

Prayers for Courage on the Way



FORWARD MOVEMENT
CINCINNATI, OHIO

CONTENTS

Foreword.....	i
Invocation.....	1
Prayers	13
For Our Selves	15
For Our Nation	33
For Our Church	49
For Our World	67
Litanies.....	91
Devotions.....	119
Vision and Task	137
Index.....	147

FOREWORD

The call to follow Jesus Christ is not an easy one. It never has been. As disciples, we are called to take up our cross. We are called to embrace those who revile us. We are called to renounce comfort and embrace trust, asking only for our daily bread.

The way of Christ and the way of the world are in opposition. At various moments in the unfolding of human history, this truth has become especially apparent. The world God made and declared “good” can appear to be governed by the powers and principalities of evil, sin, and death.

Look at Calvary. See Jesus hanging on the cross. To some, it might have looked like evil had won. But we know what happened next.

The empty tomb testifies to the triumph of God's love. Grace and mercy always have the last word.

When the world gets especially grim, we who follow Jesus Christ are called to manifest hope. The Herods of this world always think they can hold sway with displays of wealth and might. Inflicting cruelty is their favored tactic. Our Lord calls us to proclaim a more excellent way of grace, mercy, and life. Thugs and tyrants are no match for angels and saints.

We may know this intellectually, but it's certainly not easy to live as bearers of hope, grace, and mercy in a world that can look merciless, even hopeless. How are we to do this? We cannot bear the burden on our own.

The good news is that we don't have to. Jesus Christ reigns in heaven, knowing our sorrows and bearing them with us. He has sent the Holy Spirit to guide us in our pilgrimage.

And so how can we experience the love of Jesus right now? How can we turn to the Holy Spirit to lead us?

We pray. Indeed, we pray without ceasing. Constant prayer is good for us, pleasing to God, and capable of changing the world.

Do you believe that your prayer can change the world? At Forward Movement, we know it can. We are living proof.

In the mid-1930s, the Episcopal Church was facing challenges with remarkable resonance to those of today's church. The 1934 General Convention had gathered in the face of a "weary and divided" church, and the topic of church renewal was foremost on the minds of the bishops and deputies.

The church was then recovering from the trauma of the Great Depression and ensuing economic devastation. In the US and around

the world, fascism and authoritarianism were on the rise. Church leaders perceived a lack of resources necessary to address the needs of the world. And even worse, there seemed to be a lack of energy in the church to rise to meet those needs. A look at the reported numbers from the era shows a church that was weakened, dissolute, seemingly on the verge of hopeless.

Rather than “hold the line,” as some delegates urged in order to stay the decline, the General Convention voted to create a “Forward Movement Commission,” which would be charged with a mission “to reinvigorate the life of the church.” A lofty goal. How could they accomplish it?

A few weeks after that General Convention, the fledgling commission gathered. With fierce discussion and fervent prayer, they came to the conclusion that, for the Episcopal Church to be strong, its congregations would need to be strong. Strong congregations needed

be filled not with “habitual Christians,” but with disciples of Jesus Christ.

This became their calling: to convert tepid Christians into committed disciples of Jesus Christ.

In February of 1935, just a few months following General Convention, Forward Movement published its first work: a pamphlet with daily Lenten devotions, called *Discipleship*. Soon after, they released a booklet, *Follow On*. And then months later came the first issue of *Forward Day by Day*.

With each of these publications, the formula was the same: encourage disciples to spend time each day reading scripture, reflecting on God’s word, and praying for the church and the world.

As we reviewed these earliest publications during our celebration of 90 years of Forward Movement’s ministry, we were struck by their

theological vigor and confidence in God's power. The prayers for courage, strength, wisdom, and grace from the 1930s were especially striking in their relevance to the needs of today's church. They prayed, in conditions much like ours, for renewal—and it came. They prayed for strength—and found it. They prayed for hope—and shared it. These prayers changed the church of the day, as well as the lives of countless Christians who, galvanized by prayer, became disciples of Jesus Christ.

We offer these historic prayers—collected from Forward Movement publications between 1935 and 1945—now as an antidote to our own time of shrinking congregations and flagging faith. We lift these words aloft as a banner of hope. And we join our prayer with theirs in ultimate trust that evil will not triumph over love.

Congregations and individuals who are used to the cadences of Rite I—thees and thous

—will likely find these prayers familiar and ready to use. Because we know that many church-goers these days are more accustomed to modern language, we have also adapted Rite II-styled versions of the prayers, to make them more readily usable in all contexts.

