

A Reflective Space on Faith



Affirmation of Faith [1]

**We believe in God
the maker and shaper of our pathways;
who sent Jesus to show us the narrow way,
and who is the beginning and end of our travelling.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ
the sharer of our flesh;
who entered and experienced the human journey,
and who walks beside us on the road.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit
the midwife and nurturer of our potential;
who calls us now to cast off from the shore.**

**We believe in God the Father, Son and Spirit
the shaper, sharer and stirrer of our journeys;
and we recommit ourselves
to following his Way.**

Matthew 8:23-27 - *the calming of the storm*

Then Jesus got into the boat and his disciples followed him.

Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat.

But Jesus was sleeping.

The disciples went and woke him, saying,

“Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!”

He replied,

“You of little faith, why are you so afraid?”

Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

The men were amazed and asked,

“What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!”

A Short Reflection

H.L.Mencken, a well known atheist, defined faith as -
"An illogical belief in the occurrence of the improbable."

How might
you
provide a rebuttal
to Mencken's definition
in defence of
your faith?

Safe in the shadow of the Lord,
beneath his hand and power,
I trust in him, I trust in him,
my fortress and my tower.

My hope is set on God alone,
though Satan spreads his snare,
I trust in him, I trust in him,
to keep me in his care.

From fears and phantoms of the night,
from foes about my way,
I trust in him, I trust in him,
by darkness as by day.

His holy angels keep my feet
secure from every stone;
I trust in him, I trust in him,
and unafraid go on.

Strong in the everlasting Name,
and in my Father's care,
I trust in him, I trust in him,
who hears and answers prayer.

Safe in the shadow of the Lord,
possessed by love divine,
I trust in him, I trust in him,
and meet his love with mine.

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Affirmation of Faith [2]

With the whole church

we affirm

**that we are made in God's image,
befriended by Christ, empowered by the Spirit.**

With people everywhere

we affirm

**God's goodness at the heart of humanity
planted more deeply than all that is wrong.**

With all creation

we celebrate

**the miracle and wonder of life,
the unfolding purposes of God
for ever at work in ourselves in the world.**

Matthew 8:5-13 - *healing of the centurion's servant*

When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, appealing to him and saying,

'Lord, my servant is lying at home paralysed, in terrible distress.'

And he said to him,

'I will come and cure him.'

The centurion answered,

'Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, "Go", and he goes, and to another, "Come", and he comes, and to my slave, "Do this", and the slave does it.'

When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him,

'Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith.

I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

And to the centurion Jesus said,

'Go; let it be done for you according to your faith.'

And the servant was healed in that hour.

Words of Trust

**Lord, in faith, into your hands
I commit all that is good and creative in my life,
only you can make the most of it.**

**Lord, in faith, into your hands
I commit my mistakes,
only you can redeem them, bringing good out of them.**

**Lord, in faith, into your hands
I commit my sins,
only your forgiveness is big enough to cover them all.**

**Lord, in faith, into your hands
I commit what I do not understand about you,
only you can answer my questions.**

**Lord, in faith, into your hands
I commit me.**

Now, let us just get on with it.

Ian Cowie

O God, you are my God alone,
whom eagerly I seek,
though longing fills my soul with thirst
and leaves my body weak.
Just like a dry and barren land
awaits a freshening shower,
I long within your house to see
your glory and your power.

Your faithful love surpasses life,
evoking all my praise.
Through every day, to bless your name,
my hands in joy I'll raise.
My deepest needs you satisfy
as with a sumptuous feast.
So, on my lips and in my heart,
your praise has never ceased.

Throughout the night I lie in bed
and call you, Lord, to mind;
in darkest hours I meditate
how God, my strength, is kind.
Beneath the shadow of your wing,
I live and feel secure;
and daily, as I follow close,
your right hand keeps me sure.

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Affirmation of Faith [3]

I believe in the sun
even when it is not shining
And I believe in love,
even when there's no one there.
And I believe in God,
even when He is silent.

