

#51 Prayers for Respectable Sinners
Rev. Frank Archibald

Some of us are beginning to wonder, O God, if you are not being more and more edged out of life in these very modern and pressurized days. Pushed to the sidelines, like an old and respected grandfather left in an old folks' home, and telling the stories of former triumphs to those who don't listen.

Once we prayed, "Help of the helpless, O abide with me," but that was before science and psychology had given us all manner of helpers. Once we prayed to be delivered from famine, but now we put our trust in rust-proof grain and irrigation. Once we prayed for peace of mind, but that was before we had heard of tranquilizers. Or we prayed for strength and energy, and then the pep pills came along.

Once life's problems were too much for us, but now the computer can figure it out as fast as it can be fed and can remember forever and ever. Once we would pray for fine weather, but now we know the weather is determined by high pressure and low pressure systems, many miles away. Once the navigator prayed for guidance, but now he trusts the radar screen rather than his prayers. Once we prayed for deliverance from smallpox and dreaded diseases, but now we have our vaccinations and penicillin.

Yet in our deepest depths we are starving — starving for comradeship and love; starving for a meaning and purpose in living in these rushing, tasteless days; starving for pardon and peace. For now, as never before, we know in very truth, "You have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they find rest in You."

Prayer for those who have lost God's address

Today, O Lord, we remember those who have lost your address, who have been out of touch with You for ever and ever so long.

We remember those whose prayers of desperation were not answered the way they wanted them to be, and who gave it all up as a bad job. Or those whose prayers were short-circuited by some old bitterness or unconfessed sin.

Or those who are afraid to pray lest they hear you calling them to ways that cut right across their dreams. Or those who were just plain careless, or who thought they were too tired or too busy.

So, O God, we bring our prayers for those who have lost your address; that they may know you still have theirs, standing there at their door, waiting, ever waiting, with the latch on the inside only.