

April 2021 Prayer and Praise

My thanks to Grace Kelley who recently shared this poem on her blog as part of her Lenten series. Grace has an ability to put into words the feelings and emotions I need to be reminded of as well as God's ability to meet me right where I am.

Christy Secor RN, DNP, CDWF, NCF Professional Ministries Director

“just his hem—“

a poem by Grace Kelley

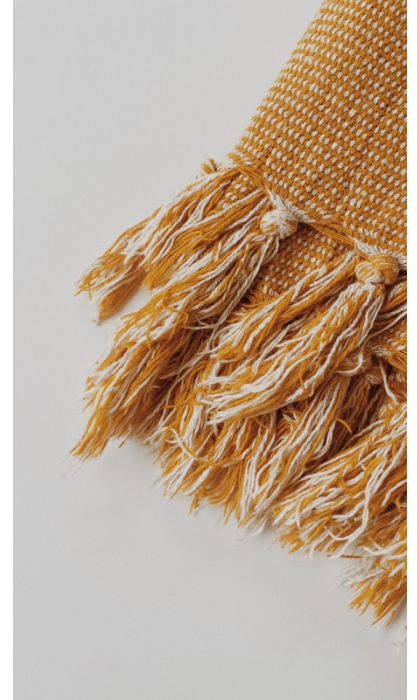
Those who said
they would help
have only hurt me
more.

The blood
won't stop
coming & all
these wounds
refuse to be
bound.

But I heard a rumor
yesterday—
it caused my heart
to leap inside
my frail & aching
chest.

They say:
a man—
a prophet—
a healer—
has come to Israel
again.

In the crowd
I hide my face
behind my shawl.
I hope no one
recognizes me—



I don't belong here.

All who touch me
are unclean &
in this crowd
I could pollute
dozens—yet do I really
seek to touch *him*?

Not him
I say to myself
just his hem—
if I can just touch
the hem of his robe
I know I will be healed—

After all this time
walking alone
perhaps I could be
a mother—
a friend—
a daughter—
again.

When my fingers
graze fabric I feel
the Power working.
My body feels
more whole
than it has in
twelve long years,
but with the joy comes
like a lightning flash
both awe & terror.

What have I done?

But before I can slip
away anonymous &
unnamed his eyes
turn toward me.
His gaze is searching

& he's asking;
"Who touched me?"
And I, shaking
in a body only
moments made whole,
confess it all
before him.

I thought
he would
chastise me
for making him
unclean—
instead I feel
his hand beneath
my chin, lifting
my eyes to his gaze.

He looks at me
like he knows me
from the top of my head,
to the soles of my feet.
He calls me daughter
& says my faith
has made
me well.

If only everyone
could be seen
like this—
his loving gaze
made well
parts of me
even miracles
couldn't heal.

Grace Kelley is a writer, speaker, and podcast co-host, inviting you to kneel down in the dirt of your difficult circumstances and plant seeds of hope, trusting that in time they will grow into something glorious. You can connect with her on her [Blog](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), or [Facebook](#) and be sure to follow her brand-new podcast "[The Rock and a Holy Place](#)." Grace lives in sunny Northern Colorado with her husband and three small kids where she balances her love of gardening and tea drinking with her hatred of folding laundry.

April Prayer Calendar

- April 1 – We remember the example set for us as Jesus washed the feet of each of his disciples (even the one who would betray him), shared a last meal with them, and walked to a garden to pray. Jesus knew suffering. He asked for another way if possible and submitted to his Father’s will. Keep our hearts soft, God, for the way you loved and gave everything for us. Remind us also of our own need to follow your perfect will.
- April 2 – The crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ serves as witness to God’s incredible love for each of us and that “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5: 8, ESV). We give thanks for this incredible gift and for the depth of the Father’s love. May we follow his example of love in the way we live out our calling as students, educators, and nurses.
- April 3 – For those times when we experience heartbreak, disappointment, pain, fear, anxiety, isolation, and grief - remind us, Lord, to look beyond these stones that have been rolled into our own lives. There is hope. Sunday is coming.
- April 4 – We praise God for the power of the resurrection, the defeat of sin and death, and the hope we have in Jesus Christ as we celebrate Easter with believers from around the world. May our lives be salt and light to a world in desperate need of something bigger than ourselves.
- April 5 – Pray for our student ministries fundraising intensives taking place April 5th-9th and for the month of May. Pray for partners to say yes to supporting the work of seeing nursing students transformed with the love of Jesus and equipped for years to come!
- April 6 – Pray for continued quality *Journal of Christian Nursing* manuscripts to be received, especially during COVID, as people are overwhelmed and busy and for our editorial team to make wise decisions for manuscript acceptance.
- April 7 – Mary Helming, a member of our JCN staff, has asked for prayer for her son who is experiencing intense pain due to a herniated disc. He is not a surgical candidate. Pray also that he and others in the country will be able to receive their Covid vaccine very soon.
- April 8 – Pray against the obstacles being experienced with the new membership system. We ask God to give us wisdom and discernment to overcome and for him to make a way.
- April 9 – Pray for nurses who are struggling with their health physically, mentally, and spiritually because of the pandemic and the challenges they are experiencing personally and professionally. Pray for a willingness and courage to be open about their needs and to seek help. Pray for opportunities to connect with others and to grow through this season of lament.
- April 10 – Pray for wisdom and deep spiritual insight for Skip McDonald, who serves NCF students, educators, and nurses in the southeast, as she continues writing Bible studies focusing on mental health. Pray for continuing protection of Skip’s health as she serves students, faculty, and nurses.
- April 11 – We ask God to lead and guide our Sunday evening times of prayer. May our prayers be used to see his kingdom come and his will done in our lives, profession, and communities.
- April 12 – Ask God to clearly lead in preparation for new student outreach that will happen this summer.
- April 13 – We praise God for answered prayer in the life of Christy Secor, NCF’s Professional Ministries Director, following a year of intense loss and change. The prayers of so many nurses

