

Newman Docs / others

Hildegard Liturgies

Hildegard Liturgy

Eastlight													
Sлимпick Wallet													
FOOLSCAP													

Ref. Buff 45112, Blue 45113, Green 45114, Grey 45115, Orange 45116, Pink 45117, Red 45118, Yellow 45119. Made in England.

45114

Centring music of Hildegard of Bingen

(Viridiissima Virga, celebrating the springing forth from the green branch of Mary
the new life of Christ, at which all the earth was made joyful)

Prayer (from Iona)

Be still my children
My voice is not always
heard in the thunder and earthquakes
of your experience.
I do not only speak when you are
physically and mentally involved in living.
Be still - and in the stillness I will speak
when you are quiet
when you are resting
when you are aware of me pulsating within
you and around you
when you are waiting and listening
I will break through
and enrich your silence
releasing my peace and glory
and transforming your experience
until in the stillness
you find yourself longing
to shout for joy.

Put yourself in a position of relaxation and think of
the aspects of God's presence in creation that
particularly appeals to you. After a couple of minutes,
share your thoughts with the person next to you (in
turns).

Poem by Edwina Gately (adapted) Sides A and B

A. We are called to become
A perfect creation.
No one is called to become
who we individually are called to be.
It does not matter
How short or tall
Or thick-set or slow
We may be.

B. It does not matter
whether we sparkle with life
Or are silent as a still pool,
Whether we sing your song aloud
Or weep alone in darkness.

A. It does not matter
Whether we feel loved and admired
Or unloved and alone

For we are called to become
A perfect creation
No one's shadow
Should cloud our becoming,
No one's light
Should dispel our spark.

B. For the Lord delights in us
Jealously looks upon us
And encourages with gentle joy
Every movement of the Spirit
Within us.

A. Unique and loved we stand
Beautiful or stunted in our growth
But never without hope and life.

All: For we are called to become
A perfect creation.
This becoming may be
Gentle or harsh,
Subtle or violent,
But it never ceases,
Never pauses or hesitates,
Only is -
Creative force -
Calling us
Calling us to become
A perfect creation

("you" has been replaced by "we" throughout)

Intercessions

The Lord's Prayer (One Possible New
Translation from the Aramaic)

O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos,

Focus your light within us - make it useful:

Create your reign of unity now -

Your one desire then acts with ours,
as in all light, so in all forms.

Grant what we need each day in bread and insight

Loose the cords of mistakes binding us,
as we release the strands we hold
of others' guilt.

Don't let surface things delude us,

But free us from what holds us back.

From you is born all ruling will,
the power and the life to do,
the song that beautifies all,
from age to age it renews.

Truly - power to these statements -
may they be the ground from which all
my actions grow: Amen.

(From Prayers of the Cosmos
N. Douglas Klotz)

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March 5.

The power of prayer

From the Dean of Chester

Sir, With respect, prayer is not simply about seeking divine help and intervention (letter, March 1). It has more to do with being in tune with God's will, by offering Him adoration, confession and thanksgiving.

On this basis, supplication is possible: not for personal gain, or to make God change His mind, but to provide a channel through which His loving purposes for creation may become a reality.

Yours sincerely,

STEPHEN SMALLEY,

The Deanery,

7 Abbey Street, Chester CH1 2JF.

dean@chestercathedral.org.uk

March 2.

Give and take

Grand Master, United Grand Lodge of England, this evening attended a Dinner with the Board of Grand Stewards at the Oriental Club, Stratford House, Stratford Place, London W1.

Livery company

Paviors' Company

The following have been installed officers of the Paviors' Company for the ensuing year:

Master, Mr Keith C. White; Upper Warden, Mr A. Ivan Nellist; Renter Warden, Mr Robin L. Wilson.

Legal appointments

Mr Geoffrey Solomons has been appointed a full-time chairman of Employment Tribunals with effect from March 1. Mr Solomons will be assigned to the London Central Region.

Mr Paul Simon Shaerf has been appointed a full-time Immigration Adjudicator with effect from

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Sir C

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Prayer in the modern world

It is surprising that so little attention has been given by theologians to the subject of prayer, for there are many problems to be solved. Primitive people asked God for rain but the sophisticated modern world knows too much about meteorology. People today ask if those who pray are trying to make God change his mind or if they think that he has after all overlooked something? Too often the language of public prayer is stilted and unreal. Personal prayer often looks like a way of withdrawing from the world and its problems that men ought to be able to solve but do not. There is a real danger that prayer will be rejected by many devout people as part of an obsolete and unhealthy pietism. Yet a cursory glance at scripture is enough to show us that Christians are called upon repeatedly to pray and that a clear example of prayer was given to us, above all, by Christ himself. We cannot really work our problems out without expressing them in prayer any more than people can think effectively without using words. We cannot be proper Christians without praying. We shall look at the role and meaning of prayer in the modern world as the most useful introduction to liturgical practice.

The nature of prayer

The first problem to be considered is what prayer is and why we pray. The following answer, given by a priest, seems to be a good one: 'I would say that prayer is a dialogue between myself and God, through Christ, in unity, in the Holy Spirit, with other Christians in the church.' In other words, prayer is more than just a personal matter between the individual and God, but at the same time it necessarily involves God and is not just Christians speaking to one another. One trouble

with this sort of definition is that the common experience of prayer that ordinary people have is that of a monologue rather than a dialogue.

The emphasis on prayer as a 'conversation with God', nevertheless, has been widely used by spiritual writers. Prayer of petition places the conversation in the correct sort of context, of the created being approaching the creator, or of the adopted child asking the father for help. The difficulty that this seems to be trying to **coerce** God really relates only to the time before Christ. The Word become flesh has now entered into the human situation. The Jesus who wept over the coming destruction of Jerusalem can be asked as a human being to share our everyday problems in much the same way that we sometimes ask for the sympathetic help of a good friend (cf Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations* III, London 1967, 209-210).

A rather different view of prayer from the conversation-with-God one is the utilitarian view. Paul Van Buren, for example, says: 'The meaning of intercessory prayer is its use: it begins in reflection upon the situation in the light of the Christian perspective and leads to appropriate action.' (*The secular meaning of the gospel*, London 1963.) On this view prayer stems from concern for our neighbour and forms part of the sharing of our brother's burden. The Christian will look at the world, for example, as if he were reading with his newspaper in one hand and his Bible in the other. This is how he prays, looking at the world in the light of the Gospel and the Gospel in the light of the world: he not only talks to God but also has to find God's answer for himself. This process should guide him in taking the action that is needed.

Does this view make better sense in the modern world? Less emphasis is placed upon God but it is a more challenging and difficult approach. It is easy to pray for food for hungry Africans and Asians but difficult to work out how to sway public opinion and put enough pressure on governments to make them divert sufficient resources from space and military expenditure to make it possible to provide food for the hungry of the world.

LET LITURGY LIVE

The scope of prayer

As soon as one goes beyond the simple definition of prayer as talking to God, it becomes difficult to decide exactly what is or is not prayer. In liturgy, more easily than in private prayer, use can be made of poetry, drama and debate, things that have a teaching role without being prayer in the ordinary sense. Prayer may not always be immediately recognisable as such, especially on informal occasions as in the family. A young child may ask, for example, when his elder brother is unkind to him: 'Why do I have to forgive him?' The explanation given by the parent may well include an account of how Jesus has won for us God's forgiveness for our own sins (just like Daddy forgiving the children when they do dreadful things). Quite naturally such a talk will end with the parent asking the children to thank God for forgiving them and saying something like: 'Let's hope that God will help us all to learn how to forgive one another.' Such a statement, while not formally addressed to God, nevertheless brings him firmly into the picture and is a prayer in meaning and intent. Such situations do not always lead naturally to explicit prayers and to try to force formal prayers into such situations may only defeat the real purpose, which is to teach children how to think about God's will and to train them to have a prayerful attitude to life.

It is easier to make prayer explicit when it is asking for something. This is true not only for children but also for those on the fringes of the church who do not make a habit of prayer. As every parent knows, children find it easier to ask for something than to say a 'thank you' for it. Whether explicit or not, and whether we call it prayer (in a broader sense) or just a prayerful attitude, what must be explicitly recognised is that such occasions have a very important function as a means of relating liturgy to life and of making prayer meaningful in the modern world.

