

## Writing short prayers

Friends in these challenging times we need to practices of prayer that can hold us. You will know of the practice of silent contemplation that Richard Arnold offers through Christian meditation—there is a deep quiet that can sit underneath our spoken prayer.

Last year I was introduced to a practice of prayer writing through the ancient form of the collect. I find writing these short prayers helps give shape to my care – for others, for the world, and for my part in it.

Collect prayers can gather up or ‘collect’ the needs of the day– usually choosing just one need to bring before God.

The collect prayer speaks to a particular aspect of the Divine. For instance ‘God of Shadows’, ‘God who speaks the word beloved’.

You may notice that most of the collects I’ve written in this time of Coronavirus are laments – naming sorrows either experienced or witnessed [ [www.tellingwords.com/blog](http://www.tellingwords.com/blog) ].

The formulation goes like this

1. First in a collect God is named with a particular name or quality
2. That quality is expanded on or explained
3. Then there is a request or plea for help
4. The prayer closes with what poet Pádraig Ó Tuama calls ‘a little bird of praise’

I think writing and praying these prayers can help our awareness of what the needs are around us. They also help us wonder about what way God meets us in our current experiences.

You might like to try your hand at this.

Julie Perrin  
April 2020.