

# Prayers

*in dark times*

A SELECTION OF  
POEMS



Uniting Church in Australia  
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

# *Prayers in dark times*

blessed are you  
who walk the scorching beaches  
and shelter in the ocean  
brushing burning embers  
God beside you

blessed are you  
who weep with grief and sorrow  
and bear an ashen image  
of a life of green and growing  
God beside you

blessed are you  
who face the firestorm's fury  
and volunteer for danger  
companions in the battle  
God beside you

blessed are you  
who work to bring together  
the rallied deeds of angels  
and shape a place of respite  
God beside you

blessed are you  
who set a bowl of water  
in the wilderness of burning  
to care for little creatures  
God beside you

blessed are you  
who wait with calm and coping  
engage in patient listening  
approach with wine and welcome  
cook for crowds of strangers  
clothe and house your neighbours  
pray for rest and rainfall  
God beside you

**Rev Jennie Gordon**



**Uniting Church in Australia**  
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# *Prayers in dark times*

God of darkness  
You must be the god of darkness  
Because if you are not,  
who else can we turn to?  
Turn to us now.

Turn to us.

Turn your face to us.  
Because it is dark here. And we are in need.  
We are people in need.

We can barely remember our own truth,  
and if you too have forgotten, then we are  
without a hope of a map.

Turn to us now. Turn to us.

Turn your face to us.

Because you turned towards us in the dark  
and beautiful body of incarnation.

You turned towards us.

Amen.

**Pádraig Ó Tuama**



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A woman in silhouette is shown from the waist up, reaching her arms up towards a large, faint cross that is centered in the sky. The background is a warm, golden sunset or sunrise sky with several white doves in flight. The overall mood is one of hope and prayer.

# *Prayers in dark times*

It's as though it's suddenly  
turned winter,  
the way the earth is covered over  
and the grey stretch of ash  
is drawn up to its chin like a blanket.

And though it's day,  
the bird-less quiet is a kind of night,  
and everything we ever thought we  
knew has been turned upside down,  
the first now last, and the last first.

**Bill Rush**



**Uniting Church in Australia**  
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# *Prayers in dark times*

This blackness  
of landscape

as if a fire had  
passed through

with no echo of water  
in the dumb silence

there is though the fear  
a sun, a ball of glow

just above a horizon  
waiting for a breath

waiting for a change of wind  
waiting for a cool voice

just to say something

**Rory Harris**



**Uniting Church in Australia**  
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# *Prayers in dark times*

Comfort, comfort all my people  
with the comfort of my word.  
Speak it tender to my people:  
“All your sins are taken away.”

Though our land  
is burned and blackened,  
rooves & walls beyond repair  
Animals are lost or homeless  
comfort, comfort!

Volunteers throughout the country  
serving, weary, giving all  
helping strangers, friends & neighbours  
comfort, comfort!

Though our houses have been taken  
memories, treasures lost & gone  
one destroyed but one is standing  
comfort, comfort!

Still so much has been defended  
next-door-heroes risk their lives  
every deed will be remembered  
comfort, comfort!

**Robin Mann**



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# *Prayers in dark times*

The wound so deep  
- a grey-green jagged shard of pain  
rips through my soul,  
my heart,  
my very brain.

The world stands still  
-so much unreal  
imagination;  
I crumple  
on a desert isle of disbelief  
spinning wildly  
powerless desperation;  
I wonder weakly  
'Where is God in this  
-in this insane configuration?  
My God, can I believe  
you know,  
or care at all?'

A cloud of silence  
-mother's milk of love  
descends,  
permeates and stills my soul.  
"My child,  
I share your pain  
and weep beside you.  
I am your comfort,  
ever-present strength  
in all of this.  
"Lean on me now  
-release your burden  
and I will hold you  
lest you fall."

**Written by Jean Mayers**  
during the 2009 Victorian bushfires.



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