

# Sanctuary

## Midday Prayers for Peace and Justice

Welcome to Sanctuary: Midday Prayers for Peace and Justice. In this 28 day prayer cycle Abbey of the Arts Wisdom Council members invite you into contemplative time with a short reading followed by 5 minutes of silence. During the silence you are invited to hold a loving intention for peace, justice, and compassion to flourish in the world.

This collection of 7-8 minute guided prayer practices was designed as a complement to our 6 Prayer Cycles, each containing 7 days of morning and evening prayer. In these chaotic times we offer you this series of short reflections to nourish and bolster you during a midday pause.

You are encouraged to set aside 7-8 minutes each day for contemplative time and imagine dancing monks around the world sharing in this prayer with you.

### **Day 1: Claudia Love Mair reading Cole Arthur Riley**

Activism that commits to bearing witness to injustice can be weary work. It should come as no surprise, for we were never meant to need to look upon and travel so deeply into inequity. Seeing a person or piece of creation trampled should always disrupt something in us. It should always do something to the soul. And when you trace that trampling back across generations and systems and powers, a quiet sorrow is born in you.

#### **Credits:**

*All texts under fair use or with permission.*

[Cole Arthur Riley](#), *This Here Flesh: Spirituality, Liberation, and the Stories that Make Us*. (New York: Convergent Books, 2022), pg. 128



### **Day 2: Te Martin reading Cynthia Bailey Manns**

We will know we are going in the right direction by the signs we see along the way. Are there changes in our behaviour that lead to a deeper connection to God's love for us? Does our behaviour reflect our love for others in a compassionate, forgiving way? Are we willing to embrace mystery in our relationships with God and others? Are we willing to be healed?

Transformed? Do we have experiences of awe, wonder, or joy that cannot be described? Do we experience God's presence in the depths of our deepest sorrows?

**Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

[Cynthia Bailey Manns](#), "Claimed: A Transformational Journey of Holiness, Wholeness, and Ministry" from *Embodied Spirits: The Stories of Spiritual Directors of Color*. (Morehouse Publishing, 2014), pg. 64



**Day 3: Cassidhe Hart reading Julian of Norwich**

[Our Lord] showed me something small, no bigger than a hazelnut, lying in the palm of my hand, and I perceived that it was as round as any ball. I looked at it and thought: What can this be? And I was given this general answer: It is everything which is made. I was amazed that it could last, for I thought that it was so little that it could suddenly fall into nothing. And I was answered in my understanding: It lasts and always will, because God loves it; and thus everything has being through the love of God.

In this little thing I saw three properties. The first is that God made it, the second is that he loves it, the third is that God preserves it. But what is that to me? It is that God is the Creator and the lover and the protector. For until I am substantially united to him, I can never have love or rest or true happiness; until, that is, I am so attached to him that there can be no created thing between my God and me. And who will do this deed? Truly, he himself, by his mercy and his grace, for he has made me for this and has blessedly restored me.

**Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, trans. by Edmund Colledge and James Walsh. (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), pgs. 130–131



**Day 4: Melinda Thomas reading Kat Armas**

Life on the edge is more adaptive because it has to be. Species learn that to survive in environments that are ever-changing become the most creative. This is why ecotones are called "zones of opportunity," places where life thrives not in spite of the tension but because of it. Conservationists recognize that by protecting these liminal spaces, they safeguard the broader web of life.

Ecotones whisper to me of resistance, of refusing the forces that seek to confine and control. Western ways of learning have long convinced us that knowledge is universal, that it flows from the center, from empire, as if wisdom must be dictated from above. But nature teaches us otherwise. Wisdom thrives at the margins, in the spaces between, where different ways of knowing collide and something altogether new begins to emerge. To decolonize knowledge is to turn our gaze toward the thresholds where survival and tension have given rise to a deeper understanding of the world. Here, wisdom waits, not in the polished certainty of empire but in the raw becoming of those who dwell at the edges.

**Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

[Kat Armas](#), *Liturgies for Resisting Empire: Seeking Community, Belonging, and Peace in a Dehumanizing World*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2025), pg. 65



**Day 5: Amber Andreasen reading Henri Nouwen**

Keep your eyes on the Prince of Peace, the one who doesn't cling to his divine power; the one who refuses to turn stones into bread, jump from great heights and rule with great power; the one who says, "Blessed are the poor, the gentle, those who mourn, and those who hunger and thirst for righteousness; blessed are the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers and those who are persecuted in the cause of uprightness" (see Matt. 5:3–11); the one who touches the lame, the crippled, and the blind; the one who speaks words of forgiveness and encouragement; the one who dies alone, rejected and despised. Keep your eyes on him who becomes poor with the poor, weak with the weak, and who is rejected with the rejected. He is the source of all peace.

Where is this peace to be found? The answer is clear. In weakness. First of all, in our own weakness, in those places of our hearts where we feel most broken, most insecure, most in agony, most afraid. Why there? Because there our familiar ways of controlling our world are being stripped away; there we are called to let go from doing much, thinking much, and relying on our self-sufficiency. Right there where we are weakest the peace which is not of this world is hidden.

**Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

Henri Nouwen, "Adam's Story: The Peace That Is Not Of This World" (Henri J.M. Nouwen. ©The Henri Nouwen Legacy Trust). Published in *Weavings* 3, No. 2 (March–April 1988)



### **Day 6: Felicia Murrell reading Valarie Kaur**

Divine rage is fierce, disciplined, and visionary. The aim of divine rage is not vengeance but to reorder the world. It is precise and purposeful. . . It points us to the humanity of even those who we are fighting. . . Perhaps our task as human beings is to find safe containers for our raw reactionary rage — and then choose to harness that energy in a way that creates a new world for all of us.

#### **Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

[Valarie Kaur](#), *See No Stranger: A Memoir and Manifesto of Revolutionary Love*. (New York: One World, 2020), pg. 133



### **Day 7: Kayce Hughlett reading from her essay**

*“Joy and sorrow are sisters; they live in the same house.”*

—Macrina Weiderkehr

I practice yoga. I practice breathing. I practice [soul strolling](#). I practice writing. I practice life. Sometimes I even remember why I practice.

I practice for life. I practice for joy. I practice for grief and sorrow. I practice for peace and justice. I practice for the times these things all jumble together. I practice for now.

Joy and sorrow are two sisters that live in the same house. They wrestle and fight, trying to prove that one is more important than the other. They hold hands. They push away. They tug at each other’s hair. They’re perplexed by how different they seem and yet how close they are. They are confused siblings. The best they can do is stroll hand in hand, listening and noticing what arises around them. They need each other to remember the sacredness, sanctity, and beauty of both life and loss. Peace and justice.

#### **Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

[Kayce Hughlett](#), “Joy and Sorrow Are Sisters”, published July 2015 online in her blog: [kaycehughlett.com/blog/2015/7/28/joy-and-sorrow-are-sisters](http://kaycehughlett.com/blog/2015/7/28/joy-and-sorrow-are-sisters)



### **Day 8: Michael Moore reading Thomas Merton**

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am

following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore I will trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

**Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

Thomas Merton, "Prayer of Unknowing" from *Thoughts In Solitude*. (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1999), pg. 79



**Day 9: Jo-ed Tome reading Marlene Marburg**

This is a reading from Marlene Marburg in her book, *Grace Upon Grace: Savouring the Spiritual Exercises through the Arts*. What I am about to read is Marlene Marburg's paraphrasing one of the Principle and Foundation of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, written in the first person:

I am created to be who God wants to be in me. I am intended to bring beauty and fullness to all that God creates and empowers me to be and do. God imagined me out of love, for love. Only in love can God's full imagination be realised. Only in full communion with God can all persons and all reality know and experience wholeness. God's world has undergone change through conscious and unconscious human action, some which seems disordered. Disorder is not flux or the polarities of everyday life but the failure to recognise and act in accordance with the love of God instilled in our hearts. This love inspires me to participate in my life-world through my personal authentic gifts. It enables me to find from the choices available to me that which will empower or disempower my life. What reason would I have to choose disempowerment? Why would I ever choose to disconnect myself from my life source?

**Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

Marlene Marburg, *Grace Upon Grace: Savouring the Spiritual Exercises through the Arts*. (Morning Star Publishing, 2019), pgs. 29–30



**Day 10: Carmen Acevedo Butcher reading Richard Rohr**

Your image of God creates you. . .<sup>1</sup>The word *God* is, first of all, a stand-in for everything — reality, truth, and the very shape of your universe. . . There is an absolute connection between

how you see God and how you see yourself and the whole universe. . . What you see is what you are.<sup>2</sup> Francis of Assisi knew that the finite manifests the infinite, and the physical is the doorway to the spiritual. . . There are not sacred and profane things, places, and moments. There are only sacred and *desecrated* things, places, and moments — and it is *we alone* who desecrate them by our blindness and lack of reverence. It is one sacred universe, and we are all a part of it. . .<sup>3</sup> All *being* can correctly and rightly be spoken of with “one voice” (*univocity*), as [13th-century Franciscan friar] John Duns Scotus [said]. . . What I am you also are, and so is the world. *Creation is one giant symphony of mutual sympathy*. . .<sup>4</sup> Francis had a unique ability to call others — animals, planets[,] and elements — “brother” and “sister” because he himself was a little brother. He granted other beings and things mutuality, subjectivity, “personhood,” and dignity because he first honored his own dignity as a son of God. . .<sup>5</sup> Only when we are *eager to love* can we see love and goodness in the world around us. We must ourselves remain in peace, and then we will see and find peace over there. . . The central practice in Franciscan mysticism, therefore, is that *we must remain in love*. . .<sup>6</sup>

#### Credits:

##### ***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

[Richard Rohr](#), excerpts from *Yes, And...: Daily Meditations*. (Franciscan Media, 2013, 2019) pgs. 9<sup>1</sup>, 65<sup>2</sup>, & 171<sup>4</sup> and *Eager to Love: The Alternative Way of Francis of Assisi*. (Franciscan Media, 2014), pgs. 6<sup>3</sup> \*, 8<sup>4&5</sup>, & 9<sup>6</sup>

\*using adapted text from [October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021's "Daily Meditation" email](#)



#### **Day 11: Simon de Voil reading James Finley**

Nelson Mandela, when he came out of years of unjust imprisonment for apartheid, he did not come out bitter. He did not come out a victim, he did not come out bent on revenge, he came out whole. You get the feeling that even had he died in prison he would have died a free man.

Likewise, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, in one week she experienced more suffering than most of us would experience in a whole lifetime.

She didn't drown in the suffering in which she was immersed, but walked through it — grounded in something that allowed her to be present in all the suffering, a healing presence in a suffering world.

This unitive place is really coming to the place of paradox — it is how Jesus walked this earth. He saw the suffering and all the craziness, and he saw his own crucifixion coming. But as real as all that was, there was something invincible that shone out of it — without stopping a bit of it from happening to him.

And he is modeling for us the deathless beauty of ourselves, that no one can do anything to, when all this pain, all this life is grounded in love.

**Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

[James Finley](#), from track "[Sustained in All Things](#)" on the album *Sanctuary: Exploring the Healing Path* by Alana Levandosky ([AlanaLevandosky.com](#)) & James Finely. "[Turning to the Mystics](#)" CAC Podcast with James Finely.



**Day 12: Te Martin reading Kat Armas**

Mary's war cry is one of justice, calling forth God's liberating revolution. Her cry of justice and liberation is one that announced the inauguration of a new kingdom, one that stands in contrast to the kingdoms of oppression and exploitation.

**Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

[Kat Armas](#), *Abuelita Faith: What Women on the Margins Teach Us about Wisdom, Persistence, and Strength*. (Brazos Press, 2021), pg. 170



**Day 13: Claudia Love Mair reading Lenny Duncan**

To become a witness, your very life must become a fragrant offering to the Creator, your house a temple, your very breath a prayer. It's not a matter of trying to be all these things or learning to do all these things, it's about realizing you are all these things.

**Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

Lenny Duncan, *Dear Revolutionaries: A Field Guide for a World Beyond the Church*. (Minneapolis, MN: Broadleaf Books, 2023), pg. 48



**Day 14: Cassidhe Hart reading Joanna Macy & Molly Brown**

It helps to recall that the life living through us has repeatedly died to old forms and old ways. Positive disintegration is integral to the evolution of living systems. We know this dying in the explosion of supernovas, the relinquishment of gills and fins in moving onto dry land, the

splitting of seeds in the soil. We know this in the cyclical growth, flowering and decomposition of plants through the seasons. As they live out their life cycle in one form, plants break down into compost to nourish other life-forms, including new plants of the same species. Our own life story attests to this, as we learned to move beyond the safeties and dependencies of childhood.