Private prayer and liturgical prayer

A division has grown up, especially since the middle ages, between private prayer and public liturgical prayer. The evidence of scripture and of the early church suggests (as we

PRAYER IN THE MODERN WORLD

shall see below) that too sharp a division here is a mistake. The division has been sharpened by the rather personal concern of spiritual writings like those of John of the Cross or Teresa of Avila and the *Imitation of Christ*. It has been made worse too for Roman Catholics by the liturgical use of Latin for so long after it was no longer understood by the people. The sharp contrast between liturgical and individual prayer for them was exemplified by private confession in the old days, when the penitent made his confession in personal terms, asking for God's forgiveness, and was given a formalised Latin absolution.

The division between individual private and public liturgical prayer is becoming progressively less sharp: in practice in both these fields we are concerned with different aspects of the same problem. As we learn to make liturgical prayer effective and meaningful, so shall we be able to use this to make individual prayer more fruitful. On the other hand, people have to learn how to pray at the individual personal level before they can play a creative part in public prayer. Indeed, useful lessons for liturgical prayer can be drawn from examples of individual prayer in the new testament, for the one is closely related to the other:

Sing the words and tunes of the psalms and hymns when you are together, and go on singing and chanting to the Lord in your hearts, so that always and everywhere you are giving thanks to God . . . (Eph 5 : 19-20).

Prayer in the new testament

One of the best guides for prayer is the new testament. Paul, for example, frequently intercedes for the local churches, 'It is my prayer that your love may abound more and more' (Col 1 : 9). He asks us also to pray constantly, giving thanks to God 'in Christ Jesus' (1 Thess 5 : 18). He stresses the inadequacy of our prayer but says this should be no obstacle to us, for the Spirit himself will express our plea and God will know what is meant (Rom 8 : 26-27). This, incidentally, should provide encouragement for people trying out new liturgical forms if their initial efforts lack professional polish. In later writings, Paul prays to the Father, through the Son,

especially for the Spirit to be given (eg Eph 1:15-23 and 3:16-21).

The gospels show us a Christ constantly at prayer—at the baptism in the Jordan when the Spirit descends upon him; all night on the hills before calling his apostles; at the transfiguration; in the garden of Gethsemane and, above all, at the last supper. On many of these occasions he calls upon his followers to join him in prayer (eg Mk 14:32-40; Mt 6:9; Mt 7:7-11; Jn 14:13). The prayer of Christ is the prayer of God's people that in principle, at least, is that of a community, not just of one person. This is why he says 'Our Father' not 'My Father'. Sometimes he prays for himself or for the needs of one or two particular persons (as he does when performing some of the miracles) but more usually he prays for the whole church: 'not only for these' (ie his apostles and disciples) 'but for those also who through their words will believe in me' (Jn 17:20).

Another characteristic of the prayer of Christ in the gospels is that very often it is eschatological, ie it looks to the future fulfilment, as in 'Your kingdom come' or to the working out of God's will, 'Your will be done', to the blood 'that is to be poured out for many' (Mk 14:24) or to the cup that Jesus would like to pass but only if 'as you, not I, would have it' (Mk 14:36). Finally there is the prayer for all the faithful, that their unity may bring the world to believe and that Christ's followers may join him in heaven (Jn 17).

Yet another characteristic of the new testament treatment of prayer is the emphasis on sincerity. The ostentatious public hypocrisy of the Jewish religious leaders is denounced by Christ (Lk 18:11; Mt 6:5-6). Prayer is to be based on faith (Mk 11:22-24) and persistence is needed (Lk 11:5-8; 18:1-5). Christian prayer is to be like life within the family, for we are the adopted children of the heavenly Father (Lk 11:9-13).

Prayer as a search for truth

Another aspect of prayer that is seen in scripture is that of reflection, of 'pondering these things in one's heart' (Lk 1:66; 2:19, 52). Christ himself is depicted in the gospels as praying

with the aim of helping the spectators to understand better. When, for example, he raises Lazarus from the dead, he says:

Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer.
I knew indeed that you always hear me,
but I speak
for the sake of all those who stand round me,
so that they may believe it was you who sent me.

Why, indeed, should Christ pray publicly at all? He who was the Lord of creation and could work miracles would hardly have needed to ask for help. Presumably, he had an ordinary personal human need to pray, but the only reason for doing so in public seems to have been to give his followers an example and to help them to understand what was happening, that is to probe more deeply into the truth. Such an approach is rather like Paul Van Buren's utilitarian definition of prayer quoted previously (see p 11). Prayer is a way of making possible interaction between a person's experience of the situation and his knowledge of the christian perspective. Its basis is the new commandment of love, especially of one's neighbour. It is worth noting how often in the gospels prayer is linked with the forgiveness of sins and love of one another (eg Mt 5:43-44; 6:14-15; Mk 11:25; Lk 18:13; Jn 17:26).

A practical obstacle to the love of one's neighbour, in whom Christ himself is to be seen, is one's emotions. Such feelings as resentment, possessiveness, fear, hate, greed, wrongly directed love or feelings of inadequacy can be serious impediments to doing what is God's will. Prayer may well be a useful means of overcoming emotional barriers like these and developing personally a fully mature christian attitude so as to live more fully in Christ. The interaction that takes place in prayer makes possible the full growth of the human personality. It is all too easy to keep the religious and emotional aspects of one's life in separate compartments.

The social aspects of prayer

By this interaction prayer can reach areas of truth that cannot easily be reached by other means. The basis of the interaction is rather broader, however, than Paul van Buren's definition

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suggests. It is not just between the secular situation as represented by our neighbour's material needs and the christian perspective as set out in scripture. An adequate description of what prayer is and does can only be expressed as an interaction between two different levels of understanding of the whole of our experience of life. Our total experience at the human level, including the needs of ourselves and others, and our inter-personal relationships, has to be cross-checked with our understanding of our experience of the world in the context of God's will and of the divine plan of salvation as revealed in the scriptures. Love of our neighbour naturally plays a big part by giving purpose to the process of interaction in prayer.

Thus prayer is a community-determined activity. There are other reasons, too, why prayer is not normally just a matter between the individual and God. One reason is that the basic work of prayer can be done best as a group activity. The interaction between our ordinary human experience and our understanding of things in the context of God's plan of salvation depends to a very large extent upon sharing our experience with that of others. It is in this way that we make sense of that experience. It becomes real for us. The well-known phrase of Descartes: 'I think, therefore I am' should perhaps be rendered in the light of modern social science as: 'I communicate, therefore I am.' To spend six months alone in a cave or sailing the oceans single-handed leads to severe psychological stress, whereas to be an effective member of a small group and to pray with them helps to maintain our sanity and our grasp of reality.

Is prayer answered?

There is more to it than that. Prayer is not just a monologue, nor does it really go unanswered. Prayer formally addressed to God is shared by our fellow men. It leads to appropriate action, which looks like mere action of human beings, but should really also be seen as the work of God. The Spirit is working in and through the human situation. Thus prayer, though formally a monologue, is really a multiple conversation in which God incarnate in the human situation does play a part. Prayer is at one and the same time human beings

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speaking to God and God speaking to human beings. To a large extent this process can be described as a search for truth and an effort to do the will of God.

We are now, therefore, in a position to say that prayer is indeed answered. We are not concerned here with the possibility of a miraculous intervention but only with the question of whether there is a subjective answer to prayer. It is futile to look for an answer in the ordinary sense of a dialogue, but there is an answer all the same. It comes insofar as truth is more fully understood or God's will more closely followed. It is necessarily a partial answer for it comes through human agency and is, therefore, imperfect but, all the same and within these limitations, it should be seen as God's answer.

Openness to the truth

This understanding of prayer makes clear the need for an open attitude. The truth when found may be unpleasant. A truly penitent attitude is a willingness to face the truth. As things start to go wrong in a human way prayer must bring about renewal, that is a return to the original truth of the gospel and to finding ways to give it meaning in the present age. Prayer is the basis of leadership in the church. It must help leaders to find the truth and the rest of the faithful to accept the truth in freedom. Prayer is one way of sharing truth and, therefore, a basis of prophetic leadership. A leadership that ignores these principles or does not know how to search for and share truth is not acceptable, and such a state of affairs inevitably leads to a crisis of authority in the church. When this happens the prayerful search for truth is replaced by casuistic and apologetic attitudes. In the moral field, for example, people will ask questions like: 'How can I do what I want without a formal lie?' or in the field of theology: 'How can an argument be adduced in support of this belief?' The general overall effect of all this in the church tends towards a withdrawal from the world and a glorification of the church itself, glossing over its defects. The underlying cause of this situation is a lack of real holiness among christians. The only effective remedy for the situation and for difficulties of this sort is an attitude of openness and a search for truth through prayer.

