

APPENDIX D
PRAYER ANTHOLOGY

*“Certain thoughts are prayers. There are moments when, whatever be the attitude of the body,
the soul is on its knees.”*

Victor Hugo

Historical Prayers

A Chaplain’s Prayer

I know you are strong in the might of the Lord. You will go forth to battle on the morrow with light hearts and determined spirits, through the solemn duty may rest heavy on your souls. And, in the hour of battle, when all around is darkness, lit by the lurid cannon glare the piercing musket flash – when the wounded strew the ground, the dead litter your path – then remember, soldiers, that God is with you. The eternal God fights for you. He rides on the battle cloud. He sweeps onward with the march of the hurricane charge – God, the Awful and Infinite, fights for you, and you will triumph. Great Father, we bow down before Thee. We invoke Thy blessing, we deprecate Thy wrath, we return Thee thanks for the past, we ask Thy aid for the future. O God of mercy, we pray Thy blessing on the American arms. God prosper the cause. Amen.

*The Rev. Joab Prout, Chaplain, Continental Army, before the Battle of Brandywine,
September 9, 1777*

Washington’s Prayer for the Nation

Almighty God, we make our earnest prayer that Thou wilt keep the United States in Thy holy protection, that Thou wilt incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to the government and entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another and for their fellow citizens of the United States at large. And finally, that Thou will most graciously be pleased to dispose of us all to do justice, to love mercy, and demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without a humble imitation of whose examples in these things, we can never hope to be a happy nation. Grant our supplication, we beseech Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

President George Washington, written at Newburg-on-the-Hudson, New York, June 8, 1783 and sent to the governors of all the states.

From the Chief of Naval Operations

O God, we pray Thee that the memory of our comrades fallen in battle may ever be sacred in our hearts; that the sacrifice which they have offered for our country's cause may be acceptable in Thy sight; and that an entrance into Thine eternal peace may, be Thy pardoning grace, be open unto them through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Admiral Ernest J. King, CNO during WWII

FDR's Prayer for the Nation

Almighty God, who hast given us this good land for our heritage; We humbly beseech thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of thy favour and glad to do thy will. Bless our land with honourable industry, sound learning, and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogancy, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues. Endue with the spirit of wisdom those to whom in thy Name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that, through obedience to thy law, we may show forth thy praise among the nations of the earth. In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in thee to fail; all, which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Eisenhower's D-Day Prayer

Almighty God, we are about to be committed to a task from which some of us will not return. We go willingly to this hazardous adventure because we believe that those concepts of human dignity, rights, and justice that Your Son expounded to the world, and which are respected in the government of our beloved country, are in peril of extinction from the earth. We are ready to sacrifice ourselves for our country and our God. We do not ask, individually, for our safe return. But we earnestly pray that You will help each of us to do his duty. Permit none of us to fail a comrade in the fight. Above all, sustain us in our conviction in the justice and righteousness of our cause so that we may rise above all terror of the enemy and come to You, if called, in the humble pride of the good soldier and in the certainty of Your infinite mercy. Amen.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander, Allied Forces Europe

Prayer of a Navy Wife

To you, my husband, how I love you so. I pray each night that the troubled waters of the sea will bring you back home to me. As I watched you pull away, that pier so long, I promised to you that I would stay strong. I say that I can take the pain, the loneliness, the hardship, yet my love for

thus never allows me to quit, my heart and soul goes with you, my love, my confidante, my friend, I say, oh God, not again, but he and I know that love withstands through all advances, from the other man. So please, my love, always remember this: You are my king, my shining prince, and my love, for as time goes on, we still fit like a glove.

Mrs. Tracey Harvey

Prayer at the Fifth Marine Division Cemetery, Iwo Jima (1945)

This is perhaps the grimmest, and surely the holiest task we have faces since D-Day. Here before us lie the bodies of comrades and friends. Men until yesterday or last week laughed with us, joked with us, trained with us. Men who were on the same ships with us and went over the sides with us as we prepared to hit the beaches of this island. Men who fought with us and feared with us.

Somewhere in this plot of land there may lie the man who could have discovered the cure for cancer. Under one of those Christian crosses, or beneath a Jewish Star of David, there may rest now a man who was destined to be a great prophet... to find the way, perhaps, for all of us to live in plenty, with poverty and hardship for none. Now they lie here silently in this sacred soil, and we gather to consecrate this earth in their memory.

It is not easy to do so. Some of us have buried our closest friends here. We saw these men killed before our very eyes. Any one of us might have died in their places. Indeed, some of us are alive and breathing at this very moment only because the men who lie here beneath us had the courage and strength to give their lives for ours. To speak in memory of such men as these is not easy. Of them, too, can it be said with utter truth: "The world will little note nor long remember what we say here. It can never forget what they did here."

No, our poor power of speech can add nothing to what these men and the other dead of our division who are not here have already done. All that we can even hope to do is follow their example. To show the same selfless courage and power of human will their sons and ours shall never suffer these pains again. These men have done their job well. They have paid the ghastly price of freedom. If that freedom be once again lost, as it was after the last war, the unforgivable blame will be ours, not theirs. So, it is we, the living, who are here to be dedicated and consecrated.

We dedicate ourselves, first, to live together in peace the way they fought and are buried here in war. Here lie men who loved America because their ancestors generations ago helped in her founding, and other men who loved her with equal passion because they themselves or their own fathers escaped from oppression to her blessed shores. Here lie officers and men, Negroes and whites, rich men and poor...together. Here are Protestants, Catholics, and Jews... together. Here no man prefers another because of his faith or despises him because of his color. Here there are no quotas of many from each group are admitted or allowed. Among these men there is no discrimination. No prejudice. No hatred. Theirs is the highest and purest democracy.