Some original prayers we have lightly edited as needed, to suit usage in today's church. Standards around which words to capitalize have changed, and so have patterns of punctuation. Most significantly, where the prayers spoke of “mankind” or “brotherhood,” we have updated the language to reflect the desire of today's church to be inclusive of all people. In terms of language for God, we have left the original language in place. We have endeavored throughout to preserve the original meaning and poetry of the prayers with minimal adjustments.

We offer this volume primarily for individual devotion. We pray that these words will transform our own hearts, just as they did

those of so many faithful Christians from 1935-1945.

We can also imagine that some might feel inspired to bring these collects or litanies into church meetings or study groups. That's great! They might also be incorporated into publish worship, as part of the Prayers of the People or the authorized intercessions of the Daily Office. Please check to ensure that your use conforms to the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer.

If you wish to use these prayers for private devotions or corporate worship, you have our permission to reproduce material from this volume for local use. You may also make light adjustments if you feel that a prayer needs to be adapted for your context. Please include a notice with the material: "This prayer is from *Prayers for Courage on the Way* (Forward Movement, 2026). Used with permission." If you have adapted the language, please add "Adapted for local use."

Above all, we hope that, as we offer these prayers, God will hear us all and give our church the strength and faith we need to face the challenges of our time.

May we all share the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit with a world in need of courage on the way.

Cincinnati, Ohio
Easter tide 2026

Invocation



SHALL GOD BE MANIFEST?

THE ORIGINAL meaning of manifest is “to touch with the hand”; hence, to make clear or plain. For ages people groped for God, crying, “Where is He that I might find Him?” God was always there, but not manifest, not plainly knowable.

In the fullness of time God made Himself manifest. God took hold of us by the hand of Jesus Christ who said, “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9). That is the faith of the Christian Church. God is made manifest to us in the Person of the Man Christ Jesus, the world’s living Savior.

Christ shares with His Church the work of making God manifest to the world. Thus St. Paul takes up the work,

saying to pagans, “Whom therefore ye *ignorantly* worship, Him declare I unto you” (Acts 17:23). Thus St. John to fellow believers: “That which was from the beginning, which we have *heard*, which we have *seen* with our eyes, which we have *looked* upon, and our hands have *handled*, of the Word of life... declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us” (1 John 1:1-3). That is the Church’s mission. And that mission the Church began from the first and has continued (more or less) to this day.

“More or less!” We say it advisedly. For two facts strike us in the face today:

1. The Church’s power to manifest God seems sadly diminished.
2. On all sides there arise world powers which deny God. They are dead set against Christ’s way of life. They demand from us loyalty and worship of

which God alone is worthy. They build pagan altars to receive our passionate devotion, but not to the living God.

Keenly as we sense oncoming war between nations, far more should we realize how new empires of pagan dogma, propaganda and dominance are aiming to capture the peoples. They do not so much as challenge the Churches. They scoff at the Churches, even as Goliath scoffed at the terrified and disordered armies of Saul and Israel.

It is a dark hour—no time for shallow optimism. The Church stands in a pitiable plight, disunited, uncertain, confused; honeycombed with worldliness and unfaith; drugged with complacency, or smarting and chagrined with the sense of futility.

Past glories cannot solve the present crisis. Let us face the fact that the Church has been retreating. If we turn and look, we shall see that we are

backing toward a chasm. Well may we despair of help from within ourselves. We need nothing so much now as that self-despair, and in penitence to throw ourselves upon God.

Shall we as persons, shall we as a Church, believe in God? Do we believe in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and show our faith by our works? Does that faith strike down past the hay, wood, and stubble of the opinions, whims, and compromises wherewith we have presumed to overlay the foundation that is Christ? Are we yet so sick of our inadequate selves that we are ready to fall back upon God, and let Him undertake for us?

It is this state of mind which impelled the Forward Movement to sound its first note as **TURN**, repent! The call is to individuals, yes! But even more to the whole Church, the Corporate Body.

Such as these are our corporate sins:

Our content with disunion. Our
parochialism.

The vagueness of our Gospel.

Our pact with pride and worldliness.

Our callousness to human misery.

Our failure to nurture the young for
Christ.

Our lip-service to Christ; our unrealism.

Our secularizing of revealed truth.

Our disregard of the Lord's mission
command.

Therefore again—and to the Church
Corporate—the prophetic word is:

Turn from prideful self and sin.

Follow Christ as He goes to save
today's world.

Learn at any cost the Spirit's truth for
our time.

Pray for awakening, for vision, for
courage to sacrifice.

