



REMAIN IN ME



*Remain in me,
as I also remain in you.
No branch can bear fruit by itself;
it must remain in the vine.
Neither can you bear fruit
unless you remain in me.*

JOHN 15:4

introduction

*“And after I have gone
and prepared you a
place, I shall return to
take you to myself, so
that you may be with
me where I am.”*

– John 14:3



When a child dies, the order of life as we know it is overturned. Our beloved child has gone ahead to be with our Lord and we feel left behind. We find it extremely difficult see God’s hand of Love and Compassion in the midst of our sadness. But He is with us.

This book **Remain in Me** is our invitation to you to rest with God in prayer. Allow your heart to break open and tell Him your secrets. Fix your gaze upon the cross as you walk in faith. Experience God’s comforting hand on this long, unfamiliar journey.

We hope this book will support you with comfort and strength for the days ahead.

May God bless you and keep you in His love.

PIETA Singapore

• A community of bereaved parents united in faith



prayer

*Jesus, Man of Sorrows,
Acquainted with our grief,
Meet us in our sorrow.
Bless us in our mourning.
Bless us in our pain.
Bless us in our parting.
Let our grief not turn to bitterness. Let our sorrow not isolate us,
But open our hearts to all who are sorrowing.
Lead us beyond restless questioning to TRUST.
Lead us through our dark imaginings to HOPE.
Lead us back from our rebellion to a FAITH
Made sturdier by sorrow. Hold us in the night while we weep
Until we are able once again to rise up into morning
And receive your joy. Amen.*

Contemplation: Isaiah 53:3-5

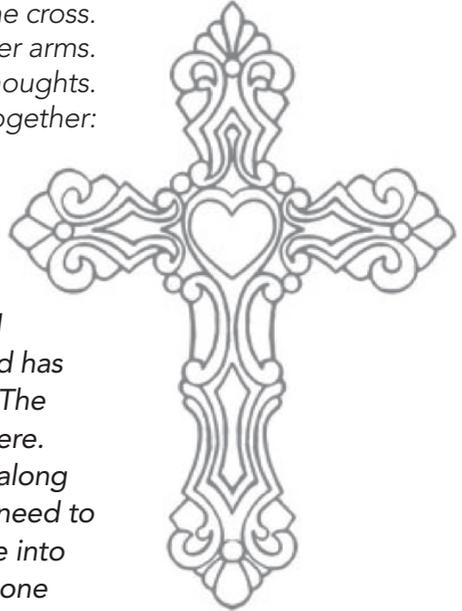
STILL my Soul, Lord Jesus. Let me savour the sweetness of your silent pregnant presence in me. May I experience a new birthing of a life that continues to give energizing joy and faithful trust. Creator God and Father gifted you to me! I cherish those times I had with you! Those memories are etched deep in my heart, often welling up with tears of gratitude and love! Still me, Lord Jesus!



prayer

Read John 19:25-27; 38-42.

*Quietly imagine Mary standing beneath the cross.
Then see her with her dead son in her arms.
Reflect on her feelings, her thoughts.
Then pray this prayer together:*



We thank you God for the gift of our child (name). You know what a treasure our child has been for us and it is not easy to be apart. The days are hard for us. The memories are there. Bless the hurt in our hearts, as we trudge along through each day. Give us the energy we need to live our lives well. Do not allow us to move into bitterness and alienation with you or with one another. We can get through this painful time in our lives and we can go on with your strength to sustain us. Grant us peace. Amen.

Contemplation: John 19:37

Stay here. Cast your simple gaze in gratitude to God who assures me that my child who has gone ahead of me is NOW in the embrace of our LOVING Father God and our Blessed Mother.

poem

Death Is Nothing At All

by Henry Scott-Holland

*Death is nothing at all.
I have only slipped away into the next room.
I am I, and you are you.
Whatever we were to each other, that we are still.*

*Call me by the old familiar name.
Speak of me in the easy way which you always used.
Put no difference into your tone.
Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.*

*Laugh as we always laughed
at the little jokes that we enjoyed together.
Play, smile, think of me. Pray for me.
Let my name be ever the household word that it always was.
Let it be spoken without an effort,
Without the trace of a shadow on it.*

*Life means all that it ever meant.
It is the same as it ever was.
There is absolute unbroken continuity.
Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?*



*I am but waiting for you. For an interval.
Somewhere. Very near.
Just around the corner.*

All is well.

*Nothing is past; nothing is lost.
One brief moment and all will be
as it was before, only better,
Infinitely happier and forever
we will all be one together with Christ.*



Contemplation: Revelation 21:1-4

Keep your gaze upon the "NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH" that is promised to us. God will dwell among us and we will be reunited with all our loved ones. What will you say to your loved one when you reunite?

reflection

We remember our lives, the way they were before our child died. How we yearn for those moments when all was well, when we looked forward to future growth together.

Every season will bring memories to us. Everywhere we turn we will recall the gift of our loved one. We will always remember the joys and the treasures of our dear one.

There will forever be an empty spot in our lives because we have lost our child who can never be replaced. We search for inner peace and we strain for a sense of acceptance of this reality.

