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prayer

March 21, 1971

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

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0 Lord our God, -'ho calls light out of darkness, life out of death, we your servants non brinfe'our'humble petitions to you,,even though we know we have lots of hang-ups. Lord, to begin with, we don't even know how to pray aright. But we will give it a try once again.

We pray, Lord, for real communication. We bring that hackneyed word to you, Father, since we really need it. You have called us to speak to you and to each other, yet somehow we can't manage to do precisely that.

Lord, teach us anew to say I and Thou. We know that hearing your word is not enough. We know that we ought to say our word, too. So, teach us to say I and Thou, as you address us gently and deeply.

Teach us to say I and Thou with our teachers. You know better than we do how we try to use our teachers for our own ends, how we fit them into our plans, how we manipulate them so that we can get into graduate school, and so on. So, teach us to communicate with them as persons, not as objects in our own little schemes.

Teach us to say I and Thou with our friends. We know that means "1 and Thou," Lord, not just some superficial substitute, like pretending to listen so that we can have a chance to say what's on our mind. That means, we know, Father, that we will somehow have to learn to listen, really listen. And for that we'll need your Spirit and your inspiration.

Teach us to say I and Thou with ourselves. Probably you smile at us when we think about ourselves, how noble we think we are, how humble we think we are, how burdened we think we are. Probably you smile at us when we look at ourselves as mere shiny things or mere drab things, manipulated by forces external to ourselves. Well, when you smile, 0 Lord, show us also the compassion of your heart, so that we can once again treat ourselves as persons, who have real needs, not as things which are complete in themselves.

Finally, Father, teach us to say I and Thou with you. Help us to tell it to you as we feel, as we walk from here to there. Help us to scream the cries of desperation and to sing the songs of joy, like the children of yours we know we are. As a down payment on this life of prayer, 0 Lord, we return to pray, as we prayed from our earliest days, that simple prayer of Jesus. Hear us, as we pray together , . .

Our Father, who are in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy 'ill be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdoms and the power and the glory, for ever and ever.

Amen