Any man among us, the living, who fails to understand that will thereby betray those who lie here dead, whoever of us lifts his hand in hate against a brother or thinks himself superior to those who happen to be in the minority makes of this ceremony and of the bloody sacrifice it commemorates, an empty, hollow mockery. To this, then, as our solemn, sacred duty, do we the living now dedicate ourselves: To the right Protestants Catholics, and Jews, of white men and Negroes alike to enjoy the democracy for which all of them have here paid the price.

To one more thing do we consecrate ourselves in memory of those who sleep beneath these crosses and stars. We shall not foolishly suppose, as did the last generation of America's fighting men, that victory on the battlefield will automatically guarantee the triumph of democracy at home. This war, with all its frightful heartache and suffering, is but the beginning of our generation's struggle for democracy. When the last battle has been won, there will be those at home, as there were last time who will want us to turn our backs in selfish isolation on the rest of organized humanity, and thus to sabotage the very peace for which we fight. We promise you who lie here: We will not do that! We join hands with Britain, China, Russia – in peace, even as we have in war – to build the kind of world for which you died.

When the last shot has been fired, there will still be those whose eyes are turned backward, not forward, who will be satisfied with those extremes of poverty and wealth in which the seeds of another war can breed. We promise you, our departed comrades: This too we will not permit. This war has been fought by the common man; its fruits of peace must be enjoyed by the common man! We promise, by all that is sacred and holy, that your sons – the sons of miners and millers, the sons of farmers and workers, will inherit from your death the right to a living that is decent and secure.

When the final cross has been placed in the last cemetery, once again there will be those to whom profit is more important than peace, who will insist with the voice of sweet reasonableness and appeasement that it is better to trade with enemies of mankind than, by crushing them, to lose their profit. To you who sleep here silently, we give our promise: We will not listen! We will not forget that some of you were burnt with oil that came from American wells, that many of you were killed by shells fashioned with American steel. We promise that when once again men seek profit at your expense, we shall remember how you looked when we placed you reverently, lovingly, in the ground.

Thus, so we memorialize those who, having ceased living with us, now live within us. Thus, do we consecrate ourselves, the living, to carry on the struggle they began. Too much blood has gone into the soil for us to let it lie barren. Too much pain and heartache have fertilized the earth on which we stand. We solemnly swear: This shall not be in vain! Out of this, and from the suffering and sorrow of those who mourn this, will come – we promise – the birth of a new freedom for the sons of men everywhere. Amen

Chaplain Ronald Gittlesohn, Chaplain Corps, U. S. Navy

Prayer offered before the Cabinet

Ever-faithful God, in death we are reminded of the precious birthrights of life and liberty You endowed to Your American people. You have shown once again that these gifts must never be taken for granted. We pledge to those whom You have called home, and ask of You:

Patience, to measure our lust for action;
Resolve, to strengthen our obligation to lead;
Wisdom, to illuminate our pursuit of justice, and
Strength, in defense of liberty.

We seek Your special blessing today for those who stand as sword and shield, protecting many from the tyranny of the few. Our enduring prayer is that You shall always guide our labors and that our battles shall always be just. We pray this day, Heavenly Father, the prayer our nation learned at another time of righteous struggle and noble cause – America’s enduring prayer: “Not that God will be on our side, but always, O Lord, that America will always be on Your side.” Amen.

Donald H. Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense, 2003

Official Prayers

The Navy Prayer

O Eternal Lord God, who alone spreadest out the heavens and rules the raging of the sea; vouchsafe to take into Thy almighty and most gracious protection our country’s Navy and all who serve therein. Preserve them from the dangers of the seas and from the violence of the enemy; that they may be a safeguard unto the United States of America and a security for such as pass on the seas upon their lawful occasion; that the inhabitants of our land may in peace and quietness serve Thee our God to the glory of Thy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Sailor’s Prayer

Lord and God, you command all things, and your love never fails. Let me be aware of your presence and obedient to your purpose. In humility, guard me against dishonesty in purpose and deed. Help me to live each day with honor so that I can face my fellow shipmates, my loved ones, and you without shame or fear. While I am away, protect my family. Let me experience courage to accept my share of responsibilities with vigor and enthusiasm. Stay close to me and keep me focused on my goals to do the work of a warrior and be proficient in my daily performance. Let my commitment to you and my country result in loyalty and faith to my superiors and to those sailors entrusted to my leadership. Make me considerate of those who live by noble traditions and creeds different than my own. Discipline me to wear my uniform with dignity and let it remind me daily of the connection I have with all Navy men and women from

the past, present, and future. If I am inclined to doubt, shore up my faith; if I am tempted, show me the path to righteousness; if I should fall short of my goal, encourage me to keep trying and never give up or give in. Sustain me always with your spirit and grace. Amen.

A Prayer for the Armed Forces

Lord God of Hosts, whose power from everlasting to everlasting, and who Name is above every name in heaven and earth; keep we pray Thee, under Thy protecting care the Armed forces of our country and all who serve therein. Defend them amid violence on land or sea or in the heavens, and grant that they may be a sure defense and safeguard for the people of the United States and a security for such as come and go in peaceful and lawful pursuit. In time of peace keep them from evil, and in the day of conflict suffer not their courage to faith that they may guard the American heritage against those who would destroy or straiten the liberties of government by the people, and to the end that the blessings of religion may be preserved to posterity. Amen.

The Marine's Prayer

Almighty Father, whose command is over all whose love never fails, make me aware of Thy presence and obedient to Thy will. Keep me true to my best self, guarding me against dishonesty in purpose and deed and helping me to live so that I can face my fellow Marines, my loved ones, and Thee without shame or fear. Protect my family. Give the will to do the work of a Marine and to accept my share of responsibilities with vigor and enthusiasm. Grant me the courage to be proficient in my daily performance. Keep me loyal and faithful to my superiors and to the duties my country and the Marine Corps have entrusted to me. Make me considerate of those committed to my leadership. Help me to wear my uniform with dignity, and let it remind me daily of the traditions which I must uphold. If I am inclined to doubt, steady my faith; if I am tempted, make me strong to resist; if I should miss the mark, give me the courage to try again. Guide me with the light of truth and grant me wisdom by which I may understand the answer to my prayer. Amen.