These are inward conquests, but if we make them, we have God's word for it that we shall have outward victory. We shall recover faith in God and faith in humanity, waiting for Christ, to be redeemed by Him, and Him alone. By all means let us set up and keep up the rhythm of this inward response to God: of penitence, of obedience, of mental and spiritual wrestling.

But let outward expression also have its way.

We indicate this by three terms:

1. **SERVE.** Where shall we find what clean hands can do with all their might?

In the Church, where the laity—not only the ordained—must work for God, to witness, to recruit, to think out the Church's problems and carry out new policy.

In the home and neighborhood, in society, where Christ, and not humanism, can build and save.

In the State, which without Christ cannot educate, nor give justice and security to its citizens.

In the Nation (which perforce is but one in a family of nations), that there may be mutual fair-dealing and peace. Unless Christians sacrifice to serve in the world—business and politics—the Church abandons the world to greed and brute force.

2. **WORSHIP.** Paganism has its pageants for the adulation of dictators. Shall we be mute and unmoved—or worse, absent ourselves—in the Presence of our God who manifests His holiness, His loving-kindness, His power to save the world? Let the fellowship of the Church renew its strength by assembling to give thanks, to offer

praise and adoration, to discharge our instinct for passionate devotion to God who alone is worthy and will never belie us.

3. **SHARE.** Here, in action, in proof of that faith which overcomes the world. God manifested His nature in sharing Himself with us in the gift of His Son—a gift once given but ever streaming forth. We likewise manifest God within us by going out to share what we are as well as what we have. Every one of our sins is stamped with a refusal to share. Therefore, to reverse sin into Christlikeness, we undo the bars which lock us and all our riches away from God and other people. To take as instances but the first and last corporate sins listed above:

- (1) Disunion. When Churches loosen their clutch upon what they fear to share, they will find reunion—not before.

(2) Our missionary sense is faint because we do not love separated peoples enough to share freely and gladly with them.

While the Church delays, the world, driven by desperation, grasps at something else than God. Shall God be manifest? Here is a program of objective activity, not made by humans but revealed by Christ to His own.

SERVE—WORSHIP—SHARE

— *Forward Day by Day*, Epiphany 1937

Prayers



For Our Selves



For Courage

Traditional

Thou who art heroic love, keep alive in our hearts that adventurous spirit, which makes people scorn the way of safety, so that Thy will be done. *Amen.*

Contemporary

O God, you are heroic love: keep alive in our hearts that adventurous spirit, which makes us scorn the way of safety, so that your will be done. *Amen.*

— *Discipleship*, 1935



Prayers

For Courage on the Way

Traditional

O God, with whom nothing is impossible, grant me that courage which comes only from perfect union with Thee, the infinite source of all power and might, so that I may meet whatever Thou dost send me with serenity and peace, and never fail to think brave thoughts, to speak brave words, and do brave deeds. I ask this in the name of Him who died for me, our Savior, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Contemporary

O God, with whom nothing is impossible, grant me that courage which comes only from perfect union with you, the infinite source of all power and might, so that I may meet whatever you send me with serenity and peace, and never fail to think brave thoughts, to speak brave words, and do brave deeds. I ask this in the name of Him who died for me, our Savior, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

— *Forward Day by Day*, Late Trinity 1938



Prayers for Courage on the Way

For Endurance

Traditional

Teach us, good Lord, to serve Thee as Thou deservest; to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to seek for rest; to labor and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we do Thy will; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Contemporary

Teach us, good Lord, to serve you as you deserve; to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to seek for rest; to labor and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we do your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

— Ignatius of Loyola, *Discipleship*, 1935



For Serenity

Traditional

O God our Father, who bearest with us, though we bitterly offend; grant to us patience with one another, that we may cast away all fretfulness and complaining, and whatsoever hinders the course of brotherly kindness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Contemporary

O God our Father, who bears with us, though we bitterly offend; grant to us patience with one another, that we may cast away all fretfulness and complaining, and whatsoever hinders the course of generous kindness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

—*Forward Day by Day*, Epiphany 1937



For Loyalty

Traditional

Almighty God, grant us Thy gift of loyalty. For our homes, give us love and obedience; for our country, sacrifice and service; for our Church, reverence and devotion; and in everything make us true to Thee; through Thy Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Contemporary

Almighty God, grant us your gift of loyalty. For our homes, give us love and obedience; for our country, sacrifice and service; for our Church, reverence and devotion; and in everything make us true to you; through your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

— *Forward Day by Day*, Summer 1941



Prayers

For Grace to Forgive

Traditional

Merciful God, in whose dear Son we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins; Give us such strong belief in this the only power that can abolish evil that we shall be enabled to forgive our enemies; and grant us grace not only to forgive but to accept forgiveness through Christ, the crucified. *Amen.*