It is never easy. Some of the uglier aspects of human behavior today arise from the fear of the wholesale changes we must now undergo. Opening our awareness to global calamity and letting ourselves feel the anguish and disorientation are integral to our spiritual ripening. Mystics speak of the “dark night of the soul.” Brave enough to let go of accustomed assurances and allow old mental comforts and conformities to fall away, they stand naked to the unknown. They let processes that their minds cannot encompass work through them. Out of darkness, the new is born.

**Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

[Joanna Macy](#) and [Molly Brown](#), *Coming Back to Life*. (Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers, 2014), pgs. 53–54



**Day 15: Amber Andreasen reading Cynthia Bourgeault**

***Psalm 85:10 (NIV)***

*Mercy and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed.*

So when we think of mercy, we should be thinking first and foremost of a bond, an infallible link of love that holds the created and uncreated realms together. The mercy of God does not come and go, granted to some and refused to others. Why? Because it is unconditional, always there, underlying everything. It is literally the force that holds everything in existence, the gravitational field in which we live and move and have our being. Just like that little fish swimming desperately in search for water, we, too — in the words of psalm 103 — “swim in mercy as in an endless sea.” Mercy is God’s innermost being turned outward to sustain the visible and created world in unbreakable love. . .

Hope’s home is at the innermost point in us, and in all things. It is a quality of aliveness. It does not come at the end, as the feeling that results from a happy outcome. Rather, it lies at the beginning, as a pulse of truth that sends us forth. When our innermost being is attuned to this pulse, it will send us forth in hope, regardless of the physical circumstances of our lives. Hope fills us with the strength to stay present, to abide in the flow of the Mercy, no matter what outer storms assail us.

**Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

Scripture quotations are from the *New International Version Bible (NIV)*. (2011). The NIV Bible. <https://www.thenivbible.com> (Original work published 1978)

[Cynthia Bourgeault](#), *Mystical Hope: Trusting in the Mercy of God*. (Lanham, Maryland: A Cowley Publications Book; Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001), pgs. 25 & 86–87



### **Day 16: Melinda Thomas reading Rachel Held Evans**

We cannot know for sure whether Mary saw her actions as a prelude to her teacher’s upcoming death and burial. I suspect she knew instinctively, the way women know these things, that a man who dines at a sick man’s house, who allows a woman to touch him with her hair, who rebukes Pharisees and befriends prostitutes, would not survive for long in the world in which she lived. Surely a woman in this society would understand it better than a man. The marginalized are always the first to comprehend death and resurrection.

Perhaps this is why the women stayed by Jesus’ side through his death and burial, after so many of the Twelve betrayed him, denied him, and fled from him in fear. This was the course of things, women knew. They would see it through to the end because Jesus was their friend, and friends love one another even through pain, even through death. For their faithful friendship, the women are rewarded with being the first to witness the resurrection of Christ, the first to preach the gospel of the risen Lord.

For her act of worship Jesus praises Mary in unparalleled terms. “Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her” (Mark 14:9 NRSV).

What a remarkable thought — that at every communion, every Easter service, every cathedral and every tent revival. . . this woman’s story should be on our lips, right along with Christ’s.

#### **Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

[Rachel Held Evans](#), *Searching for Sunday: Loving, Leaving, and Finding the Church*. (Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2015), pgs. 232–233



### **Day 17: Felicia Murrell reading from her book**

No element shall ever sever the cord that binds you to our Host, Divine Love — not alienation, not disquiet, not even unrest. This is the thing, Dear Soul. We are unaware of so much that

happens in the dark. The dark greets us with an invitation to embrace mystery. The dark is the place where Love asks us to trust, to yield and surrender.

Take a pause, Dear Soul, a long inhale of breath and release. . . What do you feel of Love's invitation to. . . trust? You see, Dear Soul, underneath the unrest and chatter, Love is doing what Love always does: steadying you, holding you, supporting you. Even when you feel off the rails and flailing about, Love is there. . . Love is our plumb line, the bulwark, our calm in a turbulent sea. As we close our eyes and envision home amid the dark, may our souls feel Love's calming presence. . . You are here, and you are held.

**Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

[Felicia Murrell](#), *AND: The Restorative Power of Love In An Either/Or World*. (PA: Whitaker House, 2024), pgs. 112–113



**Day 18: Michael Moore reading Howard Thurman**

How good it is to center down!