Prayers for Command Functions

Retirement Prayers

Invocation: Eternal God, strong to save, we ask for a very special blessing upon _____ who has given many years of service not only for his/her country, but also for the God-ordained dream of peace in our world. Such service has meant sacrifices, chief of which has been the long separations from home and family. We rejoice with him/her on his/her retirement day. Bless the

future years. May they be a time of enjoyment and peace, filled with the presence of loved ones and friends. In Your name we pray. Amen.

Benediction: Merciful God, this is a day of new beginnings. A day to remember and move on. We have come to this moment of farewell, thankful for the blessings that our shipmate has shared with us through his commitment to the values we all share as members of this sea-going family. Grant we pray, that Your Spirit might continue to dwell with his/her family and that wherever the winds may take them, they might enjoy fair winds and following seas. In the name of the holy we pray. Amen.

LT Charles Alkula, CHC, USN

Change of Command Prayers

Invocation: Almighty God, Creator and Sustainer of us all, as we begin this ceremony we invoke the power and presence of Your Spirit. Inspire us with Your wisdom, that we may appreciate the true nature of command and the serious consequences that flow from it. May the spirit of justice, care, concern, and dedication be _____ legacy to his shipmates of _____. May You continue to be with him and _____ as they leave to serve others. We pray for Your support for _____ and his family as he assumes the burdens of command. May he feel a sense of confidence and assurance when he turns to you in those lonely moments of decision. Guide and direct him always that justice, truth, and the quest for peace may be served. We ask that You be present to us all, that our actions may reflect well upon this command, our Navy, and our country. In Your gracious name we pray. Amen.

Benediction: Gracious God, we ask Your blessing to continue to be upon all who have gathered here at this transfer of responsibilities as we prepare to take our leave of this place. As the command passes from _____ to _____, may we be reminded of the responsibilities and opportunities of leadership, of the commitment and sacrifice of those who wear the uniform of their country, and of those families that support them. God with us now and let us use this occasion to celebrate the ideals of freedom, courage, honor, and peace, and dedicate ourselves anew to those values we hold so dear. In Your most holy name we offer our prayer. Amen.

LT Charles Alkula, CHC, USN, Change of Command Ceremony, Joint Maritime Facility – St. Mawgan, 24 September 2004.

Prayer of Dedication: Merciful God, we are gathered here today to dedicate this place of healing. Grant we pray that all who work the healing arts and all who seek their care may find within these walls a place of comfort and compassion. We offer this day and ourselves in the name of Your gracious and healing spirit. Amen.

LT Charles Alkula, CHC, USN, Naval Hospital – Camp Lejeune dedication of a new clinic.

Training Exercise Prayer: Eternal Father, strong to save, we greet this new day with mixed feelings. We are eager to get our exercise underway and to be tested by our tasks. We are mindful that we live in a world with many dangers. This morning, as we each face our own tests, we remember our fallen comrades in lands far away. We give thanks for their efforts and honor their memory. Be with their families, friends, and comrades. Give us we pray the ability to live lives worthy of their lives and their sacrifice. We ask this in Your strong name. Amen.

LT Charles Alkula, CHC, USN, written for the Naval Hospital – Camp Lejeune Fleet Hospital evaluation exercise while deployed to Camp Pendleton, California, October 2001

A Prayer following the attacks of September 11, 2001

Let us center our thought and hearts in prayer. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer. Grant us, Gracious God, that in this time of national tragedy, we might be comforted in our grief, encouraged in our uncertainty and fear, and sustained by Your amazing presence.

Almighty God, we remember the people who lost their lives in the four hijacked aircraft and lift up each one of them, trusting that they are comforted in the bosom of Abraham.

Ever present God, grant that those families who have lost loved ones aboard the planes a sense of Your presence and peace. We also remember those that have lost friends on those planes, for love knows no limit of blood or place.

Healing God, we lift before You those people injured during the attacks upon the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Pour down upon them Your Spirit that they might experience the healing of both body and spirit.

Amazing God, we grieve at the loss of even a single life. In the face of such unfathomable loss, our hearts have experienced grief never before known in our time or by this nation. We lift each of the victims of the attack on the World Trade Center, however they were known – as sons, daughters, husbands, wives, or friends, now before You.

God of us all, You know the loss of a single sparrow, as the creator of all of this, offer Your comfort to those who live with the uncertainty of knowing what has happened to their loved ones. Sustain them in this time and bring them safely to the place of assurance and peace.

Holy God, we remember this day the lives taken from us at the Pentagon, people who wore the uniforms of this nation or worked in its service. As we honor their sacrifice with our tears, we entrust their care to that same Spirit which was with them in life.

Eternal God, all these things, and still more, crowd our thoughts and stir our hearts. As we have in times of joy and sorrow, in the midst of life and death, we ask once more with confidence that our petitions find favor with You, that this time of loss may also be a time of new beginnings. Hear us, Lord, for Your people need You.

Sustaining God, we ask that Your guiding hand be upon the doctors, nurses, and others who are toiling against such devastation and loss. Be with them, sustaining their efforts with Your Spirit

that they might be strengthened and empowered to offer the care the victims, their families, and this nation need so much.

Gift-giving God, You who blessed Solomon wisdom, we ask that the leaders of this and every nation be shown the paths that lead to decisions and choices that have been blessed by Your Spirit.

Creating God, this tragedy affected this nation to its core and yet we know that people around the world have been touched as well. Grant to all Your creation the blessings of healing and the restoration of hope.

LT Charles Alkula, CHC, USN, composed this prayer for a ceremony at the Naval Hospital – Camp Lejeune marking the first month after the attacks of September 11, 2001.

A prayer marking the third month following the attack of 9/11

Let us come before God in prayer. Eternal God, strong to save, we begin this day with grateful hearts. We are grateful because through Your grace we have come through the night now past into the promise and potential of another day in Your world.

