

Prayers of the People, 9-25-11

Rev. Dr. Casey G. Baggott

Community Church of Vero Beach

Based on Matthew 10:2-31, All Shall Be Well

Constant God, we came here this morning to remember and give thanks for life's blessings, even as we acknowledge its strains and demands. Each of us is grateful for the blessings we know. We have offered gifts of song and prayer and worship, along with our monetary offering, all out of our gratitude – for life, for friendship, for new starts and new perspectives, for love, for the beauty of our world, for the promises of faith – and for the hope you inspire. We thank you for everything that thrills us and touches our hearts, that challenges us and stretches us, that comforts and reassures us. We are grateful.

And yet amidst our recognition of the great bounty we've received by your hand, we are also aware of those things we feel we lack. We lack certainty about our future and that of those we love. Some of us are uncertain about health, or about a hardship that lies ahead, or about a relationship that has failed or has been strained, or about antagonism or indifference we must face. We lack the knowledge that these matters will be resolved as we wish. Grant us the courage and confidence to face what we must, uncertain though we may be about ultimate outcomes. Remind us that when our hearts are heavy, our minds confounded, and our spirits strained, that we never face distress alone.

Teach us, as you have taught so many through the centuries who followed your Son, that we are held firmly in your grasp of grace. Remind us again that not a sparrow falls without your awareness. You, who are the master of the sparrows, will surely watch over us, too. You made us, you love us, you plant seeds of eternity within us and preserve us for your kingdom. We cannot fall out of your loving hands

If this life, then, brings us any heartache or hardship, let our troubles be the means by which we cultivate endurance, establish our character, and produce sustaining hope for our lives. Take the raw stuff of our lives, God: the good and the bad, the losses and the victories, the pettiness and the grandeur, and make of us firm, strong, constant, loving and ever-hopeful disciples.

Help us to cling to the promise of Christ: that our own history, and that of the wider world around us, is not headed into ultimate chaos and destruction, but towards your kingdom's coming – where at last all shall be well, all shall be well, all manner of thing shall be well.

We pray today in the name of Jesus our Christ, who taught his disciples to trust that promise. Using his words we say together ... *the Lord's Prayer*.