To sit quietly and see one's self pass by!

The streets of our minds seethe with endless traffic;

Our spirits resound with clashings, with noisy silences,

While something deep within hungers and thirsts for the still moment and the resting lull.

With full intensity we seek, ere the quiet passes, a fresh sense of order in our living;

A direction, a strong sure purpose that will structure our confusion and bring meaning in our chaos.

We look at ourselves in this waiting moment — the kinds of people we are.

The questions persist: what are we doing with our lives? — what are the motives that order our days?

What is the end of our doings? Where are we trying to go?

Where do we put the emphasis and where are our values focused?

For what end do we make sacrifices? Where is my treasure and what do I love most in life?

What do I hate most in life and to what am I true?

Over and over the questions beat in upon the waiting moment.

As we listen, floating up through all the jangling echoes of our turbulence, there is a sound of another kind —

A deeper note which only the stillness of the heart makes clear.

It moves directly to the core of our being. Our questions are answered,

Our spirits refreshed, and we move back into the traffic of our daily round

With the peace of the Eternal in our step.

How good it is to center down!

**Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

Howard Thurman, “How Good to Center Down!” from *Meditations of the Heart*. (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1992), pgs. 28–29



**Day 19: Jo-ed Tome reading Julia Baird**

The church needs to return to its core business: preaching and practicing a gospel of love. When we are absorbed only with morality debates, we forget what a close community a church can be, and what comfort it can provide. My local church runs a soup kitchen, an outreach for victims of domestic violence and the homeless, and circles those in need with food, presence and company. For the ageing, the ailing, the lonely and the young, these communities are crucial. This kind of love is not in any way limited to the church, but it is frequently concentrated there. We lose something important when these communities dwindle and disappear. Many parishioners act as quiet vigilantes of grace, caring for the neglected, the wounded, the lonely and the needy. My mother sits on the end of a pew in a wheelchair these days; communion is brought to her as grape juice in a tiny plastic cup. I watch the face of the minister — with whom I have some strong theological disagreements — as he leans down to whisper the sacraments in her ear, and am often struck by how gentle he is with her.

**Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

Julia Baird, *Phosphorescence: On Awe, Wonder & Things that Sustain You When the World Goes Dark*. (William Collins, 2021), pgs. 260–261



**Day 20: Carmen Acevedo Butcher reading from *The Cloud of Unknowing***

God, to you all hearts are open, to you all longings speak, and to you no secret thing is hidden. I beg you — purify the intentions of my heart through the unspeakable gift of your grace, so I can love you with all I am and praise you for all you are. Amen. . .<sup>1</sup> [T]he essence of. . . [contemplative] work is nothing but a naked intent, a simple reaching out to God. . . [who]. . . can fulfill our every longing. . .<sup>2</sup> [T]he desire to feel and see [God] as we can here. . . — [t]his longing is true love, and love always deserves the peace it wins.<sup>3</sup> [I]f you’re a true contemplative, your life and words will overflow with spiritual wisdom [and] compassion, . . because. . . [you]. . . measure out what you say carefully & calmly. . .<sup>4</sup> In the presence of those who have steeped their lives in the discipline of contemplation, others feel peace and through grace are brought closer to God. So seek this gift, and let grace help you.<sup>5</sup> So, as you mature in this work. . . , [growing] in love, inside and out, you can accept each day with hope and go forward in confidence, grounded in grace. . .<sup>6</sup>

**Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

Anonymous, excerpts from *The Cloud of Unknowing with the Book of Privy Counsel: A New Translation*, trans. by [Carmen Acevedo Butcher](#). (Shambhala Publications / Random House, 2009), pgs. 3 and 231<sup>1</sup>, 61<sup>2</sup>, 74<sup>3</sup>, 123<sup>5</sup>, 124<sup>4</sup>, & 189<sup>6</sup>



**Day 21: Claudia Love Mair reading from Isaiah 43:10**

“You *are* My witnesses,” says the LORD,  
“And My servant whom I have chosen,  
That you may know and believe Me,  
And understand that I *am* He.  
Before Me there was no God formed,  
Nor shall there be after Me.”

**Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

Isaiah 43:10. Scripture quotation is from The Holy Bible, New King James Version, Copyright © 1982 Thomas Nelson ([biblehub.com/nkjv/isaiah/43.htm](http://biblehub.com/nkjv/isaiah/43.htm)). All rights reserved.



**Day 22: Te Martin reading Austin Channing Brown**

Reconciliation is the pursuit of the impossible — an upside-down world where those who are powerful have relinquished that power to the margins. It’s reimagining an entirely different way of being with one another. Reconciliation requires imagination. It requires looking beyond what is to what could be. It looks beyond intentions to real outcomes, real hurts, real histories. How just, how equitable can our efforts be? What would it take to enact reparations, to make all things right?

**Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

[Austin Channing Brown](#), *I’m Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness*. (Convergent Books, 2018), pgs. 171–172



**Day 23: Cassidhe Hart reading Barbara Holmes**

The magnificence of the cosmos is subsumed in its intelligence and in ours, in its surprising creativity and in ours. In a very real sense contemplation is creation. It is the entry into a space or idea, where the impossible can be shaped, swallowed, and lived. Through a melding of consciousness and devotion, earth bodies and God-giveness become one. Prayers are danced and sung, the air changes, and the elements of the life space vibrate with potential and blessed assurance. There is no need to separate from the community, to enter the desert for a closer walk with God. Instead, the in-breaking of the *basileia* [reign/kingdom] of God occurs as sweaty palms grasp and hold, while feet stomp on uneven floors, and while the stickman beats out a rhythm.

This experience of communal contemplation is difficult to describe. Those engaged with the practice cannot tell you much about it, but they usually know when it occurs and when it is being faked. The experiences tell a story. In community there is power: the power may be political and legal, but power in worship communities is also the corporate ability to receive and interpret the gifts of the spirit. The power of contemplation in the midst of the poor and the oppressed becomes the power to bend the social and divine realm in an arc that touches earth and allows earth creatures to reach and embrace what can only be accessed through prayer. This is a powerful witness.

**Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

Barbara Homes, *Joy Unspeakable: Contemplative Practices of the Black Church*. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2004), pgs. 96–97



**Day 24: Melinda Thomas reading her poem  
Earth's Magnificat**

My spirit sings of the Great Creator.  
She formed me out of chaos,  
spread out my grasslands  
ice caps, deserts, and oceans,  
wrapped me in a mantle of stars.  
She called my land and creatures good.

She is ever alive within me:  
in leaping deer and monarch migration,  
in whale song and elephant trunks entwined.

I groan under desecration at the hands  
of humans She formed who

forgot we are kin in this web of life.

I praise the many who stand up,  
the ones who let my soil rest  
and leave the oil underground.  
I give thanks for people who listen  
when my cries turn to hurricane and wildfire.

She has placed my burdens on their hearts,  
fed the hungry with wheat and rice  
and all good things.

She causes them to rise up on my behalf.  
With Her help they will cast out  
what is broken and plant what will heal:  
crops, coral, and ecosystems,  
wolves returned to the wild.

She disrupts greed and corruption,  
teaches them to face the sun and wind,  
weaving power into all of life  
so generations to come  
will feel my sacred heart  
alive with flow and gladness as  
chicken scratch aerates soil,  
as rivers run unspoiled.

My spirit sings of the Great Creator  
now and always  
Amen.

**Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

[Melinda Emily Thomas](https://melindaemilythomas.substack.com/p/earths-magnificat), "Earth's Magnificat", originally published December 2025 online in *The Journal of Elements and Seasons*: [MelindaEmilyThomas.substack.com/p/earths-magnificat](https://melindaemilythomas.substack.com/p/earths-magnificat).  
From her forthcoming collection, *Original Name*.



**Day 25: Felicia Murrell reading Liza Rankow**

Justice work, as I have noted, is the work of healing. And as we engage it from the mystic ethos of oneness, it must be rooted in love. This is a volitional love. Love not as reactive emotion or

fondness, but as disciplined soul force. Its cultivation changes our hearts. It makes us more compassionate, more patient, and receptive with one another — hopefully also with ourselves. It makes us more open to all the expressions of Life, and more protective of them.

Gloria Anzaldúa must have been feeling something like this when she wrote,

“With awe and wonder you look around, recognizing the preciousness of the earth, the sanctity of every human being on the planet, the ultimate unity and interdependence of all beings. . . Love swells in your chest and shoots out of your heart chakra, linking you to everyone/everything. . . You share a category of identity wider than any social position or racial label. This knowledge motivates you to work actively to see that no harm comes to people, animals, ocean — to take up spiritual activism and the work of healing.”

