Opinion
Spirituality



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by Christian Mocek

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Mary Oliver, in her poem "Praying," writes:

> It doesn't have to be
>
> the blue iris, it could be
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> weeds in a vacant lot, or a few
>
> small stones; just
>
> pay attention, then patch
>
> a few words together ...

In these difficult days, my prayer is more weeds in a vacant lot than the blue iris. I go on long walks every day to calm the disparate thoughts running around my mind. I'm not surprised I'm more anxious, but I'm often surprised at my inability to say anything at all in these hard times.

But as Oliver writes, "prayer isn't a contest, it's a doorway." And, a little over a month ago in a desperate search for a doorway that would lead to solace from the daily meltdowns, arguments, and hard days with my son, I put a call out to my Facebook friends.

I decided that if I couldn't find the words to pray, maybe others could and I could put them together into something we could all use. I wanted to compile a "Litany for Parents," so I asked my friends to share their prayers with me. Then I enlisted a priest friend of mine, Fr. Anthony Cecil, to help me and my wife, Gillian, compile them into a prayer.

With Father's Day on Sunday, I thought this prayer could be a source of solace in these troubled days.

We paid attention then patched a few words together, as Oliver said to do. And in these days, I wonder if that's something we all must do for ourselves and for our world.

Prayer isn't all we should do, of course. As one who lives deeply in the Benedictine tradition of prayer and work — there is work to be done as well. The work of creating a more just world. The work of creating a more interconnected and equitable society.

But as Father's Day nears, I'm also reminded of the work that must be done in our homes. The work of teaching our children about their shared humanity. The work of loving them the way they should love others. The work of serving them the way they should serve others.

In these hard times, I pray your prayer, even if it’s simply patched together, will be a place to find much-needed comfort and encouragement. I also pray that what you hear will move you to work for justice and for peace in our homes and in our world.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

That I may always be thankful for the gift of my parenthood, *Jesus, grant me this grace.*

That I may enjoy the little moments of each day, *Jesus, grant me this grace.*

That I may always be respectful, patient and kind, *Jesus, grant me this grace.*

That I may not speak or act in anger when I am distressed and tired, but listen to my child, and understand their emotions, *Jesus, grant me this grace.*

That I may be encouraging and uplifting while knowing when to set proper boundaries, *Jesus, grant me this grace.*

That I may readily forgive, *Jesus, grant me this grace.*

That I may be attentive to my child, and not to the distractions that surround me, *Jesus, grant me this grace.*

That I may have strength and courage to treat each day as a fresh start, *Jesus, grant me this grace.*

That I replace my fears with hope, *Jesus, grant me this grace.*

That I may play more and worry less, *Jesus, grant me this grace.*

That I may teach my child to see you in others, *Jesus, grant me this grace.*

That I may see you in my child, *Jesus, grant me this grace.*

That I may teach my child to serve you through serving others, *Jesus, grant me this grace.*

That I may teach my child to serve you through my service to them, *Jesus, grant me this grace.*

That I may teach my child to love you through loving others, *Jesus, grant me this grace.*

That I may teach my child to love you through my love of them, *Jesus, grant me this grace.*

That you will watch over and protect my child, *Jesus, I trust in you.*

That you will give me wisdom when I need it, *Jesus, I trust in you.*

That you will help me be just as you are just, *Jesus, I trust in you.*

That you will help me be merciful as you are merciful, *Jesus, I trust in you.*

That you will help me to love, for you yourself are Love, *Jesus, I trust in you.*

Holy Mary, Mother of Jesus and Our Mother, *pray for us.*

St. Joseph, earthly Father of Jesus and patron of fathers, *pray for us.*

Sts. Joachim and Anne, parents of Mary, patrons of grandparents, *pray for us.*

Sts. Zechariah and Elizabeth, parents of St. John the Baptist, *pray for us.*

St. Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine, *pray for us.*

St. Monica, mother of St. Augustine, patroness of mothers, *pray for us.*

St. Margaret of Cortona, patroness of single parents, *pray for us.*

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, widowed and cared for her children alone, *pray for us.*

St. Gianna Molla, who gave her life so that her child could live, *pray for us.*

Sts. Louis and Zélie Martin, parents of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, *pray for us.*

Let us Pray: O God, who have been pleased to allow me to share in your creative power through parenthood, graciously grant that our home may be a temple of your love, and that, by imitating the example of virtue and charity shown to us in the Holy Family, we, like them, may glorify you in all that we do. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

—Litany by Christian and Gillian Mocek and Fr. Anthony Cecil

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