I believe through any trial, there is always a way
But sometimes in this suffering and hopeless despair
my heart cries for shelter,
to know someone's there
But a voice rises within me,
saying "hold on my child,
I'll give you strength,
I'll give you hope.
Just stay a little while."

I believe in the sun
even when it is not shining
And I believe in love
even when there's no one there
But I believe in God
even when he is silent

I believe through any trial there is always a way.

May there someday be sunshine
May there someday be happiness
May there someday be love
May there someday be peace....

*Unknown (written during WW2, on the wall of a cellar,
by a Jew in the Cologne concentration camp)*

James 2:14-26 - Faith and Deeds

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them?

Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."

[Continues]

[...]

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.

You believe that there is one God.

Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?

Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?

As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

'Take up your cross', he says, 'and follow me,
and in my love and comfort you shall hide.
I am the Way', he says, 'so follow me;
do not fear, I am here at your side.'

What if the rocks are blistering my feet,
and the sun's heat beats upon my head?
Near me a grass path beckons with its flowers,
I'm tempted to go that way instead.

What if the tiredness aches behind my eyes
and my boat is impossible to steer?
Out on an ocean, drifting and alone,
am I still, even then, to persevere?

Strangest of wonders, wonderfully strange,
that the cross can set me free.

Nothing is stronger than the love of God:
I know very well that he loves me.

'Take up your cross', he says, 'and follow me,
and in my love and comfort you shall hide.
I am the Way', he says, 'so follow me;
do not fear, I am here at your side.'

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Prayer

We pray for those who, because of their faith in you,
have been led through all kinds of trials and tribulations;
for those who are finding the journey of faith lonely and painful
or have given up.

And we pray for those for whom faith in you
almost comes too easily - whose faith has never grown or deepened.

We pray for those who find it hard to believe
because they have too many of this world's good things
and for those who find it hard because they haven't enough.
We pray for those who find it hard to accept anything
that cannot be seen, touched or proved -
like love, hope, peace and joy.

We pray for those who are required to work out their faith
before a watching, cynical world that wants instant answers.
We pray for the leaders of nations
and of communities large and small;
we pray for those responsible for what we see on our screens,
read in our papers and are confronted with on social media.

We pray for those whose faith is challenged by despair;
for those who are finding that the burden of living
is too great to bear;
for the sick and the dying and those who wait with them;
for the lonely and the alone and for sad and sorrowful people.
And we pray for those whose faith is worked out in deeds
to give of their time, their energy and of themselves
to help those in any form of need.

And so we pray for a renewal of faith
that is never afraid of criticism or doubt;
faith that is honest, open, never evasive, never afraid of questions;
faith which faces every challenge with humility
and meets every need with deeds of loving generosity.

Lord, let your love at work in us
turn our prayers and confession of faith
into deeds of genuine concern and effective action,
so that through us you may create in others
faith to overcome disaster and fear, and to make them whole.

This we ask through Jesus Christ,
the Author and Perfecter of our faith.

Amen

Based on David Clowes: 500 Prayers for all Occasions: 412

Closing Responses

God of fire and beauty

Warm us

God of peace and justice

Disturb us

God of wind and wonder

Amaze us

God of Pentecost

Kindle your love in our lives.

When our Lord walked the earth,
all the world found its worth;
as declared at his birth,
God became our neighbour,
granting with great favour,

Power to speak and heal,
grace to know what's real,
wisdom, insight and faith,
love and understanding.

Through his life, through his death,
through each gesture and breath,
Jesus joined faith and deed,
model for our caring,
showing and yet sharing,

Power to speak and heal [...]

Jesus loves all his friends
and that love never ends.
To the Church, gifts he sends
through the Holy Spirit;
these we still inherit,

Power to speak and heal [...]

Sing aloud and rejoice,
clap your hands, raise your voice,
for with unnerving choice
God, in love, has found us
and displays around us,

Power to speak and heal [...]

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