

A Prayer

Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic,
Serbian bishop who spoke
out against Naziism, was
arrested, and taken to
Dachau.

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.

Enemies have driven me into your embrace more than friends have.

Friends have bound me to earth; enemies have loosed me from earth and have demolished all my aspirations in the world.

Enemies have made me a stranger in worldly realms and an extraneous inhabitant of the world.

Just as a hunted animal finds safer shelter than an un hunted animal does, so have I, persecuted by enemies, found the safest sanctuary, having ensconced myself beneath Your tabernacle, where neither friends nor enemies can slay my soul. Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless and do not curse them.

They, rather than I, have confessed my sins before the world.

They have punished me, whenever I have
hesitated to punish myself.

They have tormented me, whenever I have
tried to flee torments.

They have scolded me, whenever I have
flattered myself.

They have spat upon me, whenever I have
filled myself with arrogance.

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless
them and do not curse them.

Whenever I have made myself wise, they
have called me foolish.

Whenever I have made myself mighty,
they have mocked me as though I were a
[fly].

Whenever I have wanted to lead people,
they have shoved me into the background.

Whenever I have rushed to enrich myself,
they have prevented me with an iron hand.

Whenever I thought that I would sleep
peacefully, they have wakened me from
sleep.

Whenever I have tried to build a home for
a long and tranquil life, they have
demolished it and driven me out.

Truly, enemies have cut me loose from the
world and have stretched out my hands to
the hem of your garment.

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless
them and do not curse them.

Bless them and multiply them; multiply them and
make them even more bitterly against me:

So that my fleeing will have no return;

So that all my hope in men may be scattered
like cobwebs;

So that absolute serenity may begin to reign in
my soul;

So that my heart may become the grave of my
two evil twins: arrogance and anger;

So that I might amass all my treasure in
heaven;

Ah, so that I may for once be freed from self-
deception, which has entangled me in the
dreadful web of illusory life.

Enemies have taught me to know what hardly anyone knows, that a person has no enemies in the world except himself.

One hates his enemies only when he fails to realize that they are not enemies, but cruel friends.

It is truly difficult for me to say who has done me more good and who has done me more evil in the world: friends or enemies.

Therefore bless, O Lord, both my friends and my enemies.

A slave curses enemies, for he does not understand. But a son blesses them, for he understands.

For a son knows that his enemies cannot touch his life. Therefore he freely steps among them and prays to God for them.

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.

Trees that grow tall have deep roots. Great height without great depth is dangerous. The great leaders of this world - like St. Francis, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, Jr., - were all people who could live with public notoriety, influence, and power in a humble way because of their deep spiritual rootedness.

Without deep roots we easily let others determine who we are. But as we cling to our popularity, we may lose our true sense of self. Our clinging to the opinion of others reveals how superficial we are. We have little to stand on. We have to be kept alive by adulation and praise. Those who are deeply rooted in the love of God can enjoy human praise without being attached to it. - Henri Nouwen

transformation

...until Christ
is formed in you.

(Galatians 4:19)