

PRESENT WITH US

THE LESSON: MATTHEW 6

If you have ever participated in the “Stations of the Cross” during Holy Week, these words will sound familiar to you:

*O Saviour of the world, who by thy Cross and precious Blood hast redeemed us;
Save us, and help us, we humbly beseech thee, O Lord.*

This is a prayer that reminds us that our Saviour suffered and died for us. He was “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53:3). It’s appropriate that we also repeat this prayer with those who are sick, because it reminds us powerfully that *our Lord understands suffering*.

Scripture tell us that “we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses”. Therefore we are called to confidently “draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4: 15-16). Moreover, “the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words” (Romans 8:26).

The poet Malcolm Guite put it this way: “He weeps with you and with you he will stay”, and though your suffering may take you through experiences of doubt, depression and despair, in the end “You find your God beside you on his knees”.

What does all of this mean? It means that we are not alone. We have a God who understands completely what we are going through, the best possible friend to be present with us when we suffer.

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The text we’re going to look at today is from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of St. Matthew. As you read through the text, consider the way in which Jesus himself lived out this teaching.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER](http://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER).)

Continue to pray for those known to you who are sick, this week using the prayer below. Ask God to help you to know how best to “weep with those who weep”.

*Almighty God, giver of health and healing: Grant to these thy servants such a sense of thy presence that they may have perfect trust in thee. In all their suffering may they cast their care upon thee, so that, enfolded in thy love and power, they may receive from thee health and salvation according to thy gracious will; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.* (PRAYER FROM THE MINISTRY TO THE SICK, BCP PAGE 580)

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MATTHEW 6: **TRUST YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER**

²⁵“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁸And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³²For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. ³⁴“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.