

EVERY
TEAR
WILL BE
WIPED
AWAY

*prayers for comfort
in times of grief*

Selected and Introduced by

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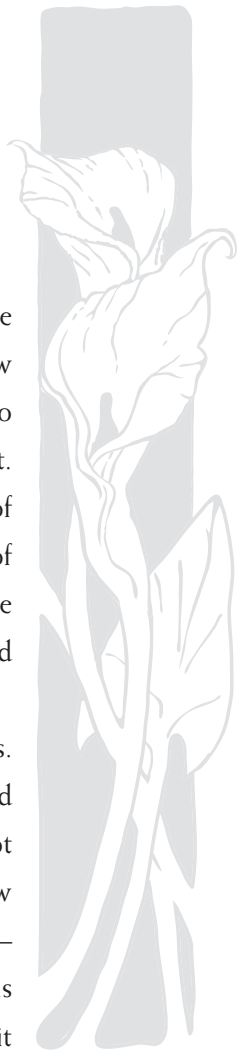
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INTRODUCTION

Living through grief takes courage. When we lose someone we love, everything we know alters dramatically. Because our lives change so significantly, constancy is what we need most. For Christians, faith may be the best source of that constancy. Faith can provide the sense of security that enables us to enter into a dialogue with deep loss, helps us cope with the pain, and in time, even remake our lives.

Getting through feelings of loss is a process. Even as we mourn, we Christians are consoled in our belief that death is only a separation, not an end. Our faith comforts us because we know our beloved dead are given a new beginning—a life more fully experienced with God. This realization does not take away our grief, but it





does provide solace. As our journey continues, it can lead us to a spirit of joyful hope. We can also come to understand that having known our beloved is a gift that will always remain with us. We can begin to feel genuine gratitude.

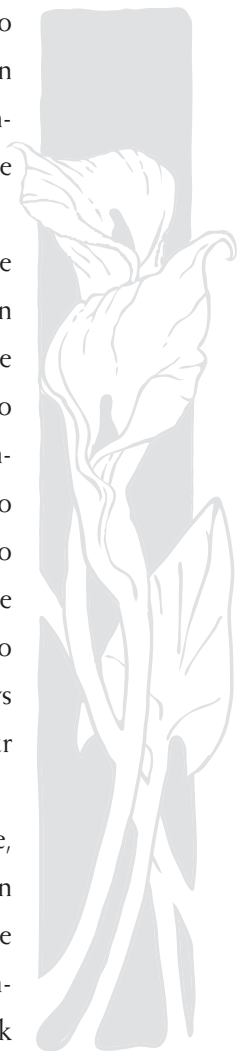
Our gratitude comes most deeply from understanding that all life has been given to us freely and generously by a loving God. This unconditional love, which knows no limits, helps raise us out of personal distress. As Saint Paul reminds us, love “endures all things,” even death. Our faith gives us the strength to endure a serious loss because we know we are not alone. Christ is the center of our lives, and we can overcome any hardship—even the death of a loved one—because of our life in the Risen Lord. It is not that we forget our loss, but we see it in a new way—through the eyes of faith. This deeper perspective can provide peace and enable us to go on.

Thus in gratitude and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, we can stand firm in our faith, using

the remainder of our lives to reflect God's love to others. We who have loved have been blessed. In return, our faith calls us to be a blessing to others, and this becomes possible when we make the effort to live a life of prayerful reflection.

Prayer can be a constant touchstone as we make our way through grief. In communion with God, we grow in gratitude and are made stronger. When we pray, we open ourselves to the work of the Holy Spirit and God's transforming presence in our lives. We allow the Spirit to guide our hearts and bring enlightenment to our being. We learn to hear God in the silence beyond the words of prayer. It is in responding to what we hear that we are changed. Prayer renews our spirit, freeing us of whatever obscures our path toward a more Christ-centered life.

Our prayer can praise God, express gratitude, and seek forgiveness, but we can also petition God when we are in trouble, asking for assistance and support. This petitioning is the most common form of prayer, and it is a safe way to speak





our truth, whatever it may be. Healing can begin in this kind of conversation with God.

When we try to make sense of our lives without someone we dearly valued and when our grief seems overwhelming, prayer can offer consolation. Coping with grief after the death of someone close to us can take some time, and there is no formula. We can find the will to continue through our faith, but our heart may still hold a brokenness within from that loss. Making room for prayer on a regular basis—and allowing the silence that is part of our dialogue with God to envelop us—can nevertheless help mend that brokenness as we move through grief. Sometimes prayer can offer revelation as we receive the wisdom to see beyond our own story. Suddenly our focus shows us more clearly what we are called to do. Prayer widens our hearts so that we can recognize the needs of others and respond to their needs in love. Ultimately, prayer can bring us deep joy.

During the more than two thousand years

since Jesus lived among us, we have found ourselves made better by following him and listening to the Word of God, our Bible. Praying with Scripture regularly can give us a greater understanding of everything God has done for us, as well as everything we are asked to do in return. Beyond the Bible, we have a wealth of ancient traditional prayers from which to draw, including those from our liturgy. Finally, we can look to generations of witnesses to our faith who have led by their fidelity. They have modeled for us how God does hear our prayers; these prayers are answered—we are never alone—even though the outcome may not be what we had hoped.



