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*A Caregiver’s Prayer*

**A Prayer for Those Who Are Living with Alzheimer’s Disease**

*Based on the Prayer of Saint Francis*

**Lord make me an instrument of your peace.**

*Give me the grace to have what I already have and to make it grow;*

*help me to reap a personal sense of calm and restfulness in the*

*midst of my loved one's devastating disease*

*and to extend that peace in his/her daily care.*

**Where there is hatred, let me sow love.**

*Help me to sow love in the midst of this hated disease.*

*Teach me how to render loving and patient care to my loved one.*

*Show me the way to be Your instrument of grace*

*and help me come to a resolution of acceptance and consideration.*

**Where there is discord, union.**

**Where there is injury, pardon.**

*Help me to seek healing of a hardened heart,*

*oftentimes full of anger and resentment,*

*and to reconcile myself to the reality of my loved one's disease;*

*to see the "injury" of Alzheimer's as a means for me and my affected loved one*

*to grow in greater love and intimacy with you, Lord,*

*and to pardon that which is unknown for causing this devastating disease.*

 **Where there is doubt, faith.**

*I know doubt is a necessary part of life.*

*Help me in situations when I doubt myself in the care of my loved one;*

*when I question my responsibilities of being a caregiver;*

*when I sit in doubt at times thinking You have abandoned me, Lord;*

*and most of all, when I lose that faith and hope*

*that I know are what ultimately sustain me and my loved one*

*throughout the journey of this disease,*

**Where there is despair, hope.**

*I know that everyone dealing with this disease has despair,*

*but help me to be an instrument to others*

*so I can offer hope to them, too.*

*In my despair, give me the grace to reach out to others for solace and support,*

*so that we all can know the hope that is always restored*

*through your love and grace, Lord.*

**Where there is darkness, light.**

*I know Jesus is the Light of the World.*

*Help me always to remember and to receive that Light of Christ.*

*I am a reflection of that Light;*

*my loved one with Alzheimer's is a reflection of that Light, too.*

*Help us, together, to be that Light for ourselves and others.*

**And where there is sadness, joy.**

*I am losing my loved one to this devastating disease.*

*It makes both of us sad.*

*Help me to recognize the joy in the present moment with my loved one each day;*

*to experience that joy together, to overcome our sadness that sometimes prevails,*

*and to know that God is ever with us on our journey.*

**O Divine Master, grant that I may
not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;**

*Help me not to be so needy.*

*Use me as an instrument to others for consolation,*

*even in my own journey and grief.*

*Help me find the grace to care and comfort others*

*who are also affected by this disease,*

*thereby giving my loved one and me comfort, too.*

**To be understood, as to understand;**

*Help me not to be fixated on always trying to understand my loved one*

*and always wanting for him/her to understand me;*

*what he/she is trying to communicate;*

*all the "whys" and" hows" of this disease;*

*but to just understand and listen most of all;*

*and to recognize that the progression of the disease*

*is destroying my loved one's brain, not the person behind the disease.*

**To be loved, as to love.**

*I miss my loved one's love; I miss the touch and companionship;*

*the days of sharing and caring for each other.*

*Help me to keep our love alive;*

*to aspire to love him/her as much as I can through this journey,*

*knowing that when I am caring for another human being, we both grow in love,*

*and that when we both grow in that love, it will be given whole-heartedly to others.*

**For it is in giving that we receive.**

*Help me not to tire of all the "care" giving*

*and to be charitable in that giving.*

*Help me be a more generous receiver;*

*to receive the abundant gifts of others,*

*to accept help and welcome help*

*throughout this disease journey.*

**It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.**

*Help me to forgive myself for all the times when I am angry, or weary, or lonely,*

*or upset, or impatient, or frustrated. …*

*Help me to know that my loved one forgives me, too;*

*for my negative actions and emotions oftentimes become elevated because*

*the madness of the disease overwhelms me.*

**And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.**

*Give me the strength and perseverance when grief overcomes me*

 *to withstand the loss of my loved one twice;*

*to endure patiently when he/she no longer recognizes me,*

*when I am seen as a stranger or foe,*

*when I must realize the slow passing away of a person I once knew and still love;*

*and finally, give me the grace and fortitude for that final goodbye*

*so that I might* *have peace and promise in my loved one's physical death*

*when my loved one is joined with Christ in a new, eternal life.*

**Amen.**

*By Dana Territo, Director of Services, Alzheimer’s Services of the Capital Area, Baton Rouge, Louisiana*