This is the foundation of mystic activism: a recognition of the Divine as the unifying essence within all, and a compelling love for the multiplicity of Life’s expression that inspires our commitment to work toward justice and wholeness.

**Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

[Liza J. Rankow](#), *Soul Medicine for a Fractured World*. (New York: Orbis Books, 2026), pg. 118



**Day 26: Jo-ed Tome reading Kathleen Schwab and Therese Kay**

Discipline and peace go together. Work and rest go together. In order to work effectively you need to have restful times, when your mind isn't buzzing with details. Clear space in your life by delegating some tasks to another time. I've told you before you should only think about one day's work at a time. Your abilities will expand this way — you will do a much better job when you can give your full attention to each task. Let the world take care of itself for a while. Close your eyes, turn your attention inward, and rest here with Me. When you open your eyes to go about your life again, don't let the whole world rush in on you. Open the door only to what will help you. If you let every babbling idea into the house, soon you can't work for the racket. You must actively guard your peace of mind.

Your attention should not be at the beck and call of the world. You can also have times when the door is open to the world, but what is important is that the decision is yours. Cultivate and guard peace in your mind for a portion of every day.

**Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

[Kathleen Schwab](#) and [Therese Kay](#), *A Healing Journey: 14 Daily Devotionals for Those Dealing with Grief, Pain, or Anxiety*. (Kindle Direct Publishing, 2018), no page number in Kindle



### **Day 27: Carmen Acevedo Butcher reading Father Greg Boyle**

For forty years, I have been accompanying gang members in Los Angeles. . . I recently spoke on a panel. . . I told the crowd that two unwavering principles held at Homeboy Industries were the following: 1) Everyone is unshakably good (no exceptions) and 2) We belong to each other (no exceptions). Then I posited: “Now, do I think all our vexing and complex social dilemmas would disappear if we embraced these two notions?” I paused, then continued, “Yes, I do.” And the entire audience exploded in laughter. I was startled. When the laughter subsided, I repeated quietly: “Yes. I do.”<sup>1</sup> These two ideas allow us to roll up our sleeves so that we can actually make progress. So that we can love without measure and without regret. So that we can cultivate a new way of seeing. . . [T]he answer to every question is, indeed, compassion. . .<sup>2</sup> Paramount for all of us. . . is how to forge a way out of our intractable impasses. Obstacles and hazards abound. With a cherishing love, we’re still on the fastest route.<sup>3</sup> [Cherishing love] posits that our health as a community is inextricably linked to the thriving of everyone in the community. What gets cultivated is a warmth and kindness that genuinely wants another to be happy. . .<sup>4</sup> A community of cherished belonging is God’s dream come true. . .<sup>5</sup>

#### **Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

Father Greg Boyle, excerpts from *Cherished Belonging: The Healing Power of Love in Divided Times*. (Simon & Schuster, 2024), pgs. 4 and 2–3<sup>1</sup>, 2<sup>2&3</sup>, 12<sup>5</sup>, & 97<sup>4</sup>



### **Day 28: Christine Valters Paintner reading her Blessing for Peace**

Wondrous Peacemaker,  
guide us in a world filled with war,  
hatred, and division  
to create a place where everyone  
can live free from fear of violence.

Care for the soldiers, the victims, the refugees.  
Be a balm for their wounds  
and guide them to alignment with your holy desires.  
Transform the tools of destruction  
into vessels of cultivation.

Where bombs rain down,  
let tiny seeds sprout among the rubble.  
Where the stranger has fled to safety,  
let them be welcomed with open arms.  
Where the desire for vengeance consumes,  
let a new way crack open.

Infuse us with the courage needed  
to speak words of care,  
to be the presence of peace  
in all of our words and actions.

Let the light of your love pulse within us  
so that we become bearers of grace.  
May the radiance of our dreaming be a sign of hope  
so that all might envision together  
this more beautiful world.

**Credits:**

***All texts under fair use or with permission.***

[Christine Valters Paintner](#), *A Book of Everyday Blessings: 100 Prayers for Dancing Monks, Artists, and Pilgrims*. (Ave Maria Press, 2026), pg. 8