Many feelings stir within us. We hurt with the heartache of our loss. Help us to believe that the sorrow will lessen as the days go by.

(For couples)

Our relationship with one another is influenced by this death of our child. It may be hard to share the terrible ache, to enter into other's sorrow. Help us to share this heavy burden of loss. May our marriage grow stronger, not weaker. May our love deepen, not lessen, as we grow through this grief together.

(If other children in the family)

The children who live with us need our attention and our love. May our grief over our child who has died not take away the love and affection which are so rightly theirs and which is so necessary for their own grieving time.



We long for consolation and peace in our lives. We want to believe that our beloved child rests in the tender care of Your loving arms, O God. Deepen the belief in us that our child is home with You. Amen.



Contemplation: Lamentations 3:17-18, 21-26

Dear (name) come sit beside me and let me sit close beside you.
Let me LISTEN to what you long to whisper to me since you left me!
With loving patience I WAIT! SPEAK YOUR WORDS... I AM LISTENING.
I know you are with the Father and our Blessed Mother Mary.

prayer

*Dear, gentle Jesus,
my faith is tender.
I come to You
needing to know that You love me.
Only in your presence can I find the courage
to look at my brokenness
and to see myself as You see me.
Help me to let the power of your love
reach into those painful places in my heart
that are bruised and need healing.
Let me rest for a moment
in the comfort of your embrace.
Amen.*

Contemplation: Luke 18:35-43

The blind man called out to Jesus in the streets and asked to REGAIN his sight. Imagine that you too are in the streets. You can see the blind man and you can see Jesus. How you long to be where the blind man is. How you long to ask Jesus to heal you too. Speak to Jesus.



prayer

*Loving Saviour who is my strength,
Save me from being overwhelmed
by this burden of loss
that crushes my spirit,
leaving me without rest.
Bring me closer to you,
carry me along
into the lightness of being
that is your heart.
Amen.*



Contemplation: Matthew 11:28-30

Jesus invites us to bring Him our worries, our burdens. REST gently in His embrace as you tell him what weighs heavy in your heart.

reflection

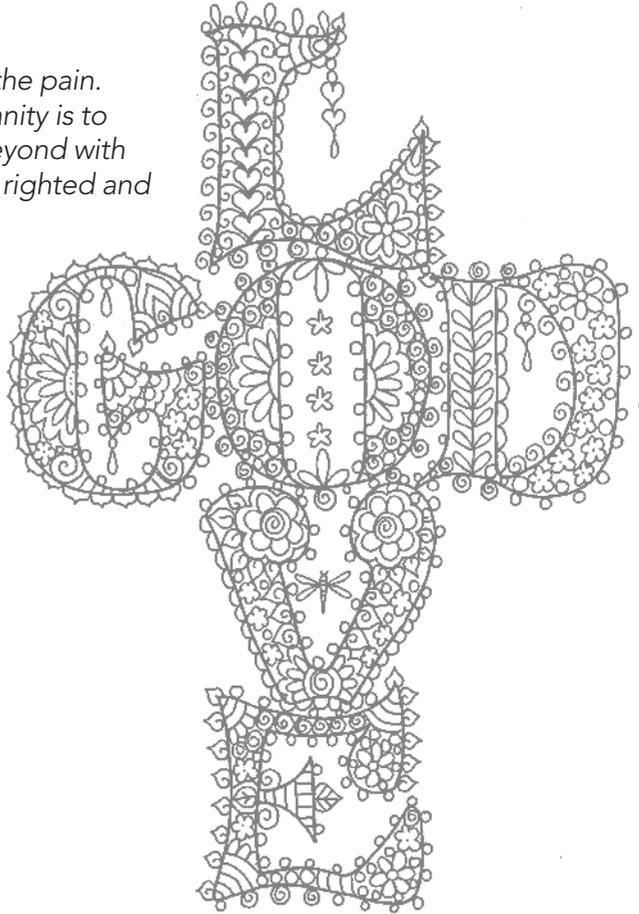
God, bring comfort and peace. Peace is your essence. Peace is Your name. Bring peace to our family who has lost our precious child in death.

We come to you God because we know that You sorrow, and are acquainted with grief. You too have endured the loss of a child. You empathize.

We can't help but ask "Why?" Forgive our insistence, our confusion, even our anger. We believe that You are just, and we ache to understand how this tragic death is an expression of that justice, how it expresses Your love. We also know – in our minds at least – that You seldom answer the "why" question. We press You, but on these matters You are mostly silent.

What we ask instead is "How?" How can we move forward? How can this bring us together and not tear us apart? How can we now live under the shadow of this untimely death? Answer this prayer with Your comfort and guidance.

There is no way to remove the pain. The grief is real. The only sanity is to know, to believe, in a life beyond with You, when all the scales are righted and the sufferings are made good. We trust You and Your promise that while our child's life on earth is done, this new life beyond has just begun. With that release we let our child go into Your arms, then by faith receive in return the boundless comfort of Your presence. That is all, that is enough. In Jesus. Amen.



