

A Different Prayer

It seems that most everything goes up this time of year: the traffic, prices at the gas pump, crowds in the stores searching for the right gift, and the frequency of demonstrations of temper, including road rage. It's no wonder, then, that the stress level takes a climb as well. In the midst of all this, consider the following prayer:

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

Help us remember that the pierced, tattooed, disinterested young man who can't make change correctly is a worried, 19-year-old college student, balancing 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 remember that the old couple walking annoyingly slow through the store aisles and blocking our shopping progress is 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 gift is love. It is not enough to share that love with those we hold dear. Open our hearts not just to those who are close to us, but to all humanity.

The truth is that we cannot begin to know the circumstances and adversities facing the people we meet and with whom we have interaction in one way or another.

Let us be slow to judge and quick to forgive. Bless us with patience, empathy and love. Amen!

Such a prayer is in keeping with the proclamation of the angels who appeared to the shepherds more than 2,000 years ago, as they announced the birth of our Savior: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

--Beecher Hunter