

The Southwell Litany: A Litany for personal prayer

(Note: The original prayer was written in later 1800's by George Ridding first Bishop Southwell, England. It covers what has been the structure of classical Christian prayers since the 13th century, the acronym of which is ACTS – adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication) What is below is a Dr. Richard's adaptation of the original King James language). This prayer was the final prayer at the close of every retreat around the country hosted by the Congregational Society of Retreat Guides. Dr. Richard was President of this Society for several years, and has been a member of the Society for almost 30 years).

Let us pray:

O Lord, open our minds to see ourselves as You see us, or even as others see us and we see others, and from all unwillingness to know our infirmities,

Save us and help us, we humbly beseech You, O Lord.

From moral weakness of spirit; from timidity; from hesitation; from fear of others and dread of responsibility, strengthen us with courage to speak the truth in love and self-control; and alike from the weakness of hasty violence and weakness of moral cowardice,

Save us and help us, we humbly beseech You, O Lord.

From weakness of judgment; from the indecision that can make no choice; from the irresolution that carries no choice into act; and from losing opportunities to serve You,

Save us and help us, we humbly beseech You, O Lord.

From infirmity of purpose; from want of earnest care and interest; from the sluggishness of indolence, and the slackness of indifference; and from all spiritual deadness of heart,

Save us and help us, we humbly beseech You, O Lord.

From dullness of conscience; from feeble sense of duty; from thoughtless disregard of consequences to others; from a low idea of the obligations of our Christian calling; and from all half-heartedness in our service for You,

Save us and help us, we humbly beseech You, O Lord.

From weariness in continuing struggles; from despondency in failure and disappointment; from overburdened sense of unworthiness; from morbid fancies of imaginary back-sliding, raise us up to a lively hope and trust in Your presence and mercy, in the power of faith and prayer; and from all exaggerated fears and vexations,

Save us and help us, we humbly beseech You, O Lord.

From self-conceit, vanity and boasting; from delight in supposed success and superiority, raise us up to modesty and humility of true sense and taste and reality; and from all the harms and hindrances of offensive manners and self-assertion,

Save us and help us, we humbly beseech You, O Lord.

From affectation and untruth, conscious or unconscious; from pretence and acting a part which is hypocrisy; from impulsive self-adaptation to the moment in unreality to please persons or make circumstances easy, strengthen us to honorable simplicity; and from all false appearances,

Save us and help us, we humbly beseech You, O Lord.

From love of flattery; from over-ready belief in praise; from dislike of criticism; from the comfort of self-deception in persuading ourselves that others think better than the truth of us,

Save us and help us, we humbly beseech You, O Lord.

From all love of display and sacrifice to popularity; from thought of ourselves in forgetfulness of You in our worship; hold our minds in spiritual reverence; and in all our words and works from all self-glorification,

Save us and help us, we humbly beseech You, O Lord.

From pride and self-will from desire to have our own way in all things; from overweening love of our own ideas and blindness to the value of others; from resentment against opposition and contempt for the claims of others; enlarge the generosity of our hearts and enlighten the fairness of our judgments; and from all selfish arbitrariness of temper,

Save us and help us, we humbly beseech You, O Lord.

From all jealousy, whether of equals or superiors; from grudging others success; from impatience of submission and eagerness for authority; give us the spirit of true fellowship to share loyally with fellow-workers in all true proportions; and from all insubordination to law, order, and authority,

Save us and help us, we humbly beseech You, O Lord.

From all hasty utterances of impatience; from the retort of irritation and the taunt of sarcasm; from all infirmity of temper in provoking or being provoked; from love of unkind gossip, and from all idle words that may do hurt,

Save us and help us, we humbly beseech You, O Lord.

In all times of temptation to follow pleasure, to leave duty for amusement, to indulge in distraction and dissipation, in dishonesty and debt, to degrade our high calling and forget our Christian vows, and in all times of frailty in our flesh,

Save us and help us, we humbly beseech You, O Lord.

In all times of ignorance and perplexity as to what is right and best to do, O Lord, direct us with wisdom to judge rightly; order our ways and rule over our circumstances as You can in Your good Providence; and in our mistakes and misunderstandings,

Save us and help us, we humbly beseech You, O Lord.

In times of doubts and questions, when our belief is perplexed by new learning, new thought, when our faith is strained by creeds, by doctrines, by mysteries beyond our understanding, give us the faithfulness of learners and the courage of believers in You; alike from stubborn rejection of new revelations, and from hasty assurance that we are wiser than our forebears,

Save us and help us, we humbly beseech You, O Lord.

From strife and partisanship and division among Christians, from magnifying our certainties to condemn all differences, from all arrogance in our dealings with all people,

Save us and help us, we humbly beseech You, O Lord.

Give us knowledge of ourselves, our powers and weaknesses, our spirit, our sympathy, our imagination, our knowledge, our truth; teach us by the standard of Your Word, by the judgments of others, by examinations of ourselves; give us earnest desire to strengthen ourselves continually by study, by diligence, by prayer and meditation; and from all fancies, delusions, and prejudices of habit, or temper, or society,

Save us and help us, we humbly beseech You, O Lord.

Give us true knowledge of those with whom we live, or work, or pray, in their differences from us and in their likenesses to us, that we may deal with their real selves, not measuring their feelings by our own, but patiently considering their varied lives and thoughts and circumstances; and in all our relations to them, from false judgments of our own, from misplaced trust and distrust, from misplaced giving and refusing, from misplaced praise and rebuke,

Save us and help us, we humbly beseech You, O Lord.

Chiefly, O Lord, we pray You, give us knowledge of You, to see You in all Your works, always to feel Your presence near, to hear and know Your call. May Your Spirit be our will, and in all our shortcomings and infirmities may we have sure faith in You,

Save us and help us, we humbly beseech You, O Lord.

Finally, O Lord, we humbly beseech You, blot out our past transgressions, heal the evils of our past negligences and ignorances, make us amend our past mistakes and misunderstandings; uplift our hearts to new love, new energy and devotion, that we may be unburdened from the grief and

shame of past faithlessness to go forth in Your strength to persevere through success and failure, through good report and evil report, even to the end; and in all time of our tribulation, in all time of our prosperity,

Save us and help us, we humbly beseech You, O Lord.

The Lord's Prayer

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all for evermore. Amen.