

Pastoral Prayer: "Candles in the Wind"

All Loving and Eternal God, we lift before you our candles of prayer.

Sometimes the winds around us blow so hard that the candles of our faith begin to flicker. We ask, "How far is it back to Eden?" where the winds are but gentle breezes, or "When will Thy Kingdom come on Earth as in Heaven, where only zephyrs whisper."

Each of us comes with a place of suffering within his or her own soul:

A place of unhealed pain or memory
A person who is tugging at our heartstrings
A hidden grief, anger, fear, or shame.

We feel concern for the evil that is manifesting itself in the world around us:
Decimation of innocents in shopping malls, schools, houses of worship, and workplaces, and courts.
Distortions of thought, which lead to hubris and abuse of those who are *Other*,
Destruction of the Earth,
Dislocation and devastation of vulnerable people all over the world

We drop to our knees holding our candles flickering in these winds.
Words seem inadequate as we pray for the steadying vision of Your Light.
So in the silence, still our souls, help us find our centers, hold that which causes suffering.

In this stilling, this centering, and this holding,
May we know again that You are the Light: the constant, strong, eternal light.

When our shaky hands nearly drop the candle of faith,
May we be open to your steadying presence.

When the winds of the world blow harsh and cruel
May we remember that "Wind" also means Spirit, Holy Spirit, Your Presence with us,
Which is stronger than the blustering of all Earthly powers.
We imagine you holding our candles in Your hands of Love
And keeping them aglow with your Steady Light.

It is Your light that enables us to endure the unthinkable.
Your light that helps us be lovers in Christ's spirit to others who suffer.
Your light that enables us to receive and trust the love of others in our times of need.

We pray that we might become ever more aware of your presence and grace.

And when we do experience the darkness, and our lights begin to flicker,
Might we simply wait, O God.
We wait upon you: quietly, openly, hopefully. We wait.
We trust ourselves, and the groaning of all creation, into your loving hands.
We wait.