Gracious God, it is now three months since our nation awoke on a morning just like this one, a day full of promise and potential.

Merciful God, it is now three months, three months of remembering that day not for the promise and potential that it held, but for the way the dreams of that morning were snatched away in moments of unspeakable horror.

Holy God, during these three months, we have struggled to; as individuals, as a community, and as a nation to deal with the emotions brought about by those terrible moments in New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington, DC.

Abiding God, we have wrestled with our emotions, and like Jacob, we have been transformed by the struggle. Through Your strength, we have faced fear, anxiety, and uncertainty. By Your grace, we have embraced hope, helpfulness, and our neighbor.

And now, Eternal God, we stand ready to embrace this day. For You have hear our cry and have shared our grief. We have mourned our dead and have remembered their sacrifice. Accept our prayer of thanks for bringing us to this day of remembrance and our confidence that the days to come will not dull the memory of our fallen or of Your faithfulness. Amen.

LT Charles Alkula, CHC, USN, composed this prayer for a ceremony at the Naval Hospital – Camp Lejeune marking the third month after the attacks of September 11, 2001.

A Prayer on the First Anniversary of the 9/11 Attacks

Eternal God and Creator of us all, one year ago today, we, as a nation, wept many tears, suffering heartache, and agony at the terrible loss of loved ones and friends and the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and in Pennsylvania. The pain of this tragedy left us overwhelmed with fear and life's uncertainties. That day we fully understood the true meaning of being a victim on a grand scale – both living and dead. We were made fully aware of the fragility of life. We were made fully aware of the precious and immeasurable value of human life. We became all too familiar with the face of grief and mourning.

But in spite of this cloud of confusion and darkness that seems to linger on and on, we, as a nation, began to see a great light that overcomes the darkness. Dear Lord, we began to realize the true light of Your love and power in a growing consciousness that evil in its most desperate expression, cannot, will not, win in the end. For this reason we pause to give You thanks. We saw Your work in our midst in a growing recognition of the true face of America – of what it means to be an American with all its richness of shades and nuances of ethnic nationalities, religious traditions, and creeds. We were reminded that we are Your children, created in Your image. For this reason, we came to understand the meaning of neighbor in a more positive light and with a greater appreciation for a sense of community. As a beacon of religious tolerance, we experienced anew the power of faith in the God of our religious traditions.

We experienced again and again the promise of Your abiding presence in the words of the psalmist that You are “near the brokenhearted” and that You “save the crushed in Spirit.” Your steadfast love, presence, and care were demonstrated daily through expressions of people everywhere giving of themselves, their talents, energy, and time. During these moments, Your Spirit life our spirits with a renewed courage and determination for the challenges of forging a better world. For this reason, dear Lord, we gather here to today to affirm Your goodness to us. We gather here to affirm Your abiding presence and comforting Spirit in these times. We thank You for these moments to remember that fateful day and ask Your blessing to brighten our way to a hope in a humanity that desire peace for all. Amen.

LT Charles Alkula, CHC, USN, composed this prayer for a ceremony at the Naval Hospital – Camp Lejeune marking the first anniversary of the attacks of September 11, 2001.

Prayers in honor of the US Army's 29th Infantry Division

Invocation: With humble adoration we come before You, O King of kings. We praise You for our creation, for the wondrous gift of life. We give thanks for Your adoption of us as children of Yours. Increase in us, we pray, a childlike spirit of truthfulness, wonder, and trust, so that nothing – not suffering, not sorrow, not even death – may shake our faith in You and in our love for You. We pray this in Your Spirit's name. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving: Gracious God, we come before You this day with thoughts of events, people, and placed from our past shouting for our attention. Calm those voices that call to us from days long past, give our spirits the rest we need that we may hear Your Voice of peace and hope that whispers to us today. Merciful God, there are some here today who are brothers of a special kind, those who have tasted the awful experience of war and have emerged from those trials and tempests changed forever. In Your Spirit's name we offer thanks for those who have shared in the trials and tempests of that time. There are names that we have forgotten but who will always be known to You. Names that with youthful confidence we were certain that we would never forget. We lift their memory and their names before You now.

Generous God, we ask for Your special blessing in particular upon the men of the Merchant Navy and Mercantile Marine whose devotion to duty has for too long gone unspoken and unappreciated by so many. We know what they did and so do You. No expression of mere words can ever express our appreciation to those comrades who made our task of liberation possible. We can, however, give thanks to you for those men who shared with us those days. Thank You, for allowing us to know that such courage and devotion walked in this world. Thank You, for the men of the Merchant Navy and the Mercantile Marine. Amen.

LT Charles Alkula, CHC, USN, offered on June 1, 2004 at the 29th Infantry Division Memorial, Plymouth, Devon, United Kingdom, marking the 60th anniversary of the D-Day invasion.

Navy Birthday (October 13, 1775)

Eternal God, strong to save, we have gathered here tonight to remember this, the 229th anniversary of the founding of our Navy. We remember all who have served in the air, on land, on the sea, and under the sea, those shipmates whose lives were given in dark jungles, ocean depths, desert sands, or on far distant beaches. May we recognize their contributions to the security of our country. Grant, O God, Your blessing and protection on all men and women who now serve in our Navy – on watch and on station around the world, from the Caribbean to the Mediterranean, from Africa to Japan, from Iraq to the polar realms, and from Main Street USA to High Street Cornwall. Put new meaning in our national commitment to of “Peace Through Strength” and our Navy’s core values of “Duty, honor, and Commitment” that we may truly strive to be instruments of peace in a troubles world. We ask Your blessing now upon this bounty that we are about to receive, the hands that have prepared and serve it, and the fellowship in which we share it. We ask all of this with thankful hearts in Your gracious name. Amen.

Paraphrased by LT Charles Alkula, CHC, USN, October 13, 2004 at Joint Maritime Facility – St. Mawgan.