Pentecostalism—the charismatic prayer movement

An important development in the 1970s in the communal use of prayer has been the movement of charismatic renewal taking a wide variety of forms—charismatic prayer groups, catholic pentecostals, *Focolari*, Jesus people, liberated christians and African independent churches. Scores of thousands of such diverse groups have in common the idea that christian life can be renewed by opening oneself to the free movement of the Spirit and by taking the gospel seriously.

This movement at best is much more than a new mix of emotionalism and fundamentalism from the past. The basis for renewal comes from the new testament accounts of the early church in which a personal change of heart and a personal baptism in the Spirit leads on to a commitment to renew church and society.

Charismatic renewal is particularly widespread among Roman catholics in the United States, starting among theologically literate university lecturers who felt they were lacking in the fire and love of God shown by the early christians. It now has many thousands of followers, finding less opposition in the Roman church than in other major churches, and even has cautious episcopal approval from the American hierarchy. Pentecostal 'parishes' have been set up in some places. One Canadian bishop has witnessed to those involved in pentecostalism within the church as developing a deep sense of the presence of God and his effective action in their lives. The catholic pentecostalist movement soon spread to Britain especially in the form of charismatic prayer groups.

Prayer in the church has for many centuries been polarised into formalised prayer and private individual prayer. At the prayer meeting the needs of the freedom of the individual and the strengths of community meet. Much prayer together may be silent, but there is a strong sense of community that develops and the individual is free to contribute his own spontaneous prayer to the group. The members pray together in faith, believing that all things are possible, for it is God who prays, works and acts through them. Reflecting on the gospels all pray for the baptism of the Spirit with a readiness to accept and use in their lives the gifts that will be given. Even if no charisma are granted a common experience within

these groups is a feeling of joy and peace and many hours may be spent in prayer together without the participants flagging. One characteristic of these groups is that those taking part are often seized with an experience of the reality and goodness of God and that the prayer of praise, which ordinarily is one of the least used forms, arises spontaneously.

There are dangers as well as possibilities for great good in the movement. It grew rapidly from its inception in 1967 because it met a genuine need and it looks as if it will help to shape the future of the church. It is essential, however, that groups avoid degenerating into mere emotionalism and lack of concern for the community at large. Many of the most successful American groups have in fact pioneered new ways of meeting the needs of the secular community around them.

Doubt and faith

One problem that faces people in prayer, as well as when they want to experiment in worship, is the extent to which *doubt* should be expressed in prayer. If our individual prayer and also our worship is to be about the actual human situation and express people's real feelings and problems, doubt cannot be ignored. As well as hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, people have moments when the basis of their belief is far from certain. Such feeling may range all the way from a minor difficulty, like that of understanding how the accounts of an event can vary in different gospels, to a feeling that the church is so unholy that it is not really worth remaining a christian.

Prayer has to be honest. It is futile to try and suggest that such difficulties and doubts do not sometimes afflict even devout people. Nor is it much use suggesting that a difficulty has to be met by a blind act of faith of the kind: 'the church says this is so and therefore you must believe it.' Ordinary people react like Lewis Carroll's Alice:

'I can't believe that!' said Alice. 'Can't you?' the Queen said in a pitying tone. 'Try again: draw a long breath, and shut your eyes.' Alice laughed. 'There's no use trying,' she said: 'one can't believe impossible things!' 'I daresay you haven't had much practice' said the Queen.

Any problem that we try to treat in this sort of way merely

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builds up trouble for the church in the future. Many of the most pressing problems of today come from difficulties that past generations tried to pretend did not exist or pushed underground by blind acts of faith in the name of obedience or loyalty. The existence of doubt or difficulty has to be recognised and probably ought, therefore, to find some sort of expression in prayer and worship. On the other hand one has to avoid the liturgical expression of doubt becoming purely negative. There is no difficulty about honestly facing the disbelief of the world, and even our own difficulties or doubts in private prayer, but what expression if any should we give to them in liturgy? The disbelief surrounding us has to be recognised as, for example, Matthew Arnold in his poem *Dover Beach* saw in the ebb and flow of the surf something like the waves of doubt and unbelief that were steadily eroding the structure of the medieval christian faith. In some modern christian folk songs these sorts of thing are expressed, for example, in 'Friday Morning' or '2,000 years' (Sydney Carter, *In the present tense* 11 and Malcolm Stewart, *Gospel song book*). In order to decide whether and how it can serve a possible constructive purpose it is worth looking at the place of doubt in scripture.

Doubt in scripture

The accounts of the early history of Israel and the writings of the prophets are full of human weakness and of failure to live up to the precepts of the law of Moses. Doubt in the modern sense is seen in the wisdom books, perhaps typically in Job with the concern of the writer with the problem of why the good were afflicted with suffering and why the wicked often seemed apparently to prosper in this world?

When we turn to the new testament it is not surprising to find little expression of difficulty or doubt in Paul, for he is close to the events of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The issue is simple: 'If Jesus be not risen we are still in our sins' (1 Cor 15 : 17). When the gospel traditions came to be written down, some of the closeness of the salvation events had gone. The purpose of the writing down was to try to preserve the memory of them, of the witnesses who had 'seen and touched and heard' (1 Jn 1 : 1).

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There is the simple difficulty, for example, of Mary's: 'But how can that be for I have not known man?' There is the refusal of Thomas to believe in the risen Christ until he had put his hands into the wounds. In general, all such incidents are used to teach people something. An explanation is called for or a point has to be made. Doubt is expressed as part of the process of trying to understand, of seeking for the truth.

Paul gives an indication of why there is doubt when he says: 'Now we see in a glass darkly, then face to face' (1 Cor 13 : 12), stressing how limited our understanding and knowledge of things in this world is, being of necessity partial, imperfect and incomplete.

In scripture we have seen how doubt is a stepping stone to a deeper faith. So it should be too in prayer and in worship. For example:

We can't believe in a Son of God
Two thousand years away,
But only in a Son of God
That we can see today.
(Sydney Carter, *Faith, Hope and Nativity*)

This should help us to understand the importance of making Christ's presence in the world real for our fellow men through the witness of our lives. It brings us to the practical problems. With our new understanding of the nature of prayer what can be done to make constructive interaction more likely? What can be done to help ensure that prayer leads to appropriate action?

A practical approach to prayer and worship

The best place to start is with the small group of keen people meeting regularly in someone's house, such as a family group, interdenominational group for christian renewal or, best of all, a group engaged in study of the bible. The first session should be devoted to trying to answer the question: 'Why do we pray and what do we expect the result to be?' Then the various views put forward in the earlier sections of this chapter can be discussed.

The next step is to look at the problem raised by trying to work out prayers to fit today's needs. This can be done by

making a critical assessment of a collection of half a dozen or so contemporary examples of prayer. These prayers can be chosen from books that have proved to be useful sources for creative liturgy, or from prayers made up by other groups like themselves. They can be collected by the group themselves or they can ask some experienced person to provide them with a suitable collection.

The examples of prayers chosen by one such group included an extract from a prayer by Michel Quoist about the gospel being terribly easy to hear preached but very difficult to live, and about our fear of all the things that living it would mean. Then there was an extract from a prayer in poetic form by Brian Frost, unpublished at that time, about what drives people to take drugs (*Citizen Incognito*). The next example was a poem by Sidney Carter that begins: 'Your holy hearsay is not evidence, give me the good news in the present tense' (*In the present tense*, 1), subsequently set to music. There was an extract from a prayer about the church, that it should serve God rather than be treated as 'ours' (Caryl Micklem, *Contemporary prayers for public worship*).

There were also two examples of experimental prayers worked out by other groups working on experimental liturgy. One was a modernised version of the Roman 'I confess', and the other was a litany worked out previously for an experimental penitential service.

Critical assessment of contemporary prayer

The group that looked at these examples of modern prayers made various criticisms. The passage chosen from Quoist was thought to be too individualistic for the Anglo-Saxon temperament (the word 'I' occurred in 13 out of the 18 lines) and too emotional to be generally acceptable. The general theme, that the gospel demands more than I can give, was thought to be over-pessimistic in view of the meaning of *gospel* as 'good news'. The work of Michel Quoist has been very useful in showing that contemporary prayer can be used in liturgy but it was felt that there was plenty of room for other approaches.

