

## **The Struggling Heart**

O Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, I struggle to find Your Way, to enter onto Your path, never to stray again. But the path is hard to see sometimes and I am so human. Yet I long to be all You desire me to be. I long to enter into Your Sacred Heart, to be transformed, to be filled forever. Hold the Light on the path for me, Lord, and guide me to You. Make your footsteps deep on my path, O Lord, that my feet may find them in the darkness. Draw me to You with Your Heart of Love.

Readings: Matthew 5:3-12 Beatitudes. Matthew 6:9-14 Lord's Prayer. Matthew 6:25-34 Dependence on God. Matthew 7:7-11 Answer to prayers, 8:1-4. Cleansing of the Leper, 10:26-33. Psalms 86, 91, 121, 123, 130, 138, 141, 142, 143

Response: Pick a poem from the Struggling Heart section. Read slowly, add your personal prayers for your personal struggles whenever inspired to as you read.

Reflection: You are invited to meditate on the images or words that seem most meaningful to you from the poems. Allow the Spirit to lead your prayer. Finish by reading Psalm 23 if desired.

## PRAYER POEMS FOR "THE STRUGGLING HEART"

### Adoration

I came, stumbling  
Across the threshold of Your house  
Falling into pieces on Your floor.  
Once again, the vessel broken  
Scattering across the Holy Ground of Your Presence.

Only so precious few hours, no minutes, before  
Had I petitioned for Your Strength,  
Your Wisdom, Your Holy Silence and Your Peace.

And here I was, in pieces,  
Broken intentions, fallen to the floor  
As my tears of failure.  
I love you so much  
Why can't I do what I intend for You?  
Why do I always fail?  
Why can I not step into  
The Silence of Your Love  
When I am tempted?  
Why is it so hard?

Your precious hands picked up my pieces  
So lovingly holding them together  
And making me whole again  
With the glue of your Love.

And then,  
As if that wasn't enough,  
You poured Yourself out into my chalice  
To overflowing,  
Baptizing me once again  
In Your Love,  
Holding me together with Your Strength,  
Picking me up with Your Courage  
Molding me.

Into my ear You whispered  
Words of Love and Hope,  
Words of comfort,  
In Your plan.

You poured Yourself out  
To overflowing.  
Overflow, You said,  
Into my people.

All praise be Yours, my Lord, my Life,  
For Your loving kindness and mercy.

### **My Light in Darkness**

Dear, Sweet Jesus,  
My Light in darkness,  
Bring the Light closer,  
The darkness is getting deeper.  
Shine Your Light before me, O Lord!

The stones in my path are larger now.  
The brambles tear at me.  
I keep my eyes fixed on You, O Lord,  
And try to follow Your lead.  
Lead me, O Sacred Heart of my God!

I want to follow so close behind;  
My desire is for You!  
Don't lose me now!  
Take my hand, O Lord,  
And hold it tight.  
I am weak, but You are strong.  
Your strength overcomes my weakness, O Lord!

My desire, to be all You desire,  
Seems so far away!  
I peer into the darkness ahead  
Wishing to catch a glimpse  
Of where You are taking me.  
"Look to Me," You say,  
Taking my hand in Yours,  
"And be not afraid.  
All you want is here  
With you now.  
Sink into My Heart  
For there, You are already Home."  
O Lord, Your Sacred Heart is all I desire.

### **The Next Step**

You have drawn me to Your Cross.  
You have placed me before Your pain.  
You have opened my heart to Your love.  
Before me stands my Via Dolorosa  
As You beckon me on.

Around me the crowds shout insults,  
They laugh, they taunt.  
The stones are hot on my bare feet.  
The cross so heavy it cuts my flesh.  
Do I really need to go there?  
My thoughts tempt me.  
But I look at You and I know,  
For it is Your Sacred Heart I desire  
More than comfort.

