

“Prayer of an Anonymous Abbess:

Lord, thou knowest better than myself that I am growing older and will soon be old. Keep me from becoming too talkative, and especially from the unfortunate habit of thinking that I must say something on every subject and at every opportunity.

Release me from the idea that I must straighten out other peoples' affairs. With my immense treasure of experience and wisdom, it seems a pity not to let everybody partake of it. But thou knowest, Lord, that in the end I will need a few friends.

Keep me from the recital of endless details; give me wings to get to the point.

Grant me the patience to listen to the complaints of others; help me to endure them with charity. But seal my lips on my own aches and pains -- they increase with the increasing years and my inclination to recount them is also increasing.

I will not ask thee for improved memory, only for a little more humility and less self-assurance when my own memory doesn't agree with that of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be wrong.

Keep me reasonably gentle. I do not have the ambition to become a saint -- it is so hard to live with some of them -- but a harsh old person is one of the devil's masterpieces.

Make me sympathetic without being sentimental, helpful but not bossy. Let me discover merits where I had not expected them, and talents in people whom I had not thought to possess any. And, Lord, give me the grace to tell them so.

Amen”

Anonymous¹

¹ <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/aging> (accessed January 24, 2024). “**Abbess**: a woman who is the superior of a convent of nuns” [Abbess Definition & Meaning - Merriam-Webster](#) (accessed January 24, 2024).

Storytelling in a small group or personal reflection. One by one, each person shares their answer to the first prompt below. Then go to the next prompt and so forth. A person can pass.

- 1. Share about what you are experiencing as you grow older, as you age.**
- 2. What words from the “Prayer of an Anonymous Abbess” caught your attention? Say more.**
- 3. Talk about your family and friends who will care for you as you age and need their care and support.** Do you have your Health Care Directive, Power of Attorney, Will, and other papers completed? If not, who can help you complete these documents to make sure your wishes are written down and clearly communicated to those who will care for you as you age.
- 4. Share about your thoughts, feelings, and life’s insights you have learned after you re-read: “Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be wrong.”**

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