

To Ponder: *Sybil MacBeth Praying in Color*

Praying for the people who irk us, the people who hurt us, or the people we dislike or even hate is difficult because we do not want to think about them, let alone permit them to enter the sacred privacy of our prayers. We want to avoid our enemies, to forget that they exist. Even saying their names gives them a prestige we do not want them to have. Hospitality is out of the question. When my husband and I moved to a new house in a new town some years ago, my next-door neighbor was all about hospitality in the traditional sense of the word...She hosted a prayer group, a Third Order Franciscan gathering, and meetings of social justice committees. A fascinating assortment of individuals came for prayer and spiritual direction. What I didn't know then was who else she had invited into her life. At age 94, my neighbor's great-aunt was raped and murdered. She had walked in on the burglary of her apartment and was stabbed multiple times. The man responsible was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to death. For thirty years, he has been on death row. For thirty years my neighbor has prayed for him. Those prayers led her to initiate communication with him. Over the years they have exchanged letters. She has visited him at the state penitentiary. Her encouragement has led him to write and publish poetry. My neighbor's hospitality has changed her life. She could have opted to blot the event out of her mind. She could have cultivated a justifiable hatred for the man who murdered a beloved relative. But she didn't. Her prayers and her efforts have resulted in several stays of execution and a resentencing hearing. She now speaks in public against capital punishment. My neighbor's hospitality has also changed the man in prison. He has not become a saint or a man we would want as a neighbor, but he has been seen as someone worthy of the prayers and time of another human being. From a Christian as well as a quantum physics perspective, the way we as observers see something changes the observed. Just by looking at a quark, an atom, or a person, we alter them. Seeing a person as a child of God and praying for them changes both the person we pray for and us in ways that we cannot plan or predict.

Reading *Matthew 5: 43-48*

“You have heard that it was said,
'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

But I tell you,
 love your enemies
 and pray for those who persecute you,
that you may be children of your Father in heaven.
He causes his sun to rise
 on the evil and the good, and
sends rain
 on the righteous and the unrighteous.

If you love those who love you,
 what reward will you get?
Are not even the tax collectors doing that?
And if you greet only your own people,
 what are you doing more than others?
Do not even pagans do that?

Be perfect, therefore,
 as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Sharing...

 a word...

 a phrase...

 a reflection...

Where Charity and Love Prevail

Where charity and love prevail,
there God is ever found;
Brought here together by Christ's love,
by love are we thus bound.

With grateful joy and holy fear God's charity we learn;
Let us with heart and mind and soul now love God in return.

Forgive we now each other's faults as we our faults confess;
And let us love each other well in Christian holiness.

Let strife among us be unknown, let all contention cease;
Be God's the glory that we seek, be ours God's holy peace.

Let us recall that in our midst dwells God's begotten Son;
As members of his body joined, we are in Christ made one.

No race or creed can love exclude, if honored be God's name;
Our family embraces all whose Father is the same.

Text: [Ubi Caritas](#), tr. Omer Westendorf (1961)

Thank You For Joining Us!

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Praying for others is an act of hospitality.



Our prayer is characterized
by silence ~

Be still and know that I am God!

In that silence we listen for a new word.
God is present in all our lives.
God cares for us, and
our life experiences are a source
of deepening knowledge of God and self.

Inspired by God's Word in the silence
we share from our hearts.