A blessing when they have not walked away when the road was rough, the future uncertain and the pain unbearable.

A blessing for all who hour after hour have kept faith and stayed to keep watch with the suffering Christ, whose courage did not fail when all seemed lost, but loved to their dying breath those who had borne them life.

They will know God's peace to the end of their days.



Gentle Woman

Hail Mary, strong, gentle woman,
divinely chosen to be the mother of God,
divinely chosen as mother of all who suffer,
divinely chosen as mother of all who weep,
divinely chosen to stand and wait, wait, wait,
divinely chosen to witness the crucifixion,
divinely chosen to feel the death of your only Son,
your only Son.

Divinely chosen to receive the broken body of the Christ of God.

Divinely chosen to stand beside all who suffer,
divinely chosen to be with all who are mocked,
divinely chosen to be with all who are humiliated,
divinely chosen to be with all who are put down,
divinely chosen to be with all who are taken down from the cross of dementia.

Divinely chosen to receive their broken bodies,
divinely chosen to receive their broken minds,
divinely chosen to receive their broken spirits,
divinely chosen to present them to God.

Divinely chosen as mother of all,
Divinely chosen.

Divinely begotten daughter of God.

Friendship

Lord, we thank you for all who faithfully visit all affected by a dementia.

We pray in gratitude for the loyalty of friendship,
for moments of joy shared,
for smiles, hugs and laughter knowing that

“A kindly glance gives joy to the heart.” Proverbs. 30

For quiet presence,
for the gift of prayer,
for carer respite,
for words of encouragement and practical tasks undertaken,
for day trips and life time photo albums shared.

We give You thanks for the gift of love which is the elixir of life. May we be a friend to those who need a friend modelling our friendship on Your friendship to all.

All prayers by Sister Siobhan O'Keefe SHJM