

# Litany of Remembrance

## A Meditation

Death is nothing at all. I have only slipped away into the next room. I am I and you are you. Whatever we were to each other, that we still are. Call me by my old familiar name, speak to me in the easy way which you always used. Put no difference in your tone, wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow. Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes we enjoyed together. Let my name be the household word that it always was, let it be spoken without effect, without the trace of shadow on it. Life means all that it ever meant. It is the same as it ever was; there is unbroken continuity. Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight? I am waiting for you, for an interval, somewhere very near, just around the corner. All is well.

Henry Scott Holland (1847-1918)  
Canon of St. Paul's  
Cathedral, London

*Officiant:* We light this candle to remember those persons who have been loved . We pause to remember their name, their face, their voice. We give thanks for the memory that binds them to us this season which anticipates Christmas.

*People:* *May God's eternal love surround them.*

*Officiant:* We light this candle to redeem the pain of loss: the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs, the loss of health. As we gather up the pain of the past, we offer it to You, O God, asking that into our open hands, You will place the gift of peace.

*People:* *Refresh, restore, renew us, O God, and lead us into your future.*

*Officiant:* We light this candle to remember ourselves this Christmas time. We pause and remember the past weeks, months and for some of us, years of down times. We remember the poignancy of memories, the grief, the sadness, the hurts, the pain of reflecting on our own mortality.

*People:* *Let us remember that dawn defeats darkness.*

*Officiant:* This candle is lit to remember our faith and the gift of hope which God offers to us in the Christmas story. We remember the God who shares our life, promises us a place and time of no more pain and suffering.

*People:* *Let us remember the One who shows the way and who goes with us into our tomorrows.*

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*Officiant:* In the spirit of the season, let us now ask our God for what we need for ourselves as we participate in the Christmas Season as people coping with our loss, pain, suffering, loneliness, grief and sadness. In response to the words, "Loving God, hear our prayer," you are invited to respond with, "And in your merciful love, answer."

*People:* *And in your merciful love, answer.*

God, we come to you in the Christmas Season, with the pain growing inside us. As the nights have been growing longer, so has the darkness wrapped itself around our hearts. In this season of our longest nights, we offer to you the pain in our hearts, the traumas that some of us can not put into words. Loving God, hear our prayer.

*People:* *And in your merciful love, answer.*

*Officiant:* Compassionate God, there are those among us who are grieving over what might have been. A death or loss has changed our experience of Christmas. Once it was a special day for us too, but someone has died or moved away. Or we have lost a job, our health, a dream, a goal, a cause. We find ourself adrift, alone, lost. Loving God, hear our prayer.

*People:* *And in your merciful love, answer.*

*Officiant:* The Christmas Season reminds us of all that used to be and cannot be anymore. The memories of what was, the fears of what may be, stifle us. All around us we hear the sounds of celebration. But all we experience is a sense of feeling blue. Please be near us this night. Loving God, hear our prayer.

*People:* *And in your merciful love, answer.*

*Officiant:* The Lord be with you.

*People:* And also with you.

*Officiant:* Let us pray.

Father of all, we pray to you for all those whom we love but see no longer. Grant to them eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them. May the souls of the departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.  
*Amen.*

God of love,  
God of truth,  
God of hope,  
God of life and love, you know our needs are great at this time.  
You know them better than we can express them.

In your mercy, hear our prayer for all that has been lost in this world since September 11th (2001): for lives in New York City, Washington, D.C., Pennsylvania, Florida, Afghanistan and elsewhere in the Middle East; for the loss of innocence and sense of security in resources other than you.

In your wisdom, grant us those things that will lead us toward wholeness, love and peace with justice again.

In your grace, bless us in this time  
with your holy and life-giving presence.

For belssed are you, O God, and blessed is all that you do.  
*Amen.*