

A photograph of a large, ancient tree trunk in a forest. The tree's roots are thick and gnarled, covered in vibrant green moss. The ground is covered with fallen brown leaves and twigs. In the background, other trees are visible, some with green leaves and others bare, suggesting an autumn or early spring setting. The overall atmosphere is serene and quiet.

A GUIDE TO SLOWING DOWN

Well, I'm a-running down the road
Tryin' to loosen my load
I've got seven women on my mind
Four that wanna own me
Two that wanna stone me
One says she's a friend of mine

Take it easy, take it easy
Don't let the sound of your own wheels drive you crazy
Lighten up while you still can
Don't even try to understand
Just find a place to make your stand
And take it easy

- "Take it easy", *The Eagles*

I will always remember driving to soccer games with my dad, *Lite 96*—Calgary's 'golden oldies' station—playing on the radio. At the time, the Eagles', "Take it easy", was a regular. The lyrics of this song are, well, complicated. On the one hand, 1970s misogyny in America looms large. On the other hand, the song speaks to the common human experience of feeling like you're running out of time, like you've got too much on your plate—whether at home, work, or in the community—all the while trying to decide what you will do, as Mary Oliver once put it, "with your one wild and precious life".

What follows is a series of prayers and reflections, to be said or read whenever. It could be lunch time; before a Zoom meeting; when you wake up in the morning; or, when you get out of bed for the third or fourth time in the night. The goal is simply this: to "lighten up while you still can"; to notice "the sound of your own wheels"; to slow down and "take it easy."

The Reverend Helen Dunn, St Clement's Anglican Church,
June 2023

Day 1

Dear Lord, You alone know
what my soul truly desires,
and You alone
can satisfy those desires.

Lord, show me the right seat;
find me the fitting task;
give me the willing heart.

I trust in Thee, O Lord.
I say, "Thou art my God.
My times are in Thy hand,
my times are in Thy hand."

-Excerpt from "Wrestling with the call of God"
in *Celtic Daily Prayer: Book 1, The Journey
Begins* (HarperCollins, London: 2002), p. 291

Day 2

All that I am, Lord,
I place into Your hands.

All that I do, Lord,
I place into Your hands.

Everything that I work for
I place into Your hands.
Everything I hope for
I place into Your hands.

The troubles that weary me
I place into Your hands.
The thoughts that disturb me
I place into Your hands.

Each that I pray for
I place into Your Hands.
Each that I care for
I place into Your hands.

-Excerpt from "Prayers for committing our work to God" in
Celtic Daily Prayer: Book 1, The Journey Begins
(HarperCollins, London: 2002), p. 278



Day 3

Lord, help me now to unclutter
my life,
to organize myself in the direction
of simplicity.

Lord, teach me to listen to my
heart;

teach me to welcome change,
instead of fearing it.

Lord, I give You these stirrings
inside me,

I give You my discontent,

I give You my restlessness,

I give You my doubt,

I give You my despair,

I give You all the longings I hold
inside.

Help me to listen to these signs of
change, of growth; to listen
seriously and follow where they
may lead through the
breathtaking empty space of an
open door.

-Excerpt from "A prayer in the 'middle
years' of opportunity" in *Celtic Daily Prayer:
Book 1, The Journey Begins* (HarperCollins,
London: 2002), p. 184

Day 4

Do not hurry
as you walk with grief;
it does not help the journey.
Walk slowly,
pausing often:
do not hurry
as you walk with grief.

Be not disturbed
by memories that come unbidden.
Swiftly forgive:
and let Christ speak for you
unspoken words.
Unfinished conversation
will be resolved in Him.
Be not disturbed.

Be gentle with the one
who walks with grief.
If it is you,
be gentle with yourself.
Swiftly forgive;
walk slowly,
pausing often.

Take time, be gentle
as you walk with grief.

-Excerpt from Andy Raine, "Walking with grief" in *Celtic Daily Prayer: Book 1, The Journey Begins* (HarperCollins, London: 2002), p. 190

Day 5

We hold before God:
those for whom life is very difficult;
those who have difficult decisions to make, and who
honestly do not know what is the right thing to do.

We hold before God:
those who have difficult tasks to do and to face, and
who fear they may fail in them;
those who have difficult temptations to face, and
who know only too well that they may fall to them,
if they try to meet them alone.

