

Saint Paul tells us to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess 5:17). Diana Macalintal responds to that happy admonition in her poetic The Work of Your Hands. Whether you are looking for a prayer for procrastinators on the feast of Saint Expeditus or a prayer when Mass feels empty, a blessing for those in love or a blessing for graduates, Macalintal will help you lift your minds and hearts to our gracious God. And graced prayers and blessings these are.

Bishop Robert Morneau
Pastor of Resurrection Parish
Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of the
Diocese of Green Bay

Diana Macalintal offers us a creative and inspiring source rich in possibilities. The Work of Your Hands—a collection of prayers and blessings, touching the ordinary and extraordinary rhythms of human life—is sure to enrich our spiritual journey. Savor an outstanding and fresh resource for everyday reflection, for special celebrations and particular needs.

Edith Prendergast, RSC
Director of Religious Education
Archdiocese of Los Angeles

I read a lot of books and manuscripts, but this one caught me by surprise. I could not read it in one sitting. I kept it near me and took up one prayer after another, slowly letting them sink in. This is a book I will keep on my nightstand for many years, a book I will never put away. From the tender words in the introduction to the final “Amen!” it’s fantastic. It comes from the heart of Diana Macalintal whose passion creeps into every line. But make no mistake: it’s beautiful but it’s also disturbing. Certain lines of these prayers will not fade away from your heart easily; they will linger until God has touched you through them with his power.

Bill Huebsch
Director of the ThePastoralCenter.com
Author of *The Art of Self-giving Love*

Fresh, evocative language from the hands of one steeped in the richness of the scriptures and attentive to the deep longings of the human heart. Diana Macalintal has graced us with a gift—prayers for every season of life worth placing on our lips and planting in our hearts over a lifetime. This collection gives voice to the depths of our joy, pain, and everything in between, helping us to see God’s quiet and constant presence amidst it all.

Tony Alonso, composer and author

Diana Macalintal is that rare and gifted artist who has the ability to describe the indescribable. She is the poet who comes along only once in a great, long while with the capacity to image the unimaginable, opening our senses to the profound in our everyday midst whether it might be Christ in the least fortunate reaching out to bless us or the wisdom figure of her own grandmother who loves and nurtures God’s creation into being giving us the gift of Diana. This collection of prayers is the promise of a personal retreat, a moment away from the noise of our daily lives. All great artists summon us beyond ourselves, and after spending time in this collection of prayers, you will emerge from this book’s pages a different person than when you first opened them. Someone will be fed or held in your care for your having spent time in the world Diana opens to us.

John K. Flaherty
Liturgy Committee Chair & Music Director,
Los Angeles Religious Education Congress
Associate Director of Campus Ministry,
Loyola Marymount University

Ever feel tongue-tied in prayer? Ever wonder what you could say to God, and how you could say it? Let Diana Macalintal help you with this new book of her poetic prayers and her prayerful poems. They are both beautiful prayers themselves and beautiful invitations to deeper meditation and richer contemplation.

James Martin, SJ
Author of *Jesus: A Pilgrimage*



The Work of Your Hands



The Work of Your Hands

Prayers for Ordinary
and Extraordinary
Moments of Grace

Diana Macalintal



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My grandmother taught me to pray, though she spoke no prayer out loud. We lived together, three generations under the same roof. In our yard, I watched her build trellises, loosen dirt, and dig neatly spaced rows along the garage. Her hands transformed that dog run of brown nothingness into a green maze of curlicues, vines, and beans. Next to them were the eggplants as big as your head. Across the yard were the roses, pink and huge with thorns that cut deep.

In the same way, my grandmother shaped a barren corner of her bedroom into a shrine of icons, rosaries, palms, candles, and holy cards. Roses guarded the college photo of the child she lost to cancer and the wedding portrait with the husband she would lose years later. (Soon after, another child would complete that trinity.) She sat there each night, praying but making no sound.

My life's vocation has been to help people pray the liturgy, with all the words, music, and artistry I could muster. But my grandmother's vocation has been to make her very life a prayer, to cultivate everything around her, thorns and all, into a garden of praise to God.

Like gardening and liturgy, prayer is work, our work and God's, the fruit of which we may never see. But it is there, hidden and waiting to flourish. I dedicate this book to my grandmother, Irene, for it is the fruit of the vine she planted in me long ago.