A Prayer for the SEABEES

Dear God:

In our building projects, help us. May your will be done so that we you show us your blueprints or our life, we may respond, “Can do!”

In our building projects, help us to construct your Kingdom.

In our building projects, help us to dig into our conscience and follow your Spirit.

In our building projects, help us to make you the foundation of our life.

In our building projects, help us to make levelheaded decisions.

So that when you inspect the finished product of our life, you may judge that our actions hit the nail right on the head! Amen.

LCDR Vincent A. Salamoni, CHC, USN, June 2002

The Lord’s (Nautical) Prayer

Our Supreme Admiral Father, who are in the heavenly harbor, sacred be your call sign. You policy be promulgated, your order be executed, on the sea, and it is the eternal liberty port. Supply us this day our daily chow, and dismiss the charges for our infractions, as we don’t write up those who violate codes against us. And lead us not into ideas of misconduct but rescue us from the Dirt-Bag. Amen.

LCDR Vincent A. Salamoni, CHC, USN, aboard the USS Enterprise (CVN 65), 17 June 2001.

CREDO Prayer

Lord, we bless your holy name. and in your holy name we bless this Camp Lejeune CREDO. May it shine as a lamp of hope, and may it proclaim a message of encouragement as it serves the Camp Lejeune community. In your holy name we pray. Amen.

CDR Glen Krans, CHC, USN – in June 1997, I think it was, Chap. Norm Holcomb came down from MARFORLANT to say the prayer of dedication for CREDO Camp Lejeune. It was one of the most effective short prayers I’d ever heart at the time. For obvious reasons, I’ve come to refer to it as the “Holy Name” prayer.

Tree Lighting Prayer

Light of the world, Prince of Peace, sun of life and reborn among us, shine within us and around us. As we light this holiday tree and its bright beams burst forth, let our light shine, too, from within and all around. God, as you are many, so we many – from many different traditions. As you are one, so we are one – one in the shared desire to live in peace with each other. Give us the holy determination that this shall be so. Grant us the courage to make it so. Is your holy name we pray, for you alone are our strength, salvation, and Shalom. Amen.

CDR Glen Krans, CHC, USN – one year at Naval Hospital it was my task to deliver the invocation at what for many years had been called the “Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony.” However, this particular year, in the interests of pluralism, we decided to call it the “Winter Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony.” The deletion of reference to Christmas made my hackles rise somewhat and I decided to write as pluralistic a prayer as I could, marrying up references (some obvious, some obscure) to as many winter holiday celebrations as possible. It was a sort of passive aggressive act, and I was hoping for some feedback on it (positive or negative). I got none and to this day don’t know if people just weren’t listening, didn’t care, or if they really liked it.

Benediction

May God guide you into his own right way, and gird you with his might, and clothe you with his beauty, and fill you with his peace; so that ‘round about you, wherever you may sail, there shall be clear spaces for thought, rest, and work, and smooth, following seas.

CDR Glen Krans, CHC, USN – I inherited this benediction from Chaplain Moses Smith, CAPT., CHC, USN when I worked with him at Paris Island. I don’t know if it’s original with him or not.

Eternal Father Verse

Oh Great Physician, guide we prayer
All Corpsmen in their healing way.
For those who serve both near and far,
In hospitals and foreign shore,
Healer of souls, we now implore,
O, bless your Corpsmen evermore.

CDR Glen Krans, CHC, USN – I wrote this verse to “Eternal Father” as the benediction for a Hospital Corpsman Birthday ceremony one year.

The following prayers were taken from Occasional Ministries, a handbook of collected prayers for gathered and shared with Navy chaplains in 1985.

Morning Prayers at Sea

Good morning, Lord, how sweet it is! For some sunrise brings an end to a night of hard work, for others the beginning of the day’s labor. In both cases, Father, we rejoice, knowing You are with us. Fill our days with satisfaction, accomplishment, and the knowledge of a job well done.
Amen.

Father, as we begin this new day which You have made, grant us the assurance of Your presence that we may face today unafraid and with the courage which You alone can give. Lord, we seek Your hold inspiration. As You inspired prophets of old, inspire us to stand against what we know is wrong. Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the living of this day. Amen.

Evening Prayers at Sea

Our Heavenly Father, there was good news and bad news today. A baby was born, an anniversary card received, and good news about advancements. The first-ever 100 man-overboard score; and the chiefs served steak and lobster. Such are the gifts we receive – miracles of birth and love; acknowledgement of achievement and hard work; generosity and sharing a meal with shipmates. How blessed we are – and grateful. But ours in not a perfect world – and our lives are continually confronted with sadness mixed with joy, disappointment along with success. When our shipmates grieve – we grieve with them. When they hurt – we also feel pain. And when they pray for comfort and healing, we pray with them. There is more than humor in the saying, “We’re all in the same boat.” We’re glad to be shipmates, Lord, and share all of life with each other. Hear our prayers for one another. Bless this ship and her crew tonight, and tomorrow. It’s final exam time – we pray we will give a good accounting of ourselves; to do honor to our profession, to our Captain, to our namesake _____. To that end – grant us peace tonight and rest, to meet your gift of tomorrow – the morning.

Thank God, for picnic makers, fun makers;
For church goers, hymn singers, prayer;
For spill cleaners, ship drivers, watch standers;
For library keeps, machine fillers, friendly faces;
For all who made this a good day. Amen.

This may sound a little corny, Lord, but sometimes I get lonely out here with all this water around me. Yep – it’s true. I get confused and wonder how I’m going to make it through another day. Will you help me? Even as I pray, I remember that I was unkind to a shipmate today and I tried desperately to avoid him. I know that wasn’t right,. I’ve added to the misunderstanding and confusion. Father, take hold of me, and connect me with these other lives. Give me patience and love so that I can listen when I plug into other lives. Help me to listen and listen and listen.. and love by being quiet and serving and being there. Amen.

