

A Reflection on Caregiving at the End of Life

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CALL TO PRAYER

LEADER: Today we pray for those who are facing the end of their earthly life and for those who care for them. In *Food for the Journey*, Sr. Juliana Casey, IHM, addresses the grace and courage they share. “Many dying persons are a source of wisdom and grace. Their own courage increases ours. Their dignity speaks radiantly of the image of God that we all are. ... Courage, finally, is grace. Given to us in God’s Spirit, anchored in belief in the Resurrection, courage sustains us before what will remain mystery until the end of time.”

READING 1

(From *Our Greatest Gift: A Meditation on Dying and Caring*, by Henri J. M. Nouwen)

We can choose to live as God’s beloved children in solidarity with all people, trusting in our ultimate fruitfulness. And in so doing, we can also become people who care for others. As men and women who have faced our mortality, we can help our brothers and sisters to dispel the darkness of death and guide them toward the light of God’s grace. ... Caring is the privilege of every person and is at the heart of being human. ... There is a unity in living and caring.

(*Silent reflection*)

READING 2

Revelation 21:3-7

I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, God’s dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away.” The one who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I

make all things new.”

(*Silent reflection*)

RESPONSE

Psalm 90:1-6, 12, 17

(Alternate sides)

Lord, you have been our refuge through all generations. Before the mountains were born, the earth and the world brought forth, from eternity to eternity you are God.

A thousand years in your eyes are merely a yesterday, but humans you return to dust, saying, “Return, you mortals!”

Before a watch passes in the night,
you have brought them to their end;
They disappear like sleep at dawn;
they are like grass that dies.
It sprouts green in the morning;
by evening it is dry and withered.

*Teach us to count our days aright,
that we may gain wisdom of heart.
May the favor of the Lord our God be ours.*

ALL: O Lord, support us all the day long, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in Thy mercy grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Suggested music: “The King of Love My Shepherd Is”