The poem by Brian Frost was felt to be quite different. He tells us something about life, in this particular extract about how young people come to take dangerous drugs. He then

goes on to look at this problem in its context in a prayerful manner:

Lord, sometimes we need an escape
From the pain of pressure
built up right inside us;
Bring back to our pained minds
When we feel we need release
The knowledge that you have,
the secret of abundant life.

It was felt that this sort of treatment has an advantage by contrast with Quoist, who often packs so much into one line that it cannot easily be followed in liturgical use, for instance:

I should give everything till there is not a single pain, a single misery, a single sin in the world,

is lost as one line of a prayer and in addition, because of its exaggeration, is likely to provoke a reaction.

People either liked the Sydney Carter poem a lot or not at all. It is spoken in dramatic form by an outside agnostic and addressed to Christians, but it can be adapted for liturgical use, or used as it is. Various other criticisms were made of the prayers, especially of the expression of good ideas in language that was too flowery, or difficult to understand. Generally, prayers composed by other practical liturgy groups were liked as being simple and expressing the sort of things that people really feel.

This was a very valuable exercise giving the members of the group a useful insight into the sorts of problem involved in writing effective prayers for liturgical use. In fact, this group did go on to do some useful creative work itself and, in all probability, the personal prayer life of its members was enriched by their experience.

Making your own prayers for use in worship

Many people are hesitant about composing their own prayers for public use. This is understandable, especially among Roman Catholics, who have only had experience of this sort of work since the end of the 1960s. There is also the problem of whether ordinary people *can* write prayers or whether only

a few specially trained people with a gift for colloquial writing can do it. Thus, there are two extreme viewpoints about this issue. One is to encourage people to say things in their own words, however unpolished the results may be. The other is to look out for the occasional poet who can express the people's ideas in their own idiom. Some compromise must generally be accepted between these two extremes.

There is also another issue to be resolved. This is whether our first need is to express the truth of the gospel and the events of salvation in the people's own idiom, or alternatively to let people pray, starting from their own problems as they experience them in their daily lives. In view of the previous discussion about the nature of prayer, it would seem that both these aims are reasonable and complementary, but that the second one may provide a better starting point in present circumstances because of the recent tendency to neglect the social aspects of christianity. When we pray we are not just talking to God. We are making use of an accumulated reservoir of personal and communal experience to see a way forward in the love of our neighbour and in the communicating to other men of christian teaching.

Thus it is feasible for a group of keen people of only ordinary ability to write their own liturgical prayers. Here is a brief summary of the procedure that we have outlined above:

- 1 The group should have a discussion about the nature and purpose of prayer.
- 2 They should collect together some examples of contemporary prayers and assess them critically.
- 3 They should construct their own prayers, starting from a consideration of the problems that concern them in their daily lives, looked at in the light of the gospel (with bible study in parallel if possible).
- 4 They should try these out in actual worship together.
- 5 They should assess, finally, how useful the prayers have been.

Children and the sacraments

The christian community maintains its identity through its worship and its sacraments, however much the practical details may vary between the different denominations. New members are admitted into this community, joining different churches within it, through a general process of initiation in which there are specific liturgical landmarks. These are the actual rites of initiation (baptism and confirmation) of which baptism is shared by all christians, and the point at which an individual first takes part in the sacramental life of the community (first communion, and for some, first confession, that is confession of sins in private, with absolution). Some or all of these events must take place at some time between birth and adult life. Widely differing views about the actual timing have been held by christians living in different centuries or owing allegiance to different churches. Practice in the matter has an important bearing upon the way in which children are introduced to the sacraments and to liturgy and on the manner in which they are instructed about the christian faith.

For some of the free churches, the problem does not exist in this form. The baptists, for example, only admit adults to baptism and the eucharist, the only sacraments that they recognise. For the 'catholic' churches where infant baptism is the general rule, the problem takes the form of deciding the order and ages at which children are confirmed and make their initial confession and communion. For anglicans there is the additional complication that confirmation has been treated as the rite that initiates to eucharistic communion. Private confession is open to those who find it helpful as adults.

Historically there have been wide variations in sacramental

AN EVENING WITH HILDEGARD OF BINGEN (Association for Inclusive Language)

Viridissima Virga (sung as part of "her story")

O viridissima virga ave,
que in ventoso flabro sciscitationis
sanctorum prodisti.

Cum venit tempus
quod tu floruisti in ramis tuis:
ave, ave sit tibi,
quia calor solis in te sudavit
sicut odor balsami.

Nam in te floruit pulcher flos
qui odorem dedit omnibus aromatibus
que arida erant.

Et illa opporuerunt omnia
in viriditate plena.

Unde celi dederunt rorem super gramen
et omnis terra leta facta est.
quoniam viscera ipsius
frumentum protulerunt,
et quoniam volucres celi
nidos in ipsa habuerunt.

Deinde facta est esca hominibus,
et gaudium magnum epulantium:
unde, o suavis virgo,
in te non deficit ullum gaudium.

Hec omnia Eva contempsit.

Nunc autem laus sit altissimo.

Hail, o greenest branch,
sprung forth in the airy breezes
of the prayers of the saints.

So the time has come
that your sprays have flourished:
hail, hail to you,
because the heat of the sun has exuded from you
like the aroma of balm.

For the beautiful flower sprang from you
which gave all parched perfumes their aroma.

And they have radiated anew
in their full freshness.

Whence the skies bestowed dew upon the pasture,
and all the Earth was made joyful
because her womb
brought forth corn,
and because the birds of the firmament
built their nests in her.

Then there was harvest ready for man
and a great rejoicing of banqueters,
whence, o sweet Virgin,
no joy is lacking in you.

Eve rejected all these things.

Now let there be praise to the Highest.

MEDITATION WITH HILDEGARD

Hymn (see separate sheet)

The meditation will fall into sections taking an image from her writings. At the beginning of each section we sing (to the same tune as the hymn) a verse including the image. The main part of the text is the same as printed below, with only the underlined words including the image changing. Also included are translations of the latin of Hildegard's songs that are sung.

a. The Holy Spirit

(Translation) Through you, the clouds stream, the upper air flies
The stones have their temper,
the waters lead forth their rills
and the earth exudes freshness.

Song b. With the living Spirit we're going)
feather on the breath of God,) Twice
with the living Spirit we would go
Feather on the breath of God.

c. With the living Spirit we're going,
Gold within the flame of God etc.

(translation) O fire of the comforting Spirit,
life of the life of all Creation
You are holy in quickening all kind.

You are holy in anointing the dangerously stricken:
you are holy in wiping the reeking wound.

Song d. Scent within the perfume of God

(translation) O breath of holiness
O fire of love
O sweet draught in the breast
and flooding of the heart
in the good aroma of virtues

Song e. Arc within the wheel of God

" f. Drop within the fountain of God

(translation) O purest fountain
in whom it is seen
that God has summoned the gentiles
and sought out the lost.

Song g. Seed within the earth of God

" h. Phrase within the song of God

(translation) You always lead forth the comprehending
made joyful by the inspiration of wisdom

Song i. Harp within the hands of God

(translation) Whence praise be to you
who are the sound of praise
and bliss of life.
Hope and richest gift
giving the rewards of light.

Song j. Child within the arms of God

" k. Warmth within the kiss of God

Dance For this we sing the song again, using "Feather on the Breath of God."

Piccadilly
Hymn on Hildegard to the tune Pange lingua

1. Hildegard of faith unbending,
Feather on the breath of God,
World of substance all transcending,
Treading paths as yet untrod,
You, a woman's silence sharing
Understand our/their present lot.

2. Lonely woman, silence keeping
till the time to speak came near,
Then the praise of God unceasing
From your lips the world could hear,
till a clash with human powers
Not sure of your vision clear.

3. May discernment bring us wisdom.
In compassion may we love.
Deep in joy may we find laughter.
May our trust be just enough
So that praising we may enter
Shining courts in heav'n above.

Centring music

Introducing ourselves, passing the stone from the Sea of Galilee

Introduction to theme

Reading from Hildegard of Bingen

God has created me
God is my Lord, having dominion over me
God is also my strength
for I can wish to do nothing good without God

Through God I have living spirit
Through God I have life and movement
Through God I learn, I find my path

If I call in truth this God directs my steps
setting my feet to the rhythm of God's precepts
I run like a deer that seeks its spring.