Favorite Prayers

Submitted by LT Charles Alkula, CHC, USN

The Covenant Prayer of John Wesley

O Lord God, holy Father, who hast called us through Christ to be partakers in this gracious covenant; we take upon ourselves with joy the yoke of obedience, and engage ourselves, for love of Thee, to seek and do thy perfect will. We are no longer our own, but Thine. I am no longer my own, but Thine. Put me to what Thou wilt, rank me with whom Thou wilt; put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for Thee or laid aside for Thee, exalted for Thee, or brought low for Thee; let me be full, let me be empty; let me have all things, let me have nothing; I freely and heartily yield all things to Thy pleasure and disposal. And now, gracious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Thou art mine and I am Thine. So be it. And the covenant, which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

The Breastplate of St. Patrick

I rise today with the power of God to guide me, the might of God to uphold me, the wisdom of God to teach me, the eye of God to watch over me, the ear of God to hear me, the word of God to give me speech, the hand of God to protect me, the path of God to lie before me, the shield of God to shelter me, the host of God to defend me against the snares of the devil and the temptations of the world, against every man who meditates injury against me, whether far or near. Amen.

A Four-fold Franciscan Blessing (via St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Waterville, Maine)

May God bless you with a restless discomfort about easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that you may seek truth boldly and love deep within your heart.

May god bless you with holy anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that you may tirelessly work with those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, or the loss of all that they cherish, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and transform their pain into joy.

May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you really CAN make a difference in this world, so that you are able, with God's grace, to do what others claim cannot be done.

And the blessing of God the Supreme Majesty and our Creator, Jesus Christ the Incarnate Word who is our brother and Saviour, and Holy Spirit, our Advocate and Guide, be with you and remain with you, this day and forevermore. Amen.

Just Talk to Me (written by Boll Colclough, Lee Abby – Devon, United Kingdom)

Don't be afraid if you don't understand
Don't fear you won't do it right
Don't worry about performing

Just talk to me

Don't need no words you can't define
Don't need a special voice you keep reserved just for me
Don't even have to close your eyes

Just talk to me

Don't need to wait until you're hopeless
Don't need a particular reason to call
Don't need to fake your holiness

Just talk to me

Don't worry that you don't love me enough
Don't need to do anything special
Don't pretend you're someone or something that you're not

Just talk to me

Don't need some formal speech about all the social and theological issues of the day
Don't be afraid I won't listen
Don't use lots of fancy phrases you heard some preacher say

Just talk to me

Don't try to be impressive
Don't think about your image
Don't need to be self-conscious

Just talk to me

Don't think it has to make sense
Don't feel the need to use complete sentences
Don't feel the need to use words at all

Just talk to me

Don't pretend to be happy if you are not
Don't be overwhelmed if you feel hopeless
Don't worry if I'll do what you ask

Just talk to me

Don't feel you have to take all day or all night
Don't feel the need to be serious, somber, or stressed
Don't even think about wearing your fancy clothes

Just talk to me

Don't worry if you're pleasing me
Don't think you have to have all the answers
Don't try to feel anything different at all

Just talk to me

Don't worry about feeling terribly confident
Don't try to change the world
Don't think yourself too bad or too good to do this

Just talk to me

Don't spend your emotional energy getting all worked up over this
Don't think of me as a perfectionist
Don't believe everything you hear down there

Just talk to me

Don't keep a list or record of when we chat
Don't need to make an appointment
Don't stop to talk to the receptionist

Just talk to me

Don't try to be your preacher
Don't try to be your mother
Don't pretend you've got it all together

Just talk to me

Don't need no special glasses
Don't need a microphone
Don't worry if it isn't good

Just talk to me

Don't lie to me
Don't question if I understand
Don't think it doesn't matter

Just talk to me

Don't bother about the rules
Don't bother about whether there are any
Don't pursue anything by which to measure yourself

Just talk to me

Don't confuse me with your father
Don't put that kind of pressure on him or yourself
Don't try get away from the point of who I am

Just talk to me

Don't try to impress me
Don't try to hide anything
Don't concern yourself about whether you're wasting my time with trivialities

Just talk to me

Don't ask if I know about the latest hospital report
Don't think I don't know all the latest gossip
Don't wonder if I know the best possible outcome

Just talk to me

Don't think anything is too insignificant to bring up
Don't worry if you cry
Don't worry if you don't

Just talk to me

Don't be afraid
Don't be unnatural
Don't be anything you don't want to be

Just talk to me

Don't hesitate to shout if you feel like it
Don't hesitate to rant
Don't pretend

Just talk to me

Don't forget to laugh with me
Don't forget that I'm the one who started all this
Don't forget I already know what you're going to say

Just talk to me

Don't worry about what I might say or think about you
Don't be concerned if you lose your train of thought
Don't be surprised if I talk back

Just talk to me

Don't forget to listen
Don't forget I care more than you can possibly imagine
Don't worry about the silence

Just talk to me

Just talk to me

Just talk to me

Submitted by LCDR Vincent Salamoni, CHC, USN

Two versions of the 23rd Psalm:

USMC version

The Lord is my Supreme Commandant; there is nothing I shall requisition. Fresh and green are the fields where he gives me rack time. Near restful shores he leads me, to boost my low morale. He marches me along the right trail; he is "semper fidelis" to his name. If I should charge into storms of lead, no death would I fear. You are there with your map and compass; with these you give me liberty. You have prepared the chow hall for me in the sight of my foes. You anoint my head with a high and tight; my mug is overflowing. Surely fair winds and following seas shall follow me all the days of my tour. In the Lord's own camp shall I stand easy forever and ever.

Navy version

The Lord is my Supreme Admiral; there is nothing I shall requisition. Peaceful, like glass, are the waters where he gives me rack time. To restful ports he leads me, to boost my low morale. He guides me along the true course; he is faithful to his name, If I should sail into storms of darkness, no shipwreck would I fear. You are there with your chart and compass; with these you give me liberty. You anoint me heath with a trim, my mug is overflowing. Surely fair winds and following seas shall follow me all the days of my cruise. In the Lord's own harbor shall I moor forever and ever.