You come to my side.  
The insults pass through Your Heart to mine.  
Your eyes fill with tears  
As You take my arm and  
Hurry me along, keeping me close.  
Are You sure I can do this?  
I ask in my human heart.  
But my heart that is Yours draws closer.

Seeing ahead of me the inevitable wounds,  
I am strangely peaceful,  
As in the dying, I sense the Life.  
The shortcut to Your Heart opens up  
Though the rocky path is still to be walked.

I will be with you until the end, You promise  
As I struggle to take the next step.  
It hurts.  
The sharp, hot stones tear at me.  
My heart aches from the insults.  
I close my eyes,  
Lean on Your arm and  
Walk into the next step.

You do not promise me  
A painless journey.  
You do not promise me  
More than humiliation.  
But You do promise  
Your arm of comfort and strength and  
Your Sacred Heart of Love through pain.  
Each step, a step closer  
To the treasures of Your Heart.

## Lantern in the Night

I sit by the water's edge  
Watching the lapping water  
Move through my empty nets.  
Some days empty nets seem full  
And others full nets seem empty.

I wait by the water's edge  
Listening for Your call,  
Watching for Your beckon.  
My heart is heavy from the weight  
Of lost fish and lost fishermen.

Desiring only Your Heart  
Only to be with You,  
Only to do Your Will,  
I am confused by the darkness  
And the empty nets.

My heart is weary from the struggle.  
It searches for You  
Among the seaweed and nets.  
Glancing at every person  
Who comes my way,  
I look for a glimmer of Your Flame  
In their eyes.

Your Flame grows silently in my heart.  
As You grow brighter,  
The world in contrast grows dimmer  
As when you leave a brightly lit room,  
The darkness outside is so much darker.

I raise my hands against the darkness  
And call Your name.  
Tear through the darkness  
With Your Light!  
Take my heart into Your wounded hands  
And teach me to love like You  
Through the darkness,  
Through the pain,  
Through the emptiness.  
Inflame Your Light in this soul  
Made empty for You

And make my emptiness  
Your lantern in the night.

### **The Pebbles**

O Lord, You are my rock and my salvation.

You, O Mountain of Strength,  
Rock of immovable Truth,  
You remain, still, despite our questions, doubts.  
We praise You in the mightiness of Your Mountain  
But stumble on the pebbles at Your Feet.

In You, Lord, I find my soul's greatest rest,  
The Waters of Life,  
The Fire of Love,  
Ever-burning, ever healing.  
But when You speak, sometimes, I cringe.  
I wonder if I hear correctly.  
I wonder if I understand.  
I wonder if I can do what You ask.

In my heart I know  
You would not ask of me  
The impossible.  
But in my humanness,  
I stumble on the pebbles,  
Standing and falling,  
Standing and falling.  
Unable to die in Your Arms.  
I want to climb Your Sacred Mountain  
But I keep falling on the pebbles.

Do You tire at my feeble attempts?  
I thirst.  
Does my weakness leave You abandoned?  
My God, why have You forsaken me?  
Or do You, in Your All-knowingness,  
Watch and wait as I discover, once again,  
My utter dependence on You, my God.  
Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.

Your Sacred Heart opens to my weakness,  
Inviting me back in where I belong.  
I am nothing outside of You.  
I want nothing outside of You.  
Your Cross is hard, my Lord, but Sweet.  
Take me to the Sacred Heart of Your Mountain, my Jesus!

And rescue me from the pebbles!  
The pebbles are too heavy for me to move alone!

### **The Forbidden Fruit**

The Crucifix on the wall betrays Your body,  
Stripped of all we could take,  
Nailed down and hanging from Your healing hands,  
The same hands that worked miracles  
And whose touch healed us.  
There You suffer in shame and agony  
While we gaze on, unable to understand.

Watching You suffer still on this Cross,  
Your Body tortured with no human way out,  
Like a mother giving birth through the pain,  
You focus only on the love for us  
You hold in Your Sacred Heart  
While we pour out our insults on You  
Like salt on Your wounds.