Diana Macalintal

Fruit

Even when I was young, my grandmother's hands
were old

Aged with cracked crevices, twisted knots for knuckles
She tilled the soil of our garden with mud-blackened
fingers and

Dirt-stained nails until there was space for seed

Dig, plant, water, watch—a small thing done by a
small woman

With small arthritic hands, but how grand a garden
she grew

Beans, eggplants, lemons, oranges, squash in the fall,
strawberries in summer

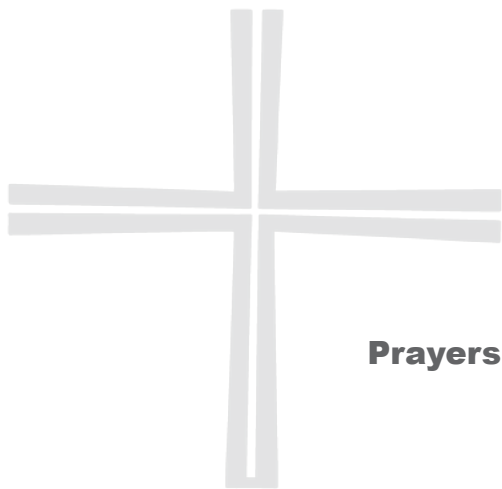
And roses enough for her only son's grave

Her hands taught me to cling not to fear but to faith
Not to grab for what seems safe but to reach for the
one in danger

Not to clutch to our own comfort but to hold firm the
hand of another

Could it be that God's hands are just like hers, dug deep
in the soil
Of our hearts, fearless of muck, patient in want,
searching
Searching for the stream of light welling up beneath
the mud
Mud our Savior smeared on blinded eyes
Eyes that witnessed death come back to life
Life that does tender small things
With immensely great and aching love

Let us be like God's hands
Holding firm to the beauty within
Grafted to the one true Vine
For on that Tree all fear has ended
A tree bloodied by Life itself
Watered by Grace eternal
Laden with Love unbounded
Free for the taking and
Sweet on the lips



Prayers

Yet, LORD, you are our father;
we are the clay and you our potter:
we are all the work of your hand.

—Isaiah 64:7

Prayer for the Work of Our Hands

Blessed are you, Lord God,
Creator of all that is good,
for in your mercy you give us work
that we may be cocreators with you.

With hands to fashion and form,
minds to imagine what has yet to be,
hearts to care for what we have made,
and a spirit to impart to our own creations,
we rejoice in the labor you give us.

By imitating you, our God and Maker,
we continue to shape the world,
to name it and claim it
and be good stewards of your good gifts
through the life-giving Spirit that renews the earth.

Keep us mindful of the power you share with us
that we may create only that which leads to peace.
May the work of our hands and our visions and dreams
collaborate with your good will,
which continues to build for us your kingdom on earth.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Prayer for Procrastinators on the Feast of Saint Expeditus

Saint Expeditus, perhaps a fictional saint, is the patron saint of procrastinators. His feast day is celebrated on April 19 (four days after tax day) or, as his followers like to say, whenever you get around to it. Traditional images of him feature the words hodie and cras, Latin for today and tomorrow.

I've done it again, Lord.

I've missed another deadline.

Why can't I ever be on time?

Imagine if Noah had pulled an all-nighter
or the Magi had put off making travel plans—
I guess if salvation had depended on me,
your will would never be done!

But you also chose the less punctual to show your glory:
Jonah, the ultimate procrastinator,
and the infamous stragglers who wound up first.

Yet, Lord, I know that *now* is the time
and *today* is the day of salvation.
So help me do what needs to be done—
today and not tomorrow.

Keep me focused on the path—
looking ahead and not behind.

With the help of Saint Expeditus
and all who patiently wait for me,
teach me to order the chaos of my day,
that each moment may be spent wisely
in timely service to you.
Amen.

Prayer to Accept Change

Just when I thought I had it all figured out, Lord,
things change again.

When will I be able to rest
in the comfort of knowing what comes next?

You, who transcend all time,
who created the stars and set them in place,
you, who are ageless yet known in every age,
grant me the grace to accept
the changes that are happening.

Empty my heart of anxiety,
and fill it instead with wonder and awe.
Release me from the chains of complacency,
and bind me to your ever-moving Spirit.

When the things I believed to be permanent and stable
are left by the wayside,
enfold me in your undying love
that I may remember in whom all things are bound.

When fear of something new paralyzes me,
and grief cripples me with anger
over the loss of what had been,
send your angels to give me a gentle push
over that frightening edge into the unknown,
so that I may learn to trust in you.

For you alone are eternal.
You alone are enduring.
You alone are the everlasting Lord.
And in you alone will this restless world find peace.
Amen.