Submitted by STG2 Eric Hodge, USN

I have found a couple of prayers that have helped me specifically through the difficult times of my life or aided me on my spiritual quest. They come from various places, regardless of religious connotation. I value wisdom above dogma after all.

“The man who rejects wisdom simply because of its source is the verist of fools.”

– The Dailai Lama

“A gentle answer turneth away wrath, but a grievous word stirs up anger.”

– Proverbs 15:1

“Haec aqua a corpore impuritates, modo simile plumbo mutando ad aurum, elluat. Purga mentem. Purga carnem. Purga animum. Its est!” (Trans. “May this water cast out all my impurities from my substance as from lead to gold. Purify my mind. Purify my body. Purify my heart. It is so.”

– Traditional prayer of Roman Paganism (Religio Romana)

“I arise today through the strength of heaven: Light of sun; Radiance of moon; Splendor of fire; Speed of lightning; Swiftness of wind; Depth of sea; Stability of earth; Firmness of rock.”

Trans. By Kuno Meyer, Selections from Ancient Irish Poetry

“Muses, whom I have so often rejected, importunate cohorts of my suffering, along consoling me in my woes by such verses, rhymes, and frenzies the like of which you never showed to others who boast of the myrtle and the laurel now let the wind, anchor, and port keep me close to you, if I am forbidden to cruise elsewhere. Oh mountains, of goddesses, oh streams, where I live, converse, and nourish myself; where I in quiet and find beauty; through whom I rise, reawaken, adorn my heart, spirit, and brow; may you transform death, cypresses and infernos into fire, and laurels, into eternal stars.”

– Preamble to the Heroic Frenzies of Giordano Bruno.

“Valiant Nuada of the white sword,
Who subdued the Firbolg of blood,
For the love of the Tribe, for pains of Danu’s children,
Hold thy shield over us, protect us all.”

– From the Carmina Gaedelica, ancient Celtic oral tradition (trans. By Caitlin Matthews)

Submitted by CDR Glen Krans, CHC, USN

Prayer attributed to an unknown Confederate Soldier...

“I asked God for strength that I might achieve. I was made weak that I might learn to obey. I asked for health that I might do greater things. I was given infirmity that I might do better things. I asked for riches that I might be happy. I was given poverty that I might be wise. I asked for power that I might have the praise of men. I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God. I asked for all things that I might enjoy life. I was given life that I might enjoy all things. I got nothing that I asked for, but everything I hoped for. Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered. I am, among all men, most richly blessed.”

There’s that delightful little prayer attributed to the Breton fishermen...

“Lord, be kind to me; the sea is so great, and my boat is so small.”

I really like that Swabbie portion of Psalm 107:23-31 as a prayer...

They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; These see the works of the LORD, and His wonders in the deep. For He spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves. They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths. They reeled and staggered like drunken men; Then they cried out to the LORD in their troubles, and He brought them out of their distresses. He stilled the storm to a whisper; They were they glad when it grew calm, and He guided them to their desired haven. Let us give thanks to the LORD for His unfailing love and His wonderful deeds for His people.

I wrote this prayer for a “Sympathy” card that we used to send out from the hospital at Camp Lejeune in response to all the “Death/Illness Notifications” we’d get from on high...

Heavenly Father, we trust you for all things. When the night is dark around us we can remember the day, but we must still light a candle. And so we lift us the light of faith and pray in confidence for the healing of your servant. Thank you, Father, in the strong name of Jesus. Amen.

Last, but certainly not least, I include Martin Luther’s Morning and Evening Prayers. As a kid, these were my prayers upon rising from sleep and retiring at the end of the day. How liturgical, eh?

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Submitted by LCDR Andrew Blum, USN (ret.), Stuart, Florida

From Jonah 2:2-9

In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. From the depths of the grave I called for help, and you listened to my cry. You hurled me into the deep, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me. I said, 'I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.' The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you brought my life up from the pit O LORD my God. "When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, LORD, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple. "Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs. But I, with a song of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. Salvation comes from the LORD.

Submitted by Leslie Magee, Navy family member – *I really don't have a favorite one that I say all the time, but I do know that I am constantly asking God for his wisdom. I read Colossians 1:9-14 and speak this to myself and to God almost on a daily basis because I really, really need it! I say:*

God, please help me to understand Your will for my life and me. Fill me with Your spiritual wisdom and give me understanding. Guide my footsteps and take away from me anything that doesn't line up with Your word and will. Change my heart so that I will desire what You desire.

I also look to Philippians 4:4-9 and James 1:5-8: I am to rejoice in God always and present my desires to God with thanksgiving and then God's peace will be with me. I also have to stay focused on positive things and not gravitate toward the negative. I put it up in God's face that He promised to give me wisdom if I ask for it and expect to receive it.

Submitted by LTjg Sharon Wheaton, CHC, USN

The Difference (written by Grace Naessens)

I got up early one morning
And rushed right into the day;
I had so much to accomplish
That I didn't have time to pray.

Problems just tumbled about me
And heavier came each task
"Why doesn't God help?" I wondered.
He answered, "You didn't ask."

I wanted to see the joy and beauty,
But the day toiled on gray and bleak;
I wondered why God didn't show me.
He said, "But you didn't seek."

I tried to come into God's presence,
I used all my keys at the lock.
God gently and lovingly chided,
"My child, you didn't knock."

I woke up early one morning,
And paused before entering the day;
I had so much to accomplish,
I had to take time to pray.

