

# The City Church, New York

The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession – Sunday September 10, 2006

“What a Friend We Have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear.” Joseph Scriven wrote those words. He was born in Ireland on this day in 1819. The words were born out of trial. His bride-to-be drowned on the eve of their wedding. Then, after moving to Canada, another engagement ended with the death of his fiancée. Yet, through it all, he knew that his Friend who gave his life for us was with him.

Let us pray.

Our dearest Friend: We can't begin to express the gratitude appropriate for the gracious fact of Your Presence. You gave Your all for us, from before Your creation of all. You give Your all to us in each moment of difficult days and through every long watch of the night. And You've promised that You will be giving Your all for us forever, that we might be conformed into Your image of Love – sisters and brothers of the Son of God.

And so, with our brother, Joseph, and with all Your saints who went to glory through the wreckage of this world, we follow You, Suffering Servant of God, and we bear whatever the pain to which You call us and for which You arm us in Your strong arms of peace that passes all understanding and every would-be explanation in this world.

We bow before Your wisdom and love and trust Your amazing grace: What a Friend we have in You! Befriended by You who gave us Your all, may we not fail to befriend even the least among us. Loved by You, whom we thought our enemy, may we not fail to love those who think we're their enemy. For You've commanded us to love friend and foe alike. May we never forget that You said we're Your friends to the extent we love as You commanded us to love. May we be Your friends, faithfully following You, knowing You're there in the darkness – no matter that our vision is too weak to see You. May we always remember that – no matter how it may seem to us – our Friend is here with us in all the emptiness of so much of life. Though it may seem we're so often all alone – we trust that we are never alone, that our Friend who “sticks closer than a brother” is right here with us, always – through each and every tomorrow – forever!

Lord, they ask us: “Where were we on 9/11?” Some ask: “Where was God on 9/11?”

But then, “Where was God on 4/3/33?” On a cross – at Calvary!

And so we pray in Your name, the words You so helpfully taught us to pray, saying:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will 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 kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.