Share with each other where we are on the journey (in pairs)

Prayer (said antiphonally, sides A and B)

- A. God, you invite us to dance in delight
shaping and forming in figures of grace.
We move to the pulse of creation's music
and rejoice to be part of the making of earth.
- B. Praise in the making, the sharing, the moving;
praise to the God who dances within us.
- A. In the steps of Jesus we reach to our partners,
touching and holding and finding our strengths.
Together we move into patterns of freedom,
and rejoice to be part of the sharing of hope.
- B. Praise in the making, the sharing, the moving;
Praise to the God who dances within us.
- A. We whirl and spin the Spirit's rhythm,
embracing the world with our circles of joy.
Together we dance for salvation and justice,
and rejoice to be part of the moving of love.
- B. Praise in the making, the sharing, the moving;
Praise to the God who dances within us.

(Adapted from Jan Berry's Prayer)

Circle Dance of journeying.

(We then move to the lower garden, on the way being anointed for strength for the journey) *each person anoints the person behind*

them.

Garden Eucharist on a theme of collaborative ministry. Sept 96

Introduction

Alleluia (Celtic)

Scripture reading Mt 28 16.20

The Eleven made their way to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had summoned them. At the sight of Jesus they fell down in homage, though some doubted what they were seeing. Jesus came forth and addressd them in these words

"All authority has been given me
both in heaven and on earth;
¹⁹go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations.
Baptize them in the name
of Abba God,
and of the Only Begotten,
and of the Holy Spirit.
²⁰Teach them to carry out
everything I have commanded you.
And know that I am with you always,
even until the end of the world!"

Alleluia

Song Will You Come and Follow Me (see song sheet)

Reading From The Sign we give. Then break into small groups

*Let us love not in
words or speech but
in truth
and action.*

1 John 3:18, 4:7-12

It is in relationships, in our communion with each other, rather than in isolation from others that we will find fulfilment. We will reflect God's life if we live in this spirit of communion and collaboration and if our relationships are characterised by equality, mutuality and reciprocity. The vocation of the Church is to be a communion, a living source of Trinitarian relationships.

This is the basis for our equality in dignity as members of the Church and for our awareness of the spirit's activity within and between us. It is also the basis of the mission we share through baptism and confirmation. The Church, as Vatican II reminded us in the opening paragraph of *Lumen Gentium*, is to be

'a sign and instrument of communion with God and of unity among all people'. (LG 1)

and, as *Christifideles Laici* reminds us

'the Church knows that the communion received by her as a gift is destined for all people'. (CFL 32)

It is our mission to awaken persons to each other, to what their personhood means in terms of dignity and equality, and to express this in right relationships. (CFL 36, 37) In the public arena, this means building up participation and solidarity as the right basis for social and political relationships.

ADVENT CELEBRATION 1985 St Joan's International Alliance AGM

The candles are lit and all say

Thus says the Creator
Who made the heavens and spread them out
Who gave shape to the earth and what comes from it
Who gave breath to its people, and life to all that move on it,

I, your Creator have called you to serve the cause of right;
I have taken you by the hand and formed you;
I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations
To open the eyes of the blind, to free captives from prison,
And those who live in darkness from the dungeon,

Reader A And Jesus said to the people

"I am the light of the world. They who follow me will not
be walking in the dark; They will have the light of life,

Reader B We who are the followers of Christ are gathered here today to celebrate the
coming of Jesus Christ our Lord, and bring to mind that not only did he come as Saviour
into the world when the time was ripe, but that the redeemer comes daily into our hearts,
and we look forward to the saviour's promised return in glory,

Carol "Woman in the night" (tune: in the bleak midwinter)

(in Faith Looking Forward, Brian Wren)

Scripture reading Version of the Magnificat (Terry Garley's version - see page of Magnificats)

Litany of prophecy

Reader My servant will be a light to the nations and my salvation shall reach the ends
of the earth

All Blessed is Christ who fulfills the promise (This response is made to each
prophecy - each in turn acting as reader)

Readers The virgin is with child and will give birth to a son whom she will call Emmanuel

All Blessed ...

- A shoot shall spring forth from the stock of Jesse, a branch from its root

- For as the rain and snow came down from heaven and return not there but
waters the earth, making it yield and give growth, to provide seed for the sower and bread
for the eating, so shall my word be that goes out of my mouth; it shall not return to me
empty, without carrying out my will, doing that for which it was sent,

- This is the covenant I will make with Israel. Deep within them I will plant
my law, writing it on their hearts. When those days arrive then I will be their God, and
they shall be my people

- The law will go out from Zion, and the oracle of the Lord from Jerusalem,
They will hammer their swords into ploughshares, their spears into
sickles

- Nation will not lift sword against nation, for unto us is born a child, a
son given to us, and the government shall be on his shoulders; and his name will be
called "wonder counsellor, mighty God, everlasting father, prince of peace"

The Peace Sung Shalom (all hold hands, then greet each other)

Final Prayers (continuation of Prayer of Confession from Renewing the Earth)

A In our hearts, Lord, we promise anew
to reverence Creation as a convicting witness
to your presence, eternal power,
and divine majesty (*cf Psalm 19 and Romans 1:20*).

B We promise to reverence your Creation as a
gracious gift entrusted to us by you, our God.

A We promise anew to be stewards
and not pillagers
of what you have entrusted to us.

B Indeed, we acknowledge
that you have entrusted your very Self to us
in Creation, through your Incarnation in Christ Jesus.

A For the Word through whom all Creation was made
and is upheld,
that Word "became flesh and dwelt among us,
full of grace and truth" (*John 1:14*).

B Lord, you pitched your divine tent among us
and made our home your home as well.

All Creator God,
you have given us every reason
to learn and promote the wisdom of lives
lived in harmony with Creation.

May we, your servants, increasingly serve.
May we, your servants, increasingly come to love your Creation
as we also increasingly come to love you,
through Christ our Lord. Amen
(The North American Conference on
Christianity and Ecology)

Pause.

All Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me.
Let there be love on earth
And let it begin in my heart.
Let there be miracles on earth
And let them begin with my faith.
Let there be a future
And let it begin with my action - now.

Final Song

A MEDITATION WITH HILDEGARD OF BINGEN

Written, compiled and performed by June Boyce Tillman

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) was a remarkable figure. As Abbess of a Benedictine community she wrote music and poetry, produced over 10 books on various subjects (mainly theological) and had visions which were painted, possibly under her supervision, by her community. Her music takes the form of unaccompanied chants, which although rooted in the plainchant tradition of her day, are distinctive in style. She is becoming known as a person of contemporary relevance especially in the area of creation spirituality. This meditation is designed to enable people to get inside her thinking.

The MEDITATION uses a mixture of music, some by Hildegard of Bingen and the piano pieces by June Boyce Tillman. Each section takes an image from Hildegard's writings. There are verses of song for all to sing. The main part of the text is the same with only the underlined words, expressing the image, changing. This is followed by readings from Hildegard's poetry and parts of her Hymn to the Spirit: each section closes with a piano piece encapsulating the image. Hildegard's music is sung in Latin and the translations are printed below in the place where they occur.

The Meditation starts with the hymn below (tune Picardy)

1. Hildegard of faith unbending,
Feather on the breath of God,
World of substance all transcending,
Treading paths as yet untrod,
Through discernment travelled forward,
Penetrating Wisdom's knot.
2. Lonely woman, silence keeping
Till the time to speak came near;
Then the praise of God unceasing
From your lips the world could hear,
Justice for the whole creation
Underpinned your message clear.
3. May discernment bring us Wisdom.
In compassion may we love.
Deep in joy may we find laughter.
May our trust be just enough;
So that dancing we may enter
Shining courts in heav'n above.

The Holy Spirit

(translation) From you the clouds stream out, the air flows, the stones take their character, the waters lead out their small streams and the earth releases its freshness

All: With the living Spirit we're going
Feather on the breath of God
With the living Spirit we're going
Feather on the breath of God
With the living Spirit, we would go
Feather on the breath of God

All: With the living Spirit we're going
Gold within the flame of God etc

(Translation) O fiery Spirit, our comforter, you are the life of the life of all that is created, you are holy in giving life to all. You are holy in anointing the seriously broken and in cleansing weeping, infected wounds.

All: Scent within the perfume of God

(Translation) O breathing place of holiness, O fire of love, O sweet flavour in the breast and infusion in the heart of beautiful perfumes of goodness

All: Arc within the wheel of God

Drop within the fountain of God

(Translation) O most pure holy fountain in which it becomes clear that God has brought together the strangers and is seeking the lost.