Submitted by Denise Dulaney, Huntsville, Alabama

These two verses have meant a lot to me:

Isaiah 40:31 – But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on the wings of eagles, they will run and not be weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Jeremiah 29:11 – For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Submitted by Dr. Patricia Jordan, DVM, Jacksonville, North Carolina

Prayer of the Unforgiven

In the center of the amphitheater of life
With nature all around, majestic trees
Shooting up towards the vibrant sky
With security of the dense buffer of middle ground
The short undergrowth still towers over the curly moss
A glow of pale yellow, a halo of presence
A soft even breeze keeps the passage of time
I ask nature for forgiveness
For not asking, for not respecting, for no listening
For not savoring and living her presence of the moment
Silence is her answer
Sadly, I realize, the unforgiven
Those that will not receive healing
Because they refuse to ask
Those that will not be healed
Because of the silence in their
Unforgivable prayer
The midbrush of berries
Branches heavy with spirit
The fresh clean air
Vital oxygen for our lungs
Deer stepping lightly between thorny branches
Or stepping purposely to respect those nations below their feet?
Do the deer take care of mother so much better than I?
Mother provides us, she houses us, she clothes us
And she can heal us
Yet there are those who refuse to let
Our mother do this
These are the tears of nature
This is the sadness of our mother
There is no solace in the unforgivable prayer
The barking of dogs, the croaking of frogs
The chirps of crickets, the high-pitched chatter
Of birds, all whose voices are not afraid to be heard
Even the lonesome repetition of an unidentified dove
There are the voices of those whom mother provides to every day
Did they ask to be here?
Or, are they, like I, doing the best thing they can in one moment of time
That burden, alone, is place on the shoulders of the ones who can't hear
They won't hear and they won't say
But they live every day
In their unforgivable prayer

Submitted by the Rev. Robert H. Hunter III, Hampstead, Maryland

Take a moment and clear your mind of thoughts that keep you from God. Take a moment to place things in perspective and pray. Forward this to someone or don't – it centered me, so I am sending it to you. I hope that it will bring you closer to God at a moment when you need it most.

Dear Lord, I thank You for this day. I thank You that I can see and hear this morning. I'm blessed because You are a forgiving God and an understanding God. You have so much for me and You keep on blessing me. Forgive me this day for everything I have done, said, or thought that was not pleasing to you. I ask now for Your forgiveness.

Please keep me safe from all danger and harm. Help me to start this day with a new attitude and plenty of gratitude. Let me make the best of each and every day to clear my mind so that I can hear from You.

Please broaden my mind that I can accept all things.

Let me not whine and whimper over things I have no control over. Let me continue to see sin through God's eyes and acknowledge it as evil. And when I sin, let me repent, and confess with my mouth my wrongdoing, and receive the forgiveness of God.

And when this world closes in on me, let me remember Jesus' example – to slip away and find a quiet place to pray. It's the best response when I'm pushed beyond my limits. I know that when I can't pray, You listen to my heart. Continue to use me to do Your will.

Bless me that I may be a blessing to others. I pray for those who are lost and can't find their way. I pray for those who are misjudged and misunderstood. I pray for those who don't know You intimately. I pray for those who don't believe.

I believe that God changes people and God changes things. I pray for all Your children; and for each and every family member in their households. I pray for peace, love, and joy in their homes. I pray that they are out of debt and that You will meet all their needs.

I pray that every eye that reads this knows there is no problem, circumstance, or situation greater than God. Every battle is in Your hands for You to fight. I pray that these words be received into the hearts of every eye that sees them and every mouth that confesses them willingly.

This is my prayer.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Submitted by CAPT O. J. Mozon, CHC, USN

A Morning Resolve

I will try this day to lead a simple, sincere, and serene life, repelling promptly every thought of discontent, anxiety, discouragement, impurity, and self-seeking; cultivating cheerfulness, charity, magnanimity, and the habit of holy silence; exercising economy in expenditure, generosity in giving, carefulness in conversation, diligence in appointed service, fidelity to every trust, and childlike faith in God. In particular, I will try to be faithful in those habits of prayer, work, study, physical exercise, eating, and sleep, which I believe the Holy Spirit has shown me to be right. And as I cannot in my own strength do this, nor even with a hope of success attempt it, I look to Thee, O Lord God my Father, in Jesus my Savior, and ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Workplace Prayer

Lord Jesus, as I enter this workplace, I bring Your presence with me. I speak Your peace, Your grace, and Your perfect order into the atmosphere of this office. I acknowledge Your Lordship over all that will be spoken, thought, decided, and accomplished within these walls. Lord Jesus, I thank You for all the gifts You have deposited in me. I do not take them lightly but commit to using them responsibly and well. Give me a fresh supply of truth and beauty on which to draw as I do my job. Anoint my creativity, my ideas, and my energy so that even my smallest task may bring You honor. Lord, when I am confused, guide me. When I am weary, energize me. Lord, when I am burned out, infuse me with the light of Your Holy Spirit. May the work that I do and the way that I do it, bring hope, life, and courage to all that I come in contact with today. And, O Lord, even in this day's most stressful moments... may I rest in You. In Your strong name I pray, Lord Jesus, Amen.

Submitted by Jackie Alkula – Mebane, North Carolina

Heavenly Father, help us remember that the jerk who cut off in traffic last night is a single mother who worked nine hours that day and is rushing home to cook dinner, help with homework, do the laundry, and spend a few precious moments with her children.

Help us to remember that the pierced, tattooed, disinterested young man who can't make change correctly is a worried 19-year-old college student, balancing his apprehension over final exams with his fear of not getting his student loans for next semester.

Remind us, Lord, that the scary looking bum, begging for money in the same spot every day (who really ought to get a job!) is a slave to addictions that we can only imagine in our worst nightmares.

Help us to remember that the old couple walking annoyingly slow through the store aisles and blocking our shopping progress are savoring this moment, knowing that, based on the biopsy report she got back last week, this will be the last year that they go shopping together.

Heavenly Father, remind us each day that, of all the gifts you give us, the greatest is love. It is not enough to share that love with those we hold dear. Open our hearts not to just those who are close to us, but to all humanity. Let us be slow to judge and quick to forgive, show patience, empathy, and love.