

A Mask Prayer

A prayer as I put on my mask:
 Creator,
as I prepare to go into the
 world,
help me to see the sacrament
in the wearing of this cloth -
 let it be "an outward sign
 of an inward grace" -
a tangible and visible way of
 living
love for my neighbours,
 as I love myself.
 Christ,
since my lips will be covered,
 uncover my heart,
that people would see my smile
in the crinkles around my eyes.

Since my voice may be muffled,
help me to speak clearly,
not only with my words,
but with my actions.

 Holy Spirit,
As the elastic touches my ears,
remind me to listen carefully -
 and full of care -
to all those I meet.

May this simple piece of cloth
 be
shield and banner,
and each breath that it holds,
be filled with your love.

 In your Name and
 in that love, I pray.
May it be so. May it be so.

Amen

A Holy Family Prayer

Son of Mary, Son of God,
May we, for whom the heavens have opened
never lose that heavenly vision.

May we, who like the shepherds,
have seen in your birth a new kind of love,
witness to that love in our lives.

Welcome, welcome,
Jesus Christ our infant saviour,
baby who makes every birth holy.

May we, who like the shepherds
have witnessed in the stable a new kind of love,
return to our work with joy.

May we, for whom the heavens have opened
to proclaim that God is with us,
we who have fed on living bread
and drunk the wine of heaven,
go out to be instruments of your peace, day by day.

Parent of all, the child born for us is the Saviour of the world.

May God who made us your children
welcome us into your kingdom,
where Christ is alive and reigns with you now and for ever.

Amen

Adapted from the New Zealand Prayer Book

Celebrating an Eternal Advent

In the first 1200 years of Christianity, the greatest feast was Easter with the high holy days of Holy Week leading up to the celebration of the resurrection of Christ. But in the 13th century, a new person entered the scene: Francis of Assisi felt we didn't need to wait for God to love us through the cross and resurrection. Francis intuited that the whole thing started with incarnate love, and he popularized what we now take for granted as Christmas, which for many became the greater Christian feast.

The Franciscans popularized Christmas. Maybe their intuition was correct. Francis realized that if God had become flesh—taken on materiality, physicality, humanity—then we didn't have to wait for Good Friday and Easter to “solve the problem” of human sin; the problem was solved from the beginning. It makes sense that Christmas became the great celebratory feast of Christians because it basically says that it's good to be human, it's good to be on this earth, it's good to be flesh, it's good to have emotions. We don't need to be ashamed of any of this. God loves matter and physicality. With that insight, it's no wonder Francis went wild over Christmas!

Francis believed that every tree should be decorated with lights to show their true status as God's creations! And that's exactly what we still do 800 years later.

Creator God, may our homes be filled with light and life this Christmas season, to remember that you have filled us, human beings created in your image, with the light of your love.

Amen.

Prayer Adapted from Richard Rohr's website

<https://cac.org/celebrating-an-eternal-advent-2019-12-24/>

A Pastors Prayer For Wash Park UMC

Creator God,
As we inch closer and closer to a day of great celebration,
May we heed the invitation you have offered us.
You came to earth as a vulnerable baby in a humble manger
and died a beaten, vulnerable man on a humble cross.
Between the bookends of humility and vulnerability
You showed us what true, brilliant life looked like.
Your life was filled with service,
kindness, wisdom, and grace for all.
It was a life that shone with the light of our creator,
A light that resides with in all of us.
Christ of grace and mercy,
Let us experience a renewal of this light within us.
This year we have struggled, we have felt pain and loss,
we have mourned.
We pray that we feel your spirit within us and around us,
And let it inspire us to bring your light into the world for
all to experience.
In your name we pray,
Amen.

Written by Rev. Jamielee
for the people of Wash Park UMC