PRAYERS
(A selection chosen from different traditions to illustrate the range of kinds of texts we can offer as prayer. Which other prayers or texts close to your own heart might you add?)
Compiled by Vanessa Able March 2024

Hail Mary
Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death, Amen.

Psalm 23
The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

The Lord's Prayer
Our Father, which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done in earth,
As it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
The power, and the glory,
For ever and ever. Amen.
Cherokee Prayer Blessing
May the Warm Winds of Heaven
Blow softly upon your house.
May the Great Spirit
Bless all who enter there.
May your Mocassins
Make happy tracks
in many snows,
and may the Rainbow
Always touch your shoulder.

Irish Blessing
May the road rise up to meet you
May the wind be always at your back
May the sun shine warm upon your face
The rains fall soft upon your fields
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand

A Blessing of Hands for Hospital Workers
Formed in your mother’s womb, these precious hands, which have been scraped, bent, worn down, and maybe even broken, are yet perfect in the Divine’s eyes.

Bless these hands, for they bring comfort to those so in need of comforting.
Bless these hands, for they nurture and care for those unable to care for themselves.
Bless these hands, for they are skilled in ways even they know not of.
Bless these hands, for even in the darkest of nights, they shine like a beacon of hope.
Bless these hands, for the very sight of them can be an answered prayer.

I wash them in rose water, sweet smelling and therapeutic, for these hands are a blessing to us all.
Amen.
Mary Oliver - Wild Geese
You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting -
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

John O’Donohue - Beannacht
On the day when
the weight deadens
on your shoulders
and you stumble,
may the clay dance
to balance you.

And when your eyes
freeze behind
the grey window
and the ghost of loss
gets into you,
may a flock of colours,
indigo, red, green
and azure blue,
come to awaken in you
a meadow of delight.

When the canvas frays
in the currach of thought
and a stain of ocean
blackens beneath you,
may there come across the waters
a path of yellow moonlight
to bring you safely home.

May the nourishment of the earth be yours,
may the clarity of light be yours,
may the fluency of the ocean be yours,
may the protection of the ancestors be yours.

And so may a slow
wind work these words
of love around you,
an invisible cloak
to mind your life.

**Buddhist Dedication of Merit**
Through this goodness may awakening spontaneously arise in our streams of being. May all obscurations and distortions fall away. May all beings be liberated from suffering, and the stormy waves of birth, sickness, old age, and death.

By this merit may all attain omniscience. May it defeat the enemy, wrong-doing. From the stormy waves of birth, old age, sickness, and death, from the ocean of samsara, may I free all beings.

**Purification Chant (Zen)**
All my ancient, twisted karma,
From beginningless greed, hate and delusion.
Born through body, speech and mind,
I now fully avow.