have sustained and encouraged her. God is using this season to teach new lessons about grief, loss, trust, and hope.

- April 14 – May God provide leadership and equity as local, state, and national leaders distribute the Covid vaccine to people of all age groups, races, and economic backgrounds.
- April 15 – Pray for wisdom for the East Texas NCF nurse group and that they would hear from the Lord regarding future retreats. We ask God to guide their planning and help them make wise decisions regarding a virtual retreat for fall and an in-person retreat in April 2022.
- April 16 – May God provide wisdom, discernment, and technical expertise for details needed for the NCFI World Congress that will be held virtually in July 2021. Pray for speakers as they record their presentations. Pray for God to use this time to strengthen nurses in the work they do.
- April 17 – We ask God to help equip the *Journal of Christian Nursing* staff to meet our 2021 goals through some new initiatives.
- April 18 – Pray for NCF student chapters as they plan leadership for the fall. We ask that new student leaders would be raised up as many graduating seniors transition away from their college campuses.
- April 19 – We pray for the health and healing of Skip McDonald’s spiritual daughter who is battling cancer.
- April 20 – Intercede for all the complicated, moving parts of NCF and that we can hear Jesus’ voice leading us in this work and ministry.
- April 21 – We lift up our newest NCF professional nurse group in Central Alabama. May God guide Jill as she leads.
- April 22 – We ask God for insight from his Word and his Spirit during this evening’s Journal Club as nurses join *JCN* editors to discuss how to improve their self-care from a biblical perspective. Pray that God will draw nurses who could use encouragement and community to this event that gives participants time to interact and also to pray together.
- April 23 – Remember Skip McDonald as she leads a series of mental health Bible studies with the University of West Florida. May God use this time to be an encouragement and support to those who are hurting.
- April 24 – We pray for opportunities to connect with young nurses—new grads and nurses in their first years of practice. These nurses can really benefit from the prayer and support of a Christian nurse group and the resources of NCF. Pray God will continue to extend the reach of NCF to more nurses.
- April 25 – Pray for the student ministries team as we process this past year of pandemic living and adjust for the coming school year. Pray for wisdom in how best to come alongside our student chapters and encourage them for the 2021 - 2022 school year.
- April 26 – We lift up and ask for God to use Skip McDonald during tonight’s Tabletop Discussion as she shares deep truth to the question many of us have asked in this past year - “Where Is God When It Hurts?”
- April 27 – Pray for our nurse group leaders from around the country as we gather this evening for support, prayer, Bible study, and fellowship. These men and women give much of themselves for the well-being of others. May God provide them with wisdom, insight, joy, and support for the work they do.

- April 28 – We thank God for the way he moves and works to meet the needs of this ministry. We ask for a positive response from our prayer and financial partners as our spring prayer letter is mailed.
- April 29 – We praise God for the way he is moving in the hearts and lives of nurses who are reaching out and asking questions about starting a new local or virtual professional nurse group. We ask God to provide wisdom as they seek others to partner with them for leadership teams. Pray also for the groups who are reestablishing themselves after the pandemic. We ask for God to use each of these groups to encourage students, faculty, and nurses. May they be safe places for us to be open and to learn and grow in our faith.
- April 30 – Pray for wisdom, creativity, and time management for NCF’s staff and marketing team and the Twin Cities leadership team as we prepare for several big events in May. There will be new Bible studies, a special webinar hosted by the Twin Cities NCF group on May 11, and other special events planned to honor nurses throughout the month of May. We will also be launching a national mentorship program. Pray for God to bring the right people to serve as mentors and to be mentored. May God use these resources and events to connect the faith and practice of students, educators, and nurses more deeply.