Once we thought, yet still do,  
We could know without You  
What Truth and good could be.  
Still unable to comprehend  
The mystery of Your Mind and Heart,  
We taste the forbidden fruit of doubt.  
Doubt in Your goodness and kindness,  
Doubt in Your plan for us,  
Doubt in the purity of Your intentions,  
Doubt that You could understand our thoughts  
That spring from the hearts and minds You placed in us.

In our confusion and pride,  
We turn the tables on You, O Lord:  
It is not ourselves who do not understand.  
It is You.

You, the tempter assured,  
Did not love us enough  
To trust us with Your mind.

You, the tempter assures,  
Do not love us enough  
To give us all we need.  
We must take it for ourselves.

With his words of evil in our ears,

Our gaze into Your Heart of Pure Love falters.  
And in that faltering  
Our eyes turn from You, Love Itself,  
To a darkness and coldness  
That will know no Light.  
Our hearts turn cold and  
Our minds grow dark.

How hard, dear Lord, it is for us  
To recapture that unbroken gaze of Love  
Once weakened by the tempter's lies.

O Sacred Heart of love unending,  
Rip the roots and hooks of evil and darkness  
From our hearts, our souls, our minds and bodies.  
Sever the vines of evil rooted in us  
And graft us once again onto Your Vine,  
The Vine of Life and Love and Truth  
That reaches to us from Your Sacred Heart,  
The Heart of our Creator and Sustainer;  
The Sacred Heart which burns  
With the Flame of Pure Love  
Guiding our prodigal return  
Into Your arms and Heart of Love.

### **Joys and Sorrows**

Pierced by our sword,  
Your Sacred Heart pours forth its contents.  
Love, embodied in Your Blood,  
Bursts forth, given to the last drop,  
Mingling with the water  
Of Your mercy and forgiveness.  
Your Heart, giving forth an eternity of Love,  
But enduring increasing humiliation,  
Neglect, arrogance, even hate,  
Grieves our sins with a sorrow  
Deeper than death.  
Yet Your Sacred Heart cries forth  
With the Blood of Love  
Mixed with the purifying tears  
Of sorrow and mercy.

As an infant,  
Hearing the cries of another,  
Though not understanding the cause,  
Is so moved with compassion,  
He joins in unity with the heartbreaking cry,



So I, though unable to comprehend  
The enormity of Your pain,  
Grieve Your pain still and  
Cry with a heart broken  
For the One I love.

Come to this heart, Lord,  
Broken for Your Love,  
And take it away, to You,  
To cry with Your sorrows,  
To love through Your tears,  
To die with Your death,  
To rise with Your Life, Your joy,  
To share in Your Sacred Heart,  
To be consumed with  
The joys and sorrows of You.

### **The Only Thing I Know**

My fortresses fall, my mountains crumble,  
Stars and earth move around me.  
Nothing is untouched, nothing is real,  
Save a growing core,  
Immovable, solid yet soft, unchanging.

This only grows stronger and clearer,  
As everything else falls around me.  
There is only one thing I know.  
There is only one thing that is real.

You, O Sacred Heart of my God,  
Are at the core of who I am.  
You, O Sacred Heart of Love,  
Are the only thing unchanging in me.  
My love for You, O Sacred Heart,  
Is all I know of myself that I am sure of.  
My love for You is all I am  
And all I want to be.

Like the Nugget left after the furnace  
Turns ore to gold, are You, my Lord.  
Like the Rock left after the tide  
Washes away the sand, are You, my Lord.  
Like the Light of a burning flame  
Holding off the darkness, are You, my Lord.

You have not moved in Your love for me.  
You have held me still, unchanging in my love for You

Though in everything else I crumble.  
Your Heart of Love, like the cement of my life,  
Holds me together with the only thing I know.

