

CELTIC EVENING PRAYER

for

SAMHAIN



GATHERING PRAYER

In the fading of the summer sun,
the shortening of the days,
we come to offer our worship.
We come like the those before us,
whose prayers the fallen leaves cannot number.
Come to us Lord Jesus, as you came to them.
Hear us Lord Jesus, as you heard them.

Open our hearts to your truth and bend our will to yours.

Accept the prayers we offer
and use them in the mystery of healing.
For your name's sake.

Amen

THANKSGIVING

In the swallows' flight and starlit sky,
WE SEE THE CREATOR'S HAND
In the browning of the leaves once green,
morning mists, autumn chill,
fruits that fall and frost's first kiss,
WE SEE THE CREATOR'S HAND
For summer's passing
and harvest home,
WE THANK YOU

For Autumn's splendour
and Winter's chill,
WE THANK YOU

For seed that has fallen,
the promise of Spring,
WE THANK YOU

Creator God, who brings forth both
green shoot and hoar frost,
sunrise and sunset,
WE BRING OUR THANKS



For wisdom and faith,
WE THANK YOU

For old age and new birth,
WE THANK YOU

For your embracing love:
a Father's love,
a Mother's love.

The love that sees our failings and forgives us.

The love that sees our joys and embraces us.

A love that knows no end or beginning.

A love that died for us.

WE BLESS YOU

Amen

WE ASK FOR FORGIVENESS

Creator God, forgive our moments of ingratitude,
the spiritual blindness that prevents us
from appreciating the wonder that is this world:
the endless cycle of Nature - of life and death and rebirth.
Forgive us for taking without giving, reaping without sowing.
Open our eyes to see, our lips to praise, our hands to share
and may we tread lightly on this precious earth.

Amen

SCRIPTURE

John 6 : 37-40

Jesus said to the crowds:

“Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me, because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me.

And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it on the last day.
For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life,
and I shall raise him on the last day.”

John 12: 24

Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

REFLECTION

According to the Celtic calendar, we entered the Winter season of Samhain on 1st November. It will last until February 1st. Samhain, has its roots in ancient, Celtic, pagan tradition and marked the end of the harvest and the bringing of the cattle down to winter pasture. It was considered to be a ‘thin’ time, when the veil between this world and the Otherworld was at its thinnest and when the spirits of the dead could most easily mingle with the living again.

The Christian Church absorbed the festival and in the Christian calendar, it has come to mark a time of Remembrance. In 8th century, Pope Gregory declared 1st November All Saints Day and 31st October (All Hallows Eve) was a time of fasting and preparation for it. Eventually 2nd November became All Souls Day.

The three days, known as Allhallowtide, constitute a time to honour all who have gone before us - and of course, Remembrance Sunday also falls at the beginning of November.

As well as a time to remember the past, it is also a time to think about the continuity of life : birth, death, re-birth – the eternal nature of life in God. An apple is a helpful symbol of this continuity. The apple tree was of significance to the ancient Celts : it comes into beautiful blossom in Spring (a sign of fertility and love) and throughout the year, the fruit continues to develop and ripen. Many varieties keep over a long period of time when stored and this was symbolic of love's presence – even long past the time of peak ripeness. The apple, of course, when it falls to the ground contains the seeds from which life begins again. As we heard in our bible reading, Jesus tells us that nothing and no-one is lost. Seen or unseen, we are all part of the life that is God's eternity.



Let's now take some time to bring before God those people whom we love and who have journeyed into the heart of God. Perhaps light a candle to symbolise the love in our hearts and the eternal light of God's peace in which they rest.

PRAYER FOR THOSE WE LOVE BUT NO LONGER SEE

Heavenly Father,
for those we love, who have journeyed into your light and love,
we pray eternal peace.

May we know the comfort of their enduring spirit,
enriching and empowering our lives.

May their love ever linger,
their presence be ever near,
until we meet again.

Amen



OUR PRAYERS FOR THE WORLD

Let us offer to God our prayers, trusting that God hears and uses them in the mystery of healing the brokenness and pain of the world



For our family of humankind throughout the world

For the earth and all its creatures

For Christ's Body on earth, his Church

For all who are ill and in special need at this time

For all who have journeyed on into the arms of God

We hold before our gracious Lord all we carry on our hearts today

LORD'S PRAYER

St Francis of Assisi said :

'Remember that when you leave this earth, you can take nothing that you have receivedbut only what you have given'

CLOSING PRAYER

As part of nature's wondrous cycle of new birth,
growth, fruitfulness and death,
we rejoice in the creation of new life.

For parenthood, the passing on of knowledge.
for understanding and the wisdom of years.

We are grateful for those who have gone before,
passing on to us our spiritual heritage.

May our lives blossom as the apple tree in Spring.

May we become fruitful in thought and deed
and may the seed of love that falls to the ground
linger beyond our time on this earth.

In the name of Jesus, we pray.

Amen

BLESSING

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May the brightness of the sun and the fullness of the moon
remind us of the Light of Christ within us,
the flame of love that warms the cold places of the earth.

And until we meet again, may God keep us
in the knowledge of his presence, the joy of his Creation
and the power of his love.

Amen.