All: Seed within the earth of God

Phrase within the song of God

(Translation) You always lead forward the learned through the inspiration of happy Wisdom

All: Harp within the hands of God

(Translation) Therefore let us praise you be, you who are the sound of praise and the joy of life, the dew of hope and the richest beauty, giving us the rewards of light

All: Child within the arms of God

Warmth within the kiss of God

Feather on the breath of God

HILDEGARD OF BINGEN on the Spirit

(taken from Meditations with Hildegard of Bingen- Uhlein)

The Holy Spirit is a burning Spirit
It kindles the hearts of humankind.
Like tympanum and lyre it plays them,
gathering volume in the temple of the soul.

The Holy Spirit is

Life-giving life,
all movement.

Root of all being.
Purifier of all impurity.
Absolver of all faults.
Balm of all wounds.

Radiant life, worthy of all praise,
The Holy Spirit resurrects and awakens everything that is.

Truly the Holy Spirit is an unquenchable fire
who bestows all excellence,
sparks all worth,
awakes all goodness,
ignites speech,
inflames humankind.

Yet in this radiance is a restorative stillness.
It is the stillness that is similarly in the will to good.
It spreads to all sides.....

O Holy Spirit, clear fountain
in you we perceive God ..

Bulwark of life
you are the hope of oneness for that which is separate..

You are the mighty way in which everything
that is in the heavens,
on the earth and under the earth
is penetrated with connectedness,
is penetrated with relatedness...

You are the source of human understanding.
You bless with the breath of wisdom.
Thus all of our praise is yours,
you who are the melody itself of praise,

the joy of life,
the mighty honour,
the hope

of those to whom you give the gifts of the light

Prayer -

Centring music of Hildegard of Bingen

(Viridiissima Virga, celebrating the springing forth from the green branch of Mary the new life of Christ, at which all the earth was made joyful)

Prayer (from Iona)

Be still my children
My voice is not always
heard in the thunder and earthquakes
of your experience.
I do not only speak when you are
physically and mentally involved in living.
Be still - and in the stillness I will speak
when you are quiet
when you are resting
when you are aware of me pulsating within
you and around you
when you are waiting and listening
I will break through
and enrich your silence
releasing my peace and glory
and transforming your experience
until in the stillness
you find yourself longing
to shout for joy.

Put yourself in a position of relaxation and think of the aspects of God's presence in creation that particularly appeals to you. After a couple of minutes, share your thoughts with the person next to you (in turns).

Poem by Edwina Gately (adapted) Sides A and B

A. We are called to become
A perfect creation.
No one is called to become
who we individually are called to be.
It does not matter
How short or tall
Or thick-set or slow
We may be.

B. It does not matter
whether we sparkle with life
Or are silent as a still pool,
Whether we sing your song aloud
Or weep alone in darkness.

A. It does not matter
Whether we feel loved and admired
Or unloved and alone

For we are called to become
A perfect creation
No one's shadow
Should cloud our becoming,
No one's light
Should dispel our spark.

B. For the Lord delights in us
Jealously looks upon us
And encourages with gentle joy
Every movement of the Spirit
Within us.

A. Unique and loved we stand
Beautiful or stunted in our growth
But never without hope and life.

All: For we are called to become
A perfect creation.
This becoming may be
Gentle or harsh,
Subtle or violent,
But it never ceases,
Never pauses or hesitates,
Only is -
Creative force -
Calling us
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("you" has been replaced by "we" throughout)

The Lord's Prayer (One Possible New Translation from the Aramaic)

O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos,
Focus your light within us - make it useful:
Create your reign of unity now -

Your one desire then acts with ours,
as in all light, so in all forms.

Grant what we need each day in bread and insight.

Loose the cords of mistakes binding us,
as we release the strands we hold
of others' guilt.

Don't let surface things delude us,
But free us from what holds us back.

From you is born all ruling will,
the power and the life to do,
the song that beautifies all,
from age to age it renews.

Truly - power to these statements -
may they be the ground from which all
my actions grow: Amen.

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Or weep alone in darkness.

A. It does not matter
Whether we feel loved and admired
Or unloved and alone

For we are called to become
A perfect creation
No one's shadow
Should cloud our becoming,
No one's light
Should dispel our spark.

B. For the Lord delights in us
Jealously looks upon us
And encourages with gentle joy
Every movement of the Spirit
Within us.

A. Unique and loved we stand
Beautiful or stunted in our growth
But never without hope and life.

All: For we are called to become
A perfect creation.
This becoming may be
Gentle or harsh,
Subtle or violent,
But it never ceases,
Never pauses or hesitates,
Only is -
Creative force -
Calling us
Calling us to become
A perfect creation

("you" has been replaced by "we" through

The Lord's Prayer (One Possible New Translation from the Aramaic)

O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos,
Focus your light within us - make it useful:
Create your reign of unity now -

Your one desire then acts with ours,
as in all light, so in all forms.

Grant what we need each day in bread and insight.

Loose the cords of mistakes binding us,
as we release the strands we hold
of others' guilt.

Don't let surface things delude us,

But free us from what holds us back.

From you is born all ruling will,
the power and the life to do,
the song that beautifies all,
from age to age it renews.

Truly - power to these statements -
may they be the ground from which all
my actions grow: Amen.

(From Prayers of The Cosmos
N. Douglas Korte)

Prayer -

Centring music of Hildegard of Bingen

(Viridiissima Virga, celebrating the springing forth from the green branch of Mary the new life of Christ, at which all the earth was made joyful)

Prayer (from Iona)

Be still my children
My voice is not always
heard in the thunder and earthquakes
of your experience.
I do not only speak when you are
physically and mentally involved in living.
Be still - and in the stillness I will speak
when you are quiet
when you are resting
when you are aware of me pulsating within
you and around you
when you are waiting and listening
I will break through
and enrich your silence
releasing my peace and glory
and transforming your experience
until in the stillness
you find yourself longing
to shout for joy.

Put yourself in a position of relaxation and think of the aspects of God's presence in creation that particularly appeals to you. After a couple of minutes, share your thoughts with the person next to you (in turns).

Poem by Edwina Gately (adapted) Sides A and B

A. We are called to become
A perfect creation.
No one is called to become
who we individually are called to be.
It does not matter
How short or tall
Or thick-set or slow
We may be.

B. It does not matter
whether we sparkle with life
Or are silent as a still pool,
Whether we sing your song aloud
Or weep alone in darkness.

A. It does not matter
Whether we feel loved and admired
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(From Prayers of the Cosmos
N. Douglas Moore)

A MEDITATION WITH HILDEGARD OF BINGEN

Written, compiled and performed by June Boyce Tillman

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) was a remarkable figure. As Abbess of a Benedictine community she wrote music and poetry, produced over 10 books on various subjects (mainly theological) and had visions which were painted, possibly under her supervision, by her community. Her music takes the form of unaccompanied chants, which although rooted in the plainchant tradition of her day, are distinctive in style. She is becoming known as a person of contemporary relevance especially in the area of creation spirituality. This meditation is designed to enable people to get inside her thinking.

The MEDITATION uses a mixture of music, some by Hildegard of Bingen and the piano pieces by June Boyce Tillman. Each section takes an image from Hildegard's writings. There are verses of song for all to sing. The main part of the text is the same with only the underlined words, expressing the image, changing. This is followed by readings from Hildegard's poetry and parts of her Hymn to the Spirit: each section closes with a piano piece encapsulating the image. Hildegard's music is sung in Latin and the translations are printed below in the place where they occur.

The Meditation starts with the hymn below (tune Picardy)

1. Hildegard of faith unbending,
Feather on the breath of God,
World of substance all transcending,
Treading paths as yet untrod,
Through discernment travelled forward,
Penetrating Wisdom's knot.
2. Lonely woman, silence keeping
Till the time to speak came near;
Then the praise of God unceasing
From your lips the world could hear,
Justice for the whole creation
Underpinned your message clear.
3. May discernment bring us Wisdom.
In compassion may we love.
Deep in joy may we find laughter.
May our trust be just enough;
So that dancing we may enter
Shining courts in heav'n above.

AN EVENING WITH HILDEGARD OF BINGEN

Viridissima Virga (sung as part of "her story")

O viridissima virga ave,
que in ventoso flabro sciscitationis
sanctorum prodisti.

Cum venit tempus
quod tu floruisti in ramis tuis;
ave, ave sit tibi,
quia calor solis in te sudavit
sicut odor balsami.

Nam in te floruit pulcher flos
qui odorem dedit omnibus aromatibus
que arida erant.

Et illa apparuerunt omnia
in viriditate plena.

Unde cell dederunt rorem super gramen
et omnis terra leta facta est.
quoniam viscera ipsius
frumentum protulerunt,
et quoniam volucres cell
nidos in ipsa habuerunt.