### **The Night Walk**

Lost on Your path,  
My compass searches for Your Heart.  
Led into the wilderness by Your Spirit,  
Into uncharted regions of the soul,  
I stumble, I fall in the night.  
I grope in the darkness for You,  
Trusting You are still there.  
As I try to brush off the dust  
From my recent falls,  
I sense Your gaze upon my soul.  
Your hands gently wipe the tears  
And dirt from my eyes and  
Softly taking my bruised hands in Yours,  
You tug at me to try again.

Bewildered by the difficulty of the path,  
I watch for the break of dawn  
So that I may see the way.  
But Your hand in mine  
Tells me of the Night Walk,  
The trusting soul,  
That closing eyes to darkness,  
Walks only in Your Light;  
Then holding on to Your hand,  
Enters softly into the  
Secret Regions of Your Heart.

Your hand lifts me again.  
Closing my eyes,  
I hope for a glimpse  
Of the Secret Path  
Leading to the Eternal City  
Of Your Sacred Heart.

### **Death to Life**

Back on my knees,  
The vessel broken once again.  
That which was filled, poured out.  
That which appeared strong, weak and broken.  
Leaning against Your Cross for strength,

I wonder if You wanted it this way?  
You know I have no strength but You.  
Is it Your wish that I be sure?

I watch myself fail, try again, fail.  
Not on the mountain, not even the pebbles,  
But on every tiny grain of sand, I stumble.  
Can I not move without Your help?  
...stand without Your arm?  
...think without Your thoughts?  
...love without Your love?  
Can I even just be, present in Your love,  
Or must You hold me even then?  
Is this feeling, this nothingness,  
This dependence on You,  
This brokenness, this death,  
Is this the death to self You speak of?  
Or is there more?

The compost pile of my life,  
Is always changing,  
Always growing into something new  
By brokenness, decay and  
A surrendering death.  
Will the Spring come when  
The seeds You planted will sprout  
And someday bloom?  
Was this Your plan, my Lord,  
To make me nothing  
So in Your Heart  
I could find my everything?

Will You take this nothingness  
And make it Yours?  
Will You build Your temple in me  
Stone by stone,  
Day by day,  
So that in time  
You may be praised in it?  
You may be worshipped in it?  
That it may absorb Your tender love,  
Then raise the fragrance  
Of a sanctified life  
From the compost of my soul.

## **Scars**

As Your hand reaches for mine,  
I see Your scars,  
A remembrance of my past,  
An acknowledgement of my present.  
I cringe at the sight,  
Knowing full well my part  
In Your pain.

In Your Mercy, still,  
You offer Your hand  
Inviting my love,  
Forgiving my ignorance,  
Dissolving my arrogance,  
Giving strength to my weakness.

As I take Your hand in mine,  
Your warm, strong touch of love  
Dissolves the bars on my heart.  
My heart seeks Yours and  
Like the sinful woman,  
My tears wash Your wounds,  
My love seeking to heal.

You, in Your infinite kindness,  
Wipe away my tears.  
Drawing my eyes to Yours  
You betray no accusations, no bitterness,  
As your gaze floods through my soul  
Making all things new.

## **Lift me, Lord**

Release me, Lord,  
From the density of this place.  
Lift me up to You  
Away from the mire  
Our human weaknesses have created.  
This soup of all our sinfulness  
Carefully prepared by the hand of Darkness,  
When taken all together,  
Weights us down in hopelessness.  
You who gave all  
To save us from this mess,  
Who broke the chains of evil,  
Break these chains in me again, my Savior,  
And release me from the power

Of those who would so willingly  
Shackle me again.

Let me live in You, Lord,  
Apart from this place.  
While walking this journey as You did,  
Help me to walk apart, living in You.  
While among Your people, Lord,  
Help me to live in the Light  
Apart from the darkness  
That I may not cast my darkness on any man,  
But that Your Light may shine through me.

Lift me, Lord, and  
Fill me with Your Light  
Pouring forth from Your Sacred Heart  
Into the darkness of my heart and soul.

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