The prayers and reflections in this book are intended to help sustain you through grief and the pain and sadness that mark it. Certain prayers may speak to your feelings better than other prayers, just as particular lines or words may es-





pecially give you focus. However you pray with these prayers is as individual as your own story.

This book is divided into four parts that are meant to help you on the journey through your personal experience of loss and help you move to a stronger faith, hope, and love.

In the first part, we seek to petition God for aid—"Hear our prayer."

This is followed by prayers offering consolation—"Every tear will be wiped away."

Next are prayers reminding us of the promise of heaven—"May angels lead you into paradise."

Finally, prayers are included that will evoke that homecoming—"Glory of all believers."

For scriptural passages other than psalms, new companion prayers have been provided to aid your spiritual reflection.

In closing, the epilogue visits the stages of grief as outlined by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross. An appendix also offers several litanies from deep within the Christian tradition, including the Litany of the Saints and the Litany of Saint Joseph.

Our prayer is that someday all of us will see those we love again when we too are called home to the Lord. May they rest in peace, and God give you peace.



To choose life means to embrace the cross. It means to put up with the cross, the difficulties, the lack of success, the fear of standing alone. Tradition has never promised us a rose garden. To embrace the cross today means to grow into resistance. And the cross will turn green and blossom. We survive the cross. We grow in suffering. We are the tree of life.

DOROTHEE SOELLE





And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

For everyone who asks, receives, and the one who seeks, finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

LUKE 11:9–10

*Merciful God, hear us.
Listen to our prayers, now and forever.
In times of sorrow,
we seek your loving aid.
Let us never cease to call on you,
asking help and comfort.
Let us always find you.
We give thanks and praise to you,
who will not turn us away.
Amen.*

GRETCHEN L. SCHWENKER





O merciful God, who answerest the poor,
Answer us,

O merciful God, who answerest
the lowly in spirit,
Answer us,

O merciful God, who answerest
the broken of heart,
Answer us.

O merciful God,
Answer us.

O merciful God,
Have compassion.

O merciful God,
Redeem.

O merciful God,
Save.

O merciful God, have pity upon us,
Now,
Speedily,
And at a near time.

—JEWISH PRAYER, DAY OF ATONEMENT

Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary,
that never was it known
that anyone who fled to your protection,
implored your help,
or sought your intercession
was left unaided.
Inspired with this confidence,
I fly to you, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother.
To you I come,
before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful.
O Mother of the Word Incarnate,
despise not my petitions,
but in your mercy,
hear and answer me.
Amen.





*My life is deprived of peace,
I have forgotten what happiness is;
My enduring hope, I said,
has perished before the LORD...*

*But this I will call to mind,
therefore I will hope:
The LORD's acts of mercy are not exhausted,
his compassion is not spent;
They are renewed each morning—
great is your faithfulness!
The LORD is my portion, I tell myself,
therefore I will hope in him.*

*The LORD is good to those who trust in him,
to the one that seeks him;
It is good to hope in silence
for the LORD's deliverance.*

LAMENTATIONS 3:17–18, 21–26

*We call on you, Lord.
On you we can rely
when peace seems gone,
our hearts broken by sadness.
Grant us your compassion,
lifting us back into life.
So we may serve you in joy,
each new morning we wake.
Amen.*

GRETCHEN L. SCHWENKER





*Incline your ear, LORD, and answer me,
for I am poor and oppressed.*

*Preserve my life, for I am devoted,
save your servant who trusts in you.*

*You are my God, be gracious to me, Lord;
to you I call all the day.*

*Gladden the soul of your servant,
to you, Lord, I lift up my soul.*

*Lord, you are good and forgiving,
most merciful to all who call on you.*

*LORD, hear my prayer,
listen to my cry for help.*

*On the day of my distress I call to you,
for you will answer me.*

PSALM 86:1–7

Our Father,
You would not willingly call on us
to suffer.
You say all things work together
for our good
if we are faithful to You.
Therefore, if You ordain it:
through disappointment and poverty,
sickness and pain,
even shame and contempt
and calumny,
You will support us with the
consolation of Your Grace
and compensate us
for any temporal suffering
by the possession of that peace
which the world can neither give
nor take away.

SAINT ELIZABETH ANN SETON





*The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,
and no torment shall touch them.*

*They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead;
and their passing away was thought an affliction
and their going forth from us, utter destruction.*

But they are in peace.

*For if to others, indeed, they seem punished,
yet is their hope full of immortality;*

*Chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed,
because God tried them
and found them worthy of himself.*

*As gold in the furnace, he proved them,
and as sacrificial offerings he took them to himself.*

*In the time of their judgment they shall shine,
and dart about as sparks through stubble;*

*They shall judge nations and rule over peoples,
and the LORD shall be their King forever.*

*Those who trust in him shall understand truth,
and the faithful shall abide with him in love:*

*Because grace and mercy are with his holy ones,
and his care is with the elect.*

WISDOM 3:1–9

*Remember, Lord, your faithful,
those souls of the righteous
whom you found worthy.
Receive our beloved dead,
taking them to yourself.
Now freed of every torment,
bless them with your love,
your truth revealed in new life.
Give us grace who feel
alone without them,
trusting in your infinite care.*

GRETCHEN L. SCHWENKER





O Lord, you have made us very small, and
we bring our years to an end like a tale
that is told.

Help us to remember that beyond our
brief day is the eternity of your love.

REINHOLD NIEBUHR