Deinde facta est esca hominibus,
et gaudium magnum epulantium:
unde, o suavis virgo,
in te non deficit ullum gaudium.

Hec omnia Eva contempsit.

Nunc autem laus sit altissimo.

Hail, o greenest branch,
sprung forth in the airy breezes
of the prayers of the saints.

So the time has come
that your sprays have flourished;
hail, hail to you,
because the heat of the sun has exuded from you
like the aroma of balm.

For the beautiful flower sprang from you
which gave all parched perfumes their aroma.

And they have radiated anew
in their full freshness.

Whence the skies bestowed dew upon the pasture,
and all the Earth was made joyful
because her womb
brought forth corn,
and because the birds of the firmament
built their nests in her.

Then there was harvest ready for Man
and a great rejoicing of banqueters.
whence, o sweet Virgin,
no joy is lacking in you.

Eve rejected all these things.

Now let there be praise to the Highest.

MEDITATION WITH HILDEGARD

Hymn (see separate sheet)

The meditation will fall into sections taking an image from her writings. At the beginning of each section we sing (to the same tune as the hymn) a verse including the image. The main part of the text is the same as printed below, with only the underlined words including the image changing. Also included are translations of the latin of Hildegard's songs that are sung.

a. The Holy Spirit

(Translation) Through you, the clouds stream, the upper air flies
The stones have their temper,
the waters lead forth their rills
and the earth exudes freshness.

Song b. With the living Spirit we're going)
feather on the breath of God,) Twice
with the living Spirit we would go
Feather on the breath of God.

c. With the living Spirit we're going,
Gold within the flame of God etc.

(translation) O fire of the comforting Spirit,
life of the life of all Creation
You are holy in quickening all kind.

You are holy in anointing the dangerously stricken:
you are holy in wiping the reeking wound.

Song d. Scent within the perfume of God

(translation) O breath of holiness
O fire of love
O sweet draught in the breast
and flooding of the heart
in the good aroma of virtues

Song e. Arc within the wheel of God

" f. Drop within the fountain of God

(translation) O purest fountain
in whom it is seen
that God has summoned the gentiles
and sought out the lost.

Song g. Seed within the earth of God

" h. Phrase within the song of God

(translation) You always lead forth the comprehending
made joyful by the inspiration of wisdom

Song i. Harp within the hands of God

(translation) Whence praise be to you
who are the sound of praise
and bliss of life.
Hope and richest gift
giving the rewards of light.

Song j. Child within the arms of God

" k. Warmth within the kiss of God

Dance For this we sing the song again, using "Feather on the Breath of God."

Hymn on Hildegard to the tune Pange lingua

1. Hildegard of faith unbending,
Feather on the breath of God,
World of substance all transcending,
Treading paths as yet untrod,
You, a woman's silence sharing
Understand our/their present lot.

2 Lonely woman, silence keeping
till the time to speak came near,
Then the praise of God unceasing
From your lips the world could hear,
till a clash with human powers
Not sure of your vision clear.

3. May discernment bring us wisdom.
In compassion may we love.
Deep in joy may we find laughter.
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So that praising we may enter
Shining courts in heav'n above.

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Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) was a remarkable figure. As Abbess of a Benedictine community she wrote music and poetry, produced over 10 books on various subjects (mainly theological) and had visions which were painted, possibly under her supervision, by her community. Her music takes the form of unaccompanied chants, which although rooted in the plainchant tradition of her day, are distinctive in style. She is becoming known as a person of contemporary relevance especially in the area of creation spirituality. This meditation is designed to enable people to get inside her thinking.

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In compassion may we love.
Deep in joy may we find laughter.
May our trust be just enough;
So that dancing we may enter
Shining courts in heav'n above.

The Holy Spirit

(translation) From you the clouds stream out, the air flows, the stones take their character, the waters lead out their small streams and the earth releases its freshness

All: With the living Spirit we're going
Feather on the breath of God
With the living Spirit we're going
Feather on the breath of God
With the living Spirit, we would go
Feather on the breath of God

All: With the living Spirit we're going
Gold within the flame of God etc

(Translation) O fiery Spirit, our comforter, you are the life of the life of all that is created, you are holy in giving life to all. You are holy in anointing the seriously broken and in cleansing weeping, infected wounds.

All: Scent within the perfume of God

(Translation) O breathing place of holiness, O fire of love, O sweet flavour in the breast and infusion in the heart of beautiful perfumes of goodness

All: Arc within the wheel of God

Drop within the fountain of God

(Translation) O most pure holy fountain in which it becomes clear that God has brought together the strangers and is seeking the lost.

All: Seed within the earth of God

Phrase within the song of God

(Translation) You always lead forward the learned through the inspiration of happy Wisdom

All: Harp within the hands of God

(Translation) Therefore let us praise you be, you who are the sound of praise and the joy of life, the dew of hope and the richest beauty, giving us the rewards of light

All: Child within the arms of God

Warmth within the kiss of God

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AN EVENING WITH HILDEGARD OF BINGEN

Viridissima Virga (sung as part of "her story")

O viridissima virga ave,
que in ventoso flabro sciscitationis
sanctorum prodisti.

Cum venit tempus
quod tu floruisti in ramis tuis:
ave, ave sit tibi,
quia calor solis in te sudavit
sicut odor balsami.

Nam in te floruit pulcher flos
qui odorem dedit omnibus aromatibus
que arida erant.

Et illa apparuerunt omnia
in viriditate plena.

Unde celi dederunt rorem super germen
et omnis terra leta facta est,
quoniam viscera ipsius
frumentum protulerunt,
et quoniam volucres celi
nidos in ipsa habuerunt.

Deinde facta est esca hominibus,
et gaudium magnum epulantium:
unde, o suavis virgo,
in te non deficit ullum gaudium.

Hec omnia Eva contempsit.

Nunc autem laus sit altissimo.

Hail, o greenest branch,
sprung forth in the airy breezes
of the prayers of the saints.

So the time has come
that your sprays have flourished:
hail, hail to you,
because the heat of the sun has exuded from you
like the aroma of balm.

For the beautiful flower sprang from you
which gave all parched perfumes their aroma.

And they have radiated anew
in their full freshness.

Whence the skies bestowed dew upon the pasture,
and all the Earth was made joyful
because her womb
brought forth corn,
and because the birds of the firmament
built their nests in her.

Then there was harvest ready for Man
and a great rejoicing of banqueters,
whence, o sweet Virgin,
no joy is lacking in you.

Eve rejected all these things.

Now let there be praise to the Highest.

MEDITATION WITH HILDEGARD

Hymn (see separate sheet)

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a. The Holy Spirit

(Translation) Through you, the clouds stream, the upper air flies
The stones have their temper,
the waters lead forth their rills
and the earth exudes freshness.

Song b. With the living Spirit we're going)
feather on the breath of God,) Twice
with the living Spirit we would go
Feather on the breath of God.

c. With the living Spirit we're going,
Gold within the flame of God etc.

(translation) O fire of the comforting Spirit,
life of the life of all Creation
You are holy in quickening all kind.

You are holy in anointing the dangerously stricken:
you are holy in wiping the reeking wound.

Song d. Scent within the perfume of God

(translation) O breath of holiness
O fire of love
O sweet draught in the breast
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Dance For this we sing the song again, using "Feather on the Breath of God."

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3. May discernment bring us wisdom.
In compassion may we love.
Deep in joy may we find laughter.
May our trust be just enough
So that praising we may enter
Shining courts in heav'n above.

O Holy Spirit,
 Fiery Comforter Spirit
 Life of the life of all creatures,
 Holy are you,
 you that give existence
 to all form.

Holy are you,
 you that are balm for the
 mortally wounded.

Holy are you,
 you that cleanse deep hurt.

Fire of love,
 breath of all holiness,
 you are so delicious to our hearts.
 You infuse our hearts deeply with
 the good smell of virtue.

H d B

O Holy Spirit,
 Clear fountain,
 in you we perceive God,
 how he gathers the perplexed
 and seeks the lost.

Bulwark of life,
 you are the hope of oneness for that which
 is separate.

You are the girdle of propriety,
 you are holy salvation.

Shelter those caught in evil,
 free those in bondage,
 for the divine power wills it.

You are the mighty way in which every
 thing that is in the heavens,
 on the earth,
 and under the earth,
 is penetrated with connectedness,
 is penetrated with relatedness.