Contemporary

Merciful God, in whose dear Son we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins; give us such strong belief in this the only power that can abolish evil, that we shall be enabled to forgive our enemies; and grant us grace not only to forgive but to accept forgiveness through Christ, the crucified. *Amen.*

— *Forward Day by Day*, Summer 1941



That We May Know How

Traditional

Our Father, teach us not only Thy will, but how to do it. Teach us the best way of doing the best thing, lest we spoil the end by unworthy means; for the sake of Christ Jesus our Lord. *Amen.*

Contemporary

Our Father, teach us not only your will, but how to do it. Teach us the best way of doing the best thing, lest we spoil the end by unworthy means; for the sake of Christ Jesus our Lord. *Amen.*

— *Forward Day by Day*, Summer 1941



Prayers

For Guidance

Traditional

Our Father, guide us in our perplexities; restrain us in our joys; comfort us in our sorrows; guard us in our temptations and forgive us all our sins. Keep us patient under trial; in anxiety and worry, help us to find trust and peace in Thee.

We look into the future, as in a glass, darkly. Come what may, O God, save us from the bitterness of hate, and grant us grace to offer unto Thee all that life brings, for the fulfillment of Thy eternal purposes; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Guidance

Contemporary

Our Father, guide us in our perplexities; restrain us in our joys; comfort us in our sorrows; guard us in our temptations and forgive us all our sins. Keep us patient under trial; in anxiety and worry, help us to find trust and peace in you.

We look into the future, as in a glass, darkly. Come what may, O God, save us from the bitterness of hate, and grant us grace to offer unto you all that life brings, for the fulfillment of your eternal purposes; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

— *Forward Day by Day*, Late Trinity 1942



Prayers

Day by Day

Traditional

Our Father, help us to live with faith and hope and love. Lift our duty above drudgery; let not our strength fail or the vision fade in the heat and burden of the day. O God, make us patient and pitiful one with another in the fret and jar of life, remembering that each fights a hard fight and walks a lonely way. Forgive us, O Lord, if we hurt our fellow souls; teach us a gentler tone, a sweeter charity of words, and a more healing touch. Sustain us when we must face sorrow; give us courage for the day and hope for the morrow. Day unto day may we lay hold of Thy hand and look up into Thy face, whatever befall, until our work is finished and the day is done. *Amen.*

For Our Nation



In Time of National Anxiety

Traditional

Grant calmness and control of thought to those who are facing uncertainty and anxiety; let their hearts stand fast, believing in the Lord. Be Thou all things to all people, knowing each one and their petition, each house and its need; for the sake of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Contemporary

Grant calmness and control of thought to those who are facing uncertainty and anxiety; let their hearts stand fast, believing in the Lord. Be all things to all people, knowing each one and their petition, each house and its need; for the sake of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

— Russian liturgy

Forward Day by Day, Late Trinity 1942



For the Country

Traditional

Grant us, O God, a vision of our land, fair as she might be; a land of justice, where none shall prey on others; a land of plenty, where vice and poverty shall cease to fester; a land of brotherhood where all success shall be founded on service, and honor shall be given to nobleness alone; a land of peace where order shall not rest on force, but on the love of all for their land, the great mother of the common life and weal. Hear Thou, O Lord, the silent prayer of all our hearts as we pledge our time and strength and thought to speed the day of her coming beauty and righteousness. *Amen.*

For the Country

Contemporary

Grant us, O God, a vision of our land, fair as it might be; a land of justice, where none shall prey on others; a land of plenty, where vice and poverty shall cease to fester; a land of mutual love where all success shall be founded on service, and honor shall be given to righteousness alone; a land of peace where order shall not rest on force, but on the love of all for their land, the great mother of the common life and wellbeing. Hear, O Lord, the silent prayer of all our hearts as we pledge our time and strength and thought to speed the day of this nation's coming beauty and righteousness. *Amen.*

— *Forward Day by Day*, Late Trinity 1942



Prayers

For Our Young People

Traditional

O God, we praise Thee for renewing Age with the company of Youth. Bless their vision of a New Time. Grant that they may be strong; that Thy word may abide in them; that they may run a strait race and not be weary; and that they may overcome the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Contemporary

O God, we praise you for renewing age with the company of youth. Bless the young's vision of a new time. Grant that they may be strong; that your word may abide in them; that they may run a steady race and not be weary; and that they may overcome the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

— *Forward Day by Day*, Summer 1936



Prayers for Courage on the Way