
“Gathering Prayer for Pride Month”

by Slats Toole

it is impossible to name You,
even now,
as we turn to pray.
we attempt many:
God and Teacher
and Healer and Refuge
and Savior and Redeemer
and Guide and Friend
and still
we cannot pin You down.
no word defines You--
You live in the space between,
in the tremor of opposites
coming together in unimagined possibilities.

it is impossible to name You
but everywhere we turn,
You are reflected in the humanity
You created to be creative
to thrive in Your image
to join Your work of shaping
life and love in ways
that help us take pride
in who You have made us to be.

draw us to You
in this queer space that You,
the Nothing and the Everything,
the Creator and the Child,
the +,
inhabit so gracefully.
amen.

“The Confession I Long to Hear”

by Slats Toole

it is so hard to say,
“we were wrong.”

it is only here, in the intimacy of prayer
with a God who became vulnerable to us
that we can dare to whisper in Your ear:
“we thought we were being kind.

we thought we were being good,
and righteous
and following Your word.

we thought we were saving souls.”

God of mercy, now we know:
judgement and salvation are your task,
not ours.
return us to Your call to care and serve all Your children,

may we never again call profane
those who you have made beloved.
amen.

“Prayers for Your People”

by Slats Toole

bless those who long to see You
but do not know how to find You
who navigate a maze of
coded language
quick assumptions and
deadly expectations.

bless those who used to sing Your praises
but whose song was stolen
by those who claimed
it didn't sound right,
it wasn't natural,
it wasn't how God made them.

bless those who stayed too long
because they thought they were loved
but that love came with so many strings
eventually they could not even
move.

bless those who are still searching
inside and outside the walls of Your church
for a glimpse of the You
who created them
as an incomplete, but vital
mirror.

bless those who stopped their search long ago,
and give them peace
even if they never know it was You,
even if they never “return”:
bless them because You are Love,
and Love is what you do.
Amen.

“Charge/Benediction”

by Slats Toole

go.

go from this place where we declare:

“all are loved.”

“all are made in the image of God.”

into world that does not agree.

go.

go to be Christ’s body

which means:

go to be safety.

go to be affirmation.

go to embody the welcome

that Christ has extended to you

your whole life long.

gird yourself with the truth

of your belovedness.

armor yourself with the knowledge

of a God whose love is beyond all of our imaginings.

walk surrounded by the peace

that can match hatred and death.

go.

go to be ambassadors

of the God who is Love.

“Benediction”

by the Rev. Jenny McDevitt

God of grace and God of glory,
We were taught that pride goeth before a fall.
And today, we are bold enough to say —
 please, let that be true.

Please, God,
Where Pride goes, let so much fall in its wake.
Where Pride goes, may homophobia fall.
Where Pride goes, may fear fade away.
Where Pride goes, may name calling and taunting cease.
Where Pride goes, may unfair standards be eased.
Where Pride goes, may unjust policies be defeated.
Where Pride goes, may injustice of every sort fall forever.

And where Pride goes, O God, may beauty bloom forever.
Where Pride goes, may acceptance be the norm.
Where Pride goes, may the welcome be warm.
Where Pride goes, may love burst forth.
Where Pride goes, may justice roll down
 and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.
Where Pride goes, may your kingdom come and your will be done.
Where Pride goes, O God, may your Church follow.

We were taught that pride goeth before a fall.
Yes, God, please, in your mercy,
 let Pride goeth before a fall.

In this, O God, as with everything when it comes to you,
we believe; help our unbelief.

Amen