1. **Reflection on Happiness**

Is not this happiness

To rise the company of a good friend;

To eat a simple breakfast with gratitude;

To say one’s prayers outdoors in the sun,

With a rowdy choir of birds singing in the fresh air;

To pick up a book without haste and savour rich meditations from wise ones who lived long ago;

To remember loved ones far away or near;

To know it is the truth when the Man from Nazareth says:

‘Be of good cheer’.

1. **The best part**

The best part of anyone’s life is ‘the little nameless unremembered acts of kindness and love’. It is these things which show that we have understood and accepted Christ’s love and grace which has been freely given to us. It is the grace and love of Christ which makes each of us somebody – somebody able to enrich and bless – in thousands of little ways – the lives of others. Those who put behind them fanciful ideas of their eloquence, and utter in time of distress a word fitly spoken. Or those who forget their own self-importance, and allow others to lean on their shoulders for support. This is what all of us are called to do, this day and every day.

1. **Prayer**

Loving God,

We pray that you might become for each of us a close companion through all the various paths where the responsibilities of discipleship and service lead us.

May we catch from you an understanding of the real reason for our being alive

In times of prosperity, fill our hearts with gratitude;

In moments of trouble do not allow our trust in you to fail.

Give us readiness and strong incentive to join with those who watch and pray for a better order of things upon this earth.

Safeguard and strengthen within us the belief that the prayer of faith changes things because it first changes us.

Make us more attractive witnesses to the Christian life

Breathe into us your love and truth so that we may be possessed and possess ideals and purposes that identify us more clearly as children of God.

In Jesus name we pray.

1. **Echo of Psalm 65**

Freely our praise comes to you, O God,

Worshipping in response to your faithfulness.

You visit the earth and water it,

You come among us with refreshment.

You soften the hills with rain,

And quench their thirst with storms.

The rivers of God are overflowing,

The soul is prepared for new growth.

Rivers and fields are renewed and waterfalls thunder with joy.

You crown the year with gladness,

All your footsteps drip with new life -

Life for the wild places beyond our land

Turning the mountain slopes green and purple;

Flocks gather in the fields

And flowers edge the roads through the Highlands.

There is an ear that hears our prayers

A love to whom all can turn.

You give us joy at the break of day,

And fill the evenings with happiness.

Everything declares its exaltation!

Everything is a song of highest praise.

1. **Prayer**

Dear Lord of all faithful believers everywhere

We lay before you now our intercessions for all those, known and unknown to us

Who are searching for peace of mind, untroubled hearts, and steadiness of will

Enable them to hear your call to follow you and trace the steps of the Man of Nazareth.

Add to their powers the resources that come to every dedicated spirit so that in all their works begun, continued, and ended in you they will find new life that is worth living.

O Eternal Spirit,

You are the holy and faithful protector of the human race.

We lift up to you the yearnings and pleadings of this and every community throughout our land today.

Transform the ordinary plans of governments and societies into movements that are good and inspired by redemptive and loving concern.

Wherever the flames of truth and justice grow dim, light the blaze of righteousness anew so that everyone of your under privileged children will be able to achieve their true humanity as the children of God who created them.

Touch all who are in pain of mind or body with healing power.

Guide and protect the Church from spiritual mediocrity, and guard us against being satisfied with second best.

May we learn to receive your blessings and be enriched by your guidance, through our Saviour Jesus Christ

1. **A Raisin in the Sun**

The play *A Raisin in the Sun* tells the story of an African American family in Chicago. The mother- a single parent- had a hard life, looking after her children and scrubbing floors to pay the bills. She has a sum of money in an insurance policy which she dreams someday will buy her a home of her own with a garden. Her son’s pleadings for her to give it to him to make more eventually prevail upon her. So she gives up her dream of a house and flowers and gives it to him. Of course he blows it. Then the sister, the brother and the mother meet. The sister berates him for his foolishness and screams and shouts at him in her gross indignation. Her mother silences her by slapping her face. Then her mother says, ‘There is always something left to love. Do you love them most when they have done well? No, it is when he is at his lowest, when his cannot believe in himself that we love most.’

Is this also true of God and God’s children?

1. **Prayer**

Loving and merciful God

We bring before you all those who have lost their way and are floundering among options where the truth is fuzzy and unclear;

Those whose cherished plans have been broken by forces not of their own making or choosing;

Those whose attitudes and temperaments have become soured by having to work with those who are undependable and untruthful;

Those whose hopes have been destroyed by planners who did not take them into account;

Those whose lives have been smothered by the monotony of the same routine for every rising sun to evening shade.

Creator of the realm of new possibilities and fresh starts,

Come to all the beleaguered children of the earth and grant them power to keep them strong;

Impart wisdom to all seeking to make life different for the oppressed and hopeless, and make us all aware of the possibilities near at hand.

Give all courage and patience so that we may be equal to the burden and challenge of these hours.

