

## Ministerial Musings

“How you doin’?” you ask innocently while eyeing the last quiche on the mini-feast buffet line.



“Not bad, but I’d love your prayers for my mom. The dementia’s kicking in and I feel like I lose a little more of her every day.”

Any grinding sound you hear is your emotional gears shifting without a clutch. The quiche is forgotten; you instantly try to be totally present to your friend, “I’m so sorry. That must be hard. Of course I’ll pray for her, and for you.” ...It’s the right thing to say, the only thing to say. But now that you’ve said it, how do you do it?

Will you pray a **resurrection prayer**? “God, by the power with which you raised Jesus from the dead, restore this mother in body and mind. Bring her back to the family that loves her so mightily.” You like that prayer because you like your friend, and you know God has the necessary power and compassion (in fact, God loves everyone involved far more than you do). But you also know the answer will almost undoubtedly be “No.” Healing will come after death, not now.

You might try a **prayer of incarnation**: call for the Holy Spirit to be with this mother and her family. One reason Jesus came was to be with us and to share our lives — the good and the bad. Just as there’s power in knowing today’s pain is not the end of our story, there’s power in knowing God understands. Of course, this prayer is tricky. We really ARE Jesus’ hands and feet. If your friend needs to lean on Jesus’ shoulder, the Spirit may use YOUR shoulder to make it happen. If so, it won’t feel like enough, but it will help.

One other possibility: a **prayer of transfiguration**. It’s a prayer to see deeper. Just as Jesus saw the horror of the cross AND the glory of the resurrection beyond it, we can pray: “God, use this tragedy to help us glimpse the real world. When things are calm, we don’t see it, but as we cower before this storm, help us feel your hand and find comfort in hearing: ‘Fear not, I am with you always.’ Thank you for loving us, now and always. ...Amen.”

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