We hold before God:
those who know that they can be their own worst
enemies.

We hold before God:
those who have difficult people to work with;
those who have to suffer unjust treatment, unfair
criticism, unappreciated work.

We hold before God:
those who are sad because someone they loved has
died; and any who are disappointed in something
for which they hoped very much.

-William Barclay, "A general intercession for those in trouble" in
Celtic Daily Prayer: Book 1, The Journey Begins (HarperCollins,
London: 2002), p. 182

Day 6

All I speak
be blessed to me, O God.

All I hear
be blessed to me, O God.

All I see
be blessed to me, O God.

All I sense
be blessed to me, O God.

All I taste
be blessed to me, O God.

Each step I take
be blessed to me, O God.

-Excerpt from "Chad - in willing service" in *Celtic Daily Prayer: Book 1, The Journey Begins* (HarperCollins, London: 2002), p. 288

Day 7

Lord,
let our memory
provide no shelter
for grievance
against another.

Lord,
let our heart
provide no harbour
for hatred of
another.

Lord,
let our tongue
be no accomplice
in the judgement of
[another].

-Excerpt from "Cuthbert
- into a desert place" in
*Celtic Daily Prayer: Book
1, The Journey Begins*
(HarperCollins, London:
2002), p. 298



Day 8



Saranam (refuge)

Receive our thanks
for night and day,
for food and shelter,
rest and play.
Be here our guest,
and with us stay,
saranam, saranam, saranam.

For this small earth
of sea and land,
for this small space
on which we stand,
for those we touch
with heart and hand,
saranam, saranam, saranam.

In the midst of foes
I cry to Thee,
from the ends of earth,
wherever I may be,
My strength in helplessness,
oh, answer me!
saranam, saranam, saranam.

Make my heart to grow
as great as Thine,
so through my hurt
Your love may shine,
my love be Yours,
Your love be mine,
saranam, saranam, saranam.

For those who've gone,
for those who stay,
for those to come,
following the Way,
be guest and guide
both night and day,
saranam, saranam, saranam.



Day 9

In these bodies we will live, in these bodies we will die
And where you invest your love, you invest your life

-Mumford and Sons, "Awake my soul" from *Sigh No More*
(Gentlemen of the Road: London, 2009)

Day 10

When you see me sitting quietly,
Like a sack left on the shelf,
Don't think I need your chattering.
I'm listening to myself.
Hold! Stop! Don't pity me!
Hold! Stop your sympathy!
Understanding if you got it,
Otherwise I'll do without it!
When my bones are stiff and aching,
And my feet won't climb the stair,
I will only ask one favor:
Don't bring me no rocking chair.
When you see me walking, stumbling,
Don't study and get it wrong.
'Cause tired don't mean lazy
And every goodbye ain't gone.
I'm the same person I was back then,
A little less hair, a little less chin,
A lot less lungs and much less wind.
But ain't I lucky I can still breathe in.

-Maya Angelou, "On aging" in *Maya Angelou: The Complete Poetry* (Random House, New York: 2015), p. 166

Day 11

What is a poem?
It is the quietest,
softest part of you,
held to an invisible microphone,
held up to the light,
held up beyond the hustle and bustle of the day
and the groaning aches of the night.

A poem is the anger
that releases itself
in your time of greatest need,
when you are ready to fracture
before you believe again,
ready to break open
and receive yourself
to yourself.

A poem is the whisper
that tells everything,
the secret that cannot be denied:

You are exactly as
you've always been—
Beloved Word,
Spoken Self,
Relieved Ache,
Tender Child.
The poem is you.
It always was.

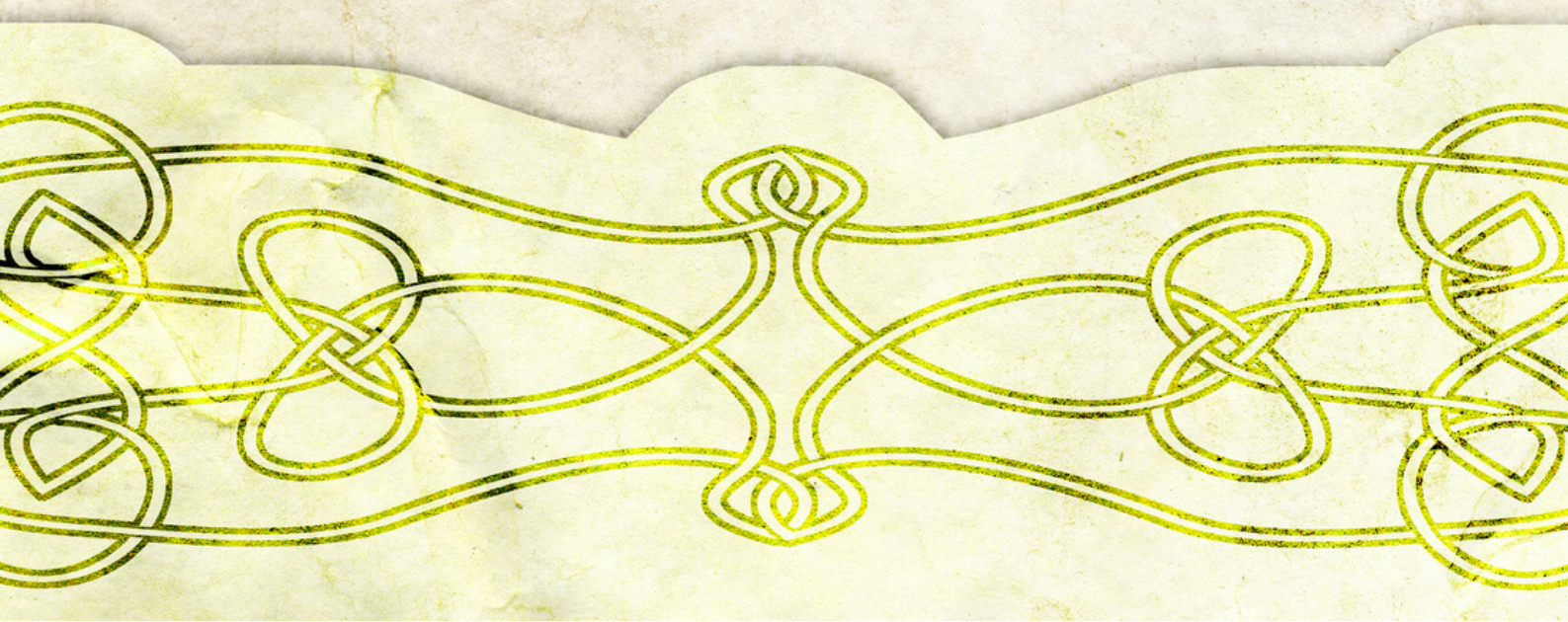
-Kaitlin Curtice in *Living Resistance* (Brazos Press, London:
2023)



Day 12

To confess your sins to God is not to say anything God does not already know. Until you confess them, however, they are the abyss between you. When you confess them, they become the bridge.

-Frederick Buechner in *Celtic Daily Prayer: Book 1, The Journey Begins* (HarperCollins, London: 2002), p. 648





Day 13

Those who lean on
Jesus' breast hear God's
heartbeat.

-Fr Amphilothius, hermit of
Patmos (1889-1970) in *Celtic
Daily Prayer: Book 1, The
Journey Begins* (HarperCollins,
London: 2002), p. 298

A photograph of a forest floor. In the foreground, there are many brown pine cones scattered across the ground, which is covered with dry pine needles and some green moss. A path made of flat, grey stones winds through the forest. In the background, there are tall, thin trees with green foliage. The lighting is soft, suggesting a dappled sunlight effect.

Day 14

When I am among the trees,
especially the willows and the honey locust,
equally the beech, the oaks and the pines,
they give off such hints of gladness.
I would almost say that they save me, and
daily.

I am so distant from the hope of myself,
in which I have goodness, and discernment,
and never hurry through the world
but walk slowly, and bow often.

Around me the trees stir in their leaves
and call out, "Stay awhile."

The light flows from their branches.
And they call again, "It's simple," they say,
"and you too have come
into the world to do this, to go easy, to be
filled
with light, and to shine."

-Mary Oliver, "When I am among the trees" in *Devotions: The Selected Poems of Mary Oliver* (Penguin Press, New York: 2017)



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