In Christ’s name we pray.

1. **Glory**

Glory be to you, O Lord

For you have given us creation

With its colours and shapes, sounds and tastes.

Glory be to you. O Lord,

For you have given the human family

With its many tongues and cultures.

Glory be to you, O Lord,

For you have given us Christ Jesus,

Brother of each of us and redeemer of all.

Therefore with all loving people,

Near or far off,

Remembered or forgotten,

We join to praise you.

Holy, holy, holy Lord of joy,

The earth and the heavens are full of the radiance of your glory.

Glory to you,

Friend most loveable,

Lord most wonderful.

1. **Emil Brunner**

The Swiss theologian Emil Brunner said ,’If the church produces no living acts of charity for the community as a whole, it is impossible to avoid suspecting that she is ick unto death’.

The parable of the God Samaritan is crucial in the expression and of the Christian faith. The action of Christians in society in the community is the demonstration of the reality of the faith and commitment of individuals and communities who claim to be followers of Jesus, those who are the successors of the disciples. What is the Church going to do in future to make the impact we are expected to articulate in the changes in our society after the lockdown is over?

1. **Busyness and Blindness**

Lord, save me

From the busyness

That fails to see

Your beauty

In every bush and tree,

Your power

In every plant and flower.

Your love

In all the things

That live and move,

Including me.

1. **Phillips Brooks**

The Bishop of Boston reckoned to be one of the greatest preachers of the Victorian age in English, Philips Brooks, expressed in a prayer an exhortation that may be important to recall ;

‘*We do not ask for tasks equal to our powers, but powers equal to our tasks.*

*We do not ask for tests equal to our shaky faith, but faith equal to life’s times of trail’.*

Stress, strain, isolation, anxiety, depression, fear and feelings of inadequacy abound in this period of the threat of the virus which surrounds us. We are not able to deal with all this by ourselves. Not merely by taking medical advice and the help of psychologists, but also in the openness to the Spirit of God which can and does transform our lives and enables us to deal with the darkest experiences of our lives.

**12 Prayer**

Creator and Giver of every gift in life,

Where we are weak, grant us the power of your grace.

Where we are strong, give us humility.

Open us up to the surprises of life,

So that what is hidden in the everyday and commonplace

May lighten our way in the world as the disciples of Jesus.

In whose name we pray.

**13 God on Trial**

One of the incidents recorded in the concentration camp in Buchenwald in the Second World War tells of a group of rabbis who were very learned. One day in despair, they decided that they would put God on trial because of their suffering. Witnesses came forward, some for the persecution, some for the defence, and a bench of rabbis acted as the judges. In the light of their experiences, the case for the prosecution was overwhelming. Their community was being wiped out; most of their families had already been destroyed. ‘How’, one said,’ could a good God permit this to happen?’

A desperate defence was mounted, but they had little difficult y in reaching their verdict that God was guilty as charged of neglecting his people. Silence fell upon the hut, and then one elderly inmate rose this feet. ‘Nevertheless’, he said,’ it is time for our evening prayers’

Blaming God might be an easy and comforting away out, but it does not address our needs in this time of death, suffering and desolation. Sometimes only prayer is the option for our situation

**14. The Parable of the Little Lifesaving Station**

On a dangerous sea coast, where shipwrecks often occur, there was once a crude little lifesaving station. The building was just a hut and there was only one boat, but the few devoted members, with no thought for themselves, went out day and night tirelessly searching for the lost. Many were saved, so the little station became famous. Some who were rescued, and others in the surrounding area, wanted to support the work, so new boats were bought and new crews trained. The little lifesaving station grew.

Some of the members were unhappy that the building was so crude and poorly equipped. They believed that a more comfortable place should be provided, so better furniture was bought and the building enlarged. It was decorated and used as a club for its members. Fewer and fewer were interested in going out to sea on lifesaving missions, so they hired lifeboat crews to do the work. The lifesaving motif still prevailed in the decoration, and there was a liturgical lifeboat in the room where the club initiations were held.

About this time a large ship was wrecked and the hired crew brought in boatloads of cold, wet and half –drowned people. They were dirty and sick, and some had skin of a different colour to those who frequented the lifesaving station as members. The chaos spurred the committee to action. A shower block was built outside to clean up all the victims of shipwrecks before they came inside.

Then a split in the club happened. Most members wanted the life-saving activities to stop immediately, as they were an unpleasant hindrance to the normal social life of the club. Some insisted upon lifesaving as their primary purpose, and pointed out that they were called a lifesaving station. They were finally voted out, and told that if they wanted that sort of thing, they could go and begin their own lifesaving station down the coast. They did.

As time passed, however, the new station experienced the same changes. It evolved into a club, and yet another station was founded. History continued to repeat itself, and if you visit the sea-coast today, you will find a number of exclusive clubs along it.

Shipwrecks are still frequent, but most of the people drown.