Hildegard's Words

We are dressed in the scaffold of creation:
in seeing—to recognize all the world,
in hearing—to understand,
in smelling—to discern,
in tasting—to nurture,
in touching—to govern.

In this way humankind comes to know God,
for God is the author of all creation.

And so,
humankind
full of creative possibilities,
is God's work.

Humankind alone,
is called to assist God.

Humankind is called to co-create.

God gave to humankind the talent
to create with all the world.

Just as the [people] shall never end,
until into dust they are transformed and resurrected,
just so,
their works are always visible.

The good deeds shall glorify,
the bad deeds shall shame,
insofar as they have not been blotted out through penance.

(Uhlein, *Meditations*, pp. 104, 106, 125)

Quoted in Dunka, *Praying with Hildegard of Bingen*

Centring music of Hildegard of Bingen

(Viridiissima Virga, celebrating the springing forth from the green branch of Mary the new life of Christ, at which all the earth was made joyful)

Prayer (from Iona)

Be still my children
My voice is not always
heard in the thunder and earthquakes
of your experience.
I do not only speak when you are
physically and mentally involved in living.
Be still - and in the stillness I will speak
when you are quiet
when you are resting
when you are aware of me pulsating within
you and around you
when you are waiting and listening
I will break through
and enrich your silence
releasing my peace and glory
and transforming your experience
until in the stillness
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Put yourself in a position of relaxation and think of the aspects of God's presence in creation that particularly appeals to you. After a couple of minutes, share your thoughts with the person next to you (in turns).

Poem by Edwina Gately (adapted) Sides A and B

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A perfect creation.
No one is called to become
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It does not matter
How short or tall
Or thick-set or slow
We may be.

B. It does not matter
whether we sparkle with life
Or are silent as a still pool,
Whether we sing your song aloud
Or weep alone in darkness.

A. It does not matter
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A perfect creation.
This becoming may be
Gentle or harsh,
Subtle or violent,
But it never ceases,
Never pauses or hesitates,
Only is -
Creative force -
Calling us
Calling us to become
A perfect creation

("you" has been replaced by "we" throughout)

The Lord's Prayer (One Possible New Translation from the Aramaic)

O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos,
Focus your light within us - make it useful:
Create your reign of unity now -
Your one desire then acts with ours,
as in all light, so in all forms.
Grant what we need each day in bread and insight
Loose the cords of mistakes binding us,
as we release the strands we hold
of others' guilt.
Don't let surface things delude us,
But free us from what holds us back.
From you is born all ruling will,
the power and the life to do,
the song that beautifies all,
from age to age it renews.
Truly - power to these statements -
may they be the ground from which all
my actions grow: Amen.

(From Prayers of the Cosmos
N. Douglas Klotz)

PICARDY
Gently

HILDEGARD

French Trad. arr. June Boyce-Tillman

Hil-de-gard of faith un-bend-ing, fea-ther on the
breath of God. World of sub-stance all trans-cend-ing.
Treading paths as yet un-trod, Through dis-cern-ment trav-elled
for-ward Pe-net-ra-ting Wis-dom's knot.

(N.B. THE BRACKETED CHORDS WITH CAPO ON 3RD FRET.)

12. HILDEGARD

1. Hildegard of faith unbending,
Feather on the breath of God,
World of substance all transcending,
Treading paths as yet untrod,
Through discernment travelled forward,
Penetrating Wisdom's knot.
2. Lonely woman, silence keeping
Till the time to speak came near;
Then the praise of God unceasing
From your lips the world could hear,
Justice for the whole creation
Underpinned your message clear.
3. May discernment bring us Wisdom.
In compassion may we love.
Deep in joy may we find laughter.
May our trust be just enough;
So that dancing we may enter
Shining courts in heav'n above.

Text: June Boyce-Tillman

Tune: Picardy arranged by June Boyce-Tillman (usually used for the text 'Let all mortal flesh keep silence') or Pange Lingua ('Sing my tongue the glorious battle')

AN EVENING WITH HILDEGARD OF BINGEN

Viridissima Virga (sung as part of "her story")

O viridissima virga ave,
que in ventoso flabro sollicitationis
sanctorum prodisti.

Cum venit tempus
quod tu floruisti in ramis tuis:
ave, ave sit tibi,
quia calor solis in te sudavit
sicut odor balsami.

Nam in te floruit pulcher flos
qui odorem dedit omnibus aromatibus
que arida erant.

Et illa apparuerunt omnia
in viriditate plena.

Unde celi dederunt rorem super gramen
et omnis terra leta facta est.
quoniam viscera ipsius
frumentum protulerunt,
et quoniam volucres celi
nidos in ipsa habuerunt.

Deinde facta est esca hominibus,
et gaudium magnum epulantium:
unde, o suavis virgo,
in te non deficit ullum gaudium.

Hec omnia Eva contempsit.

Nunc autem laus sit altissimo.

Hail, o greenest branch,
sprung forth in the airy breezes
of the prayers of the saints.

So the time has come
that your sprays have flourished:
hail, hail to you,
because the heat of the sun has exuded from you
like the aroma of balm.

For the beautiful flower sprang from you
which gave all parched perfumes their aroma.

And they have radiated anew
in their full freshness.

Whence the skies bestowed dew upon the pasture,
and all the Earth was made joyful
because her womb
brought forth corn,
and because the birds of the firmament
built their nests in her.

Then there was harvest ready for Man
and a great rejoicing of banqueters.
whence, o sweet Virgin,
no joy is lacking in you.

Eve rejected all these things.

Now let there be praise to the Highest.

MEDITATION WITH HILDEGARD

Hymn (see separate sheet)

The meditation will fall into sections taking an image from her writings. At the beginning of each section we sing (to the same tune as the hymn) a verse including the image. The main part of the text is the same as printed below, with only the underlined words including the image changing. Also included are translations of the latin of Hildegard's songs that are sung.

a. The Holy Spirit

(Translation) Through you, the clouds stream, the upper air flies
The stones have their temper,
the waters lead forth their rills
and the earth exudes freshness.

Song b. With the living Spirit we're going)
feather on the breath of God,) Twice
with the living Spirit we would go
Feather on the breath of God.

c. With the living Spirit we're going,
Gold within the flame of God etc.

(translation) O fire of the comforting Spirit,
life of the life of all Creation
You are holy in quickening all kind.

You are holy in anointing the dangerously stricken:
you are holy in wiping the reeking wound.

Song d. Scent within the perfume of God

(translation) O breath of holiness
O fire of love
O sweet draught in the breast
and flooding of the heart
in the good aroma of virtues

Song e. Arc within the wheel of God

" f. Drop within the fountain of God

(translation) O purest fountain
in whom it is seen
that God has summoned the gentiles
and sought out the lost.

Song g. Seed within the earth of God

" h. Phrase within the song of God

(translation) You always lead forth the comprehending
made joyful by the inspiration of wisdom

Song i. Harp within the hands of God

(translation) Whence praise be to you
who are the sound of praise
and bliss of life.
Hope and richest gift
giving the rewards of light.

Song j. Child within the arms of God

" k. Warmth within the kiss of God

Dance For this we sing the song again, using "Feather on the Breath of God."

HYMN ON HILDEGARD OF BINGEN (tune Pange Lingua)

or Picardy

1. Hildegard of faith unbending,
Feather on the breath of God,
World of substance all transcending,
Treading paths as yet untrod,
You, a woman's silence sharing
Understood our/their present lot.
2. Lonely woman, silence keeping
Till the time to speak came near
Then the praise of God unceasing
From your lips the world could hear,
Till a clash with human powers
Not sure of your vision clear.
3. May discernment bring us wisdom
In compassion may we love.
Deep in joy may we find laughter.
May our trust be just enough
So that praising we may enter
Shining courts in heav'n above.

June Boyce-Tillman

Hildegard's Words

We are dressed in the scaffold of creation:

in seeing—to recognize all the world,
in hearing—to understand,
in smelling—to discern,
in tasting—to nurture,
in touching—to govern.

In this way humankind comes to know God,
for God is the author of all creation.

And so,
humankind
full of creative possibilities,
is God's work.

Humankind alone,
is called to assist God.

Humankind is called to co-create.

God gave to humankind the talent
to create with all the world.

Just as the [people] shall never end,
until into dust they are transformed and resurrected,
just so,
their works are always visible.

The good deeds shall glorify,
the bad deeds shall shame,
insofar as they have not been blotted out through penance.

(Uhlein, *Meditations*, pp. 104, 106, 125)

Quoted in Danka, praying with
Hildegard of Bingen