

# Our Paschal Journey

**BROTHER PHILIP • AND ALL MY BROTHERS**

## *Vigil of Prayer*

My brothers,  
As the time of my death approaches,  
I write these pages as a prayer  
and as an expression of my faith and trust.



Through Jesus your Servant, with him, and in him,  
drawn together as one by your Spirit of love,  
we give you all our praise, O Source of our life,  
today and forever!

This is the prayer, personal reflection and song  
assembled by brother Philip for the brothers to pray with him in his final days.

## I. COME, BREATH OF LIFE

As sheer gift of God's overflowing life,  
the Holy Spirit has filled each of us  
from the first moment of our existence,  
silently inviting each of us toward what is life-giving  
within each step of our winding journeys.

I have yearned to know this Intimacy all my life,  
yet for so long I have felt unworthy of the gift.  
But God's patient faithfulness—  
expressed so strongly though our life as brothers—  
has broken through my resistance,  
making it possible for me to say Yes to an Intimacy *already given*.

This Flame of Love  
has joined us together as a community of brothers,  
kindling and deepening our love for one another,  
our passion for this world, our thirst for justice and for peace,  
and our tenderness and solidarity with the poor.

Now this Advocate and Comforter  
is upholding all of us as a family during this sacred time,  
as the firm ground under our feet.

Now God's faithful Bond of Love  
is embracing me in my dying,  
drawing me more deeply into God's triune communion.

Filled with gratitude for this unearned Gift which we share,  
I would like us to *begin* the vigil of prayer with the words  
of the song we sing at Pentecost:

**Welcome, Fire and Light, Alleluia, alleluia!  
Gift of Jesus' new life! Alleluia, alleluia!  
Wind of justice and peace, Alleluia, alleluia!  
Come, O Spirit renew the face of the earth, Alleluia!**

## II. ALWAYS YOUR BROTHER

Our faithful love for one another,  
in this Benedictine monastic community,  
is God's greatest gift to me in my life.

I am *forever* shaped by your love for me,  
and by my love for you,  
in the monastic path which we have walked together.

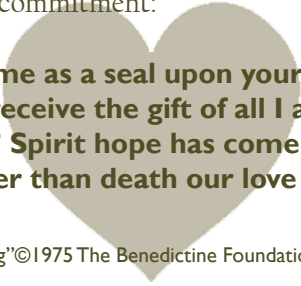
Our life together as brothers  
has made the gospel's promise tangible for me.

Each day we have been called to "listen with the ear of our heart,"  
to take "the gospel as our guide" to life,  
and to never stop growing  
in "the good zeal which monks ought to have."

Each day we have discovered that, indeed,  
"God is love" (I Jn), and that  
"God is friendship" (Aelred of Rievaulx).

As I pass-over into the great Mystery of communion,  
I do so *as your brother*,  
eternally grateful  
for the strength of our commitment to one another.

To express this  
I would like us to use the words  
from the song of our monastic profession,  
and with which we mark the anniversaries  
of our mutual commitment:



**Set me as a seal upon your heart;  
receive the gift of all I am.  
In Jesus' Spirit hope has come to flower;  
stronger than death our love and free.**

From the Song: "Gift Song" ©1975 The Benedictine Foundation of the State of Vermont, Inc.

### III. THE CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

The invitation to follow Jesus,  
and to join the company of his disciples,  
greet me each day, always as unearned gift.

As I have grown into adulthood,  
the implications of discipleship have become clearer as  
a *daily call to conversion*,  
challenging me to allow the life, self-giving,  
and resurrection of Jesus  
to be the horizon of my life.

We never receive the call to follow Jesus—  
nor do we make our response—*alone*,  
but only hand-in-hand with one another,  
with those who have received the same gift and challenge.

With you, and by God's grace, I have tried to respond.  
However, I am honestly aware  
that my response has been fragile and broken.  
Yet even here, I am offered unexpected good news:  
“I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

I pray that this call to discipleship—  
the good news of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection—  
may illumine the time of my dying,  
and that I may respond Yes with all that I am.

To express the Way of Jesus which we have embraced together,

**Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:**

**Dying you destroyed our death.**

**Rising you restored our life.**

**Lord Jesus, come in glory.**

Acclamation from the Eucharistic Prayer II of the Roman Missal