

Praying together

Among these prayers on aging are some that are quite comical and others that are serious and thoughtful.

17th Century Nun's Prayer

Lord,
Though knowest better than I know myself
that I am growing older and will some day be old.
Keep me from the fatal
habit of thinking I must say something on every subject
and on every occasion.
Release me from craving to straighten out
everybody's affairs.
Make me thoughtful but not moody;
helpful but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom,
it seems a pity not to use it all,
but Thou knowest Lord that I want a few friends at the end.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details;
give me wing to get to that point.
Seal my lips on my aches and pains.
They are increasing, and love of rehearsing them is
becoming sweeter as the years go by.
I dare not ask for grace enough to enjoy the tales of others' pains, but help me to endure
them with patience.

I dare not ask for improved memory, but for a growing
humility and a lessing cocksureness when my memory seems to
clash with the memories of others. Teach me the glorious lesson
that occasionally I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet; I do not want to be a Saint-
some of them are so hard to live with
- but a sour old person is one
of the crowning works of the devil. Give me the ability to see good
things in unexpected places, and talents in unexpected people.
And, give me, O Lord, the grace to tell them so.

- Author Unknown



In the Hands of God

More than ever I find myself in the hands of God.
This is what I have wanted all my life from my youth.
But now there is a difference;
the initiative is entirely with God.
It is indeed a profound spiritual experience
to know and feel myself so totally in God's hands.

- *Pedro Arrupe, SJ*

Prayer for the Grace to Age Well

When the signs of age begin to mark my body
(and still more when they touch my mind);
when the ill that is to diminish me or carry me off
strikes from without or is born within me;
when the painful moment comes
in which I suddenly awaken
to the fact that I am ill or growing old;
and above all at that last moment
when I feel I am losing hold of myself
and am absolutely passive within the hands
of the great unknown forces that have formed me;
in all those dark moments, O God,
grant that I may understand that it is you
(provided only my faith is strong enough)
who are painfully parting the fibers of my being
in order to penetrate to the very marrow
of my substance and bear me away within yourself.

- *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J.*

Prayer of an Aging Jesuit

Dearest Lord, teach me to grow old gracefully. Help me to see that my community does me no wrong when gradually it takes from me my duties; when it no longer seems to seek my views. Rid me of my pride in all the "wisdom" I have learned. Rid me of the illusion that I am indispensable.

Help me in this gradual detachment from earthly things to grasp the meaning of your law of time. Teach me, in this turnover of work and workers, to discern a striking expression of life's constant renewal under the impulse of your providence.

And please, Lord, let me still be useful, contributing to the world of my optimism, adding my prayers to the joyful fervor and courage of those who now take their turn at the helm. Let my lifestyle now become one of humble and serene contact with the world in change, shedding no tears for the past; making of my human sufferings a fit of reparation to all my brothers.

Let my leaving the field of action be simple and natural - like a glowing, cheerful sunset.
Lord forgive me if only now in my tranquility I begin to know how much you love me, how much you've helped me.

And now, finally, may I have a clear, deep understanding of the joyful destiny you have prepared for me, guiding my every step from the first day of my life. Lord, teach me to grow old...

- *Author Unknown*

A Christian Prayer on Aging

May Christ keep me ever young "to the greater glory of God."
For old age comes from Him, old age leads to Him,
and old age will touch me only insofar as He wills.
To be "young" means to be hopeful, energetic, smiling---and clear-sighted.

May I accept death in whatever guise it may come to me in Christ,
that is, within the process of the development of life.
A smile---inward and outward---means facing with mildness
and gentleness whatever befalls me.

Jesus, grant me to serve You, to proclaim You, to glorify You,
and to manifest You, to the very end through all the time
that remains to me of life, and above all through my death.

Lord Jesus, I commit to your care my last years, and my death;
do not let them impair or spoil the work I have so dreamed of achieving
for You.

Amen.

- *Author Unknown*

<https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/prayers-for-aging>