

**Reflection: Harvest (Autumn)**

*inspired by Rainer Maria Rilke's poem of the same name.*

**The golden leaves are falling as if from afar,  
as if from distant gardens withering in heaven...**

**We all are falling...**

**And see all others: bound to this calling.**

**And still, there's Someone  
holding all this falling  
with tenderness unending in his hands,  
and in his hands  
this universal falling can't fall through.**

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**'Trust in the resurrection enables us to realise  
that a communion between believers  
is not interrupted by death.**

**In simplicity of heart,**

**we can ask those we love**

**and have gone before us into the life of eternity:**

**"Pray for me; pray with me."**

**During their life on earth, their prayer supported us.**

**After their death, how could we stop relying on them?'**

*Brother Roger of Taizé*

**Christ of compassion,**

**you enable us to be in communion**

**with those who have gone before us,**

**and who, in You,**

**remain so close to us.**

**We confide into your hands**

**our brothers and sisters whom we remember tonight**

**They already contemplate You,**

**the eternally beautiful God.**

**And now you are preparing us too**

**to welcome your brightness.**

*based on a prayer of the Taizé community*

## **Re-remembering**

Re-remembering can be a curious word. It can suggest that we are living having lost a member, like I've lost a limb – like I'm limping along. And that's what mourning and grief can feel like. I feel a numbness, because someone I love has gone. And the same way amputees speak of Ghost pains – I know something similar, aches as if they're still there only to feel the sharper pain of disappointment and new pangs of grief.

### **When a loved one leaves... Fr Antonin Sertillanges OP**

“When a loved one leaves us, our family doesn't disappear,  
it is transformed.

A part of it enters the invisible.

We can believe that death is an absence, while it is a secret presence  
We can believe that it creates an infinite distance, while it eliminates  
all distance by bringing to the spirit was in the flesh.

The more loved ones that have left home,  
the more heavenly ties for those left behind.

Heaven is no longer populated only with angels, unknown saints  
and a mysterious God, it is becoming familiar.

It is part of our family home, and its upper level, one could say  
and, from top to bottom, memories, help, and prayers  
are answered to each other.

### **A reflection based on Colossians 1: 17b-20**

St Paul wrote with great conviction:

*“In Christ Jesus all things hold together.”*

So when I feel as though things are falling apart  
because of the rawness of grief

or I feel guilty because I didn't remember them today.

Or I wonder: what will happen to all these precious memories  
when I forget? I can trust that in Jesus all things hold together.

And I can trust that the love of God, which has overcome all things,  
will hold us together again.

### **The Bryan Prayer:**

Compassionate Lord,  
someone we love has been taken from us,  
someone precious and irreplaceable,  
And we know that there are no words  
that we can say at this moment  
to express what we are feeling.  
No words can alleviate our sorrow  
or take away our pain.  
So we have come here to express the grief,  
the pain, the emptiness, the loneliness, the fear,  
the questions and uncertainty  
that at times threaten to overwhelm us.  
We come bringing these feelings honestly before you  
and ask for strength in times of darkness.  
Hold on to us even when we find it hard to hold on to you.  
Be very near: even when we feel you to be very far away.  
Support us in the weeks, months and years ahead.  
Grant us the comfort  
you have promised, your Holy Spirit,  
to help and guide us.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord, **Amen.**

### **Conclusion:**

May the love of God  
and the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ  
bless and console us  
and gently wipe every tear from our eyes:  
In the name of the Father and of the Son  
and of the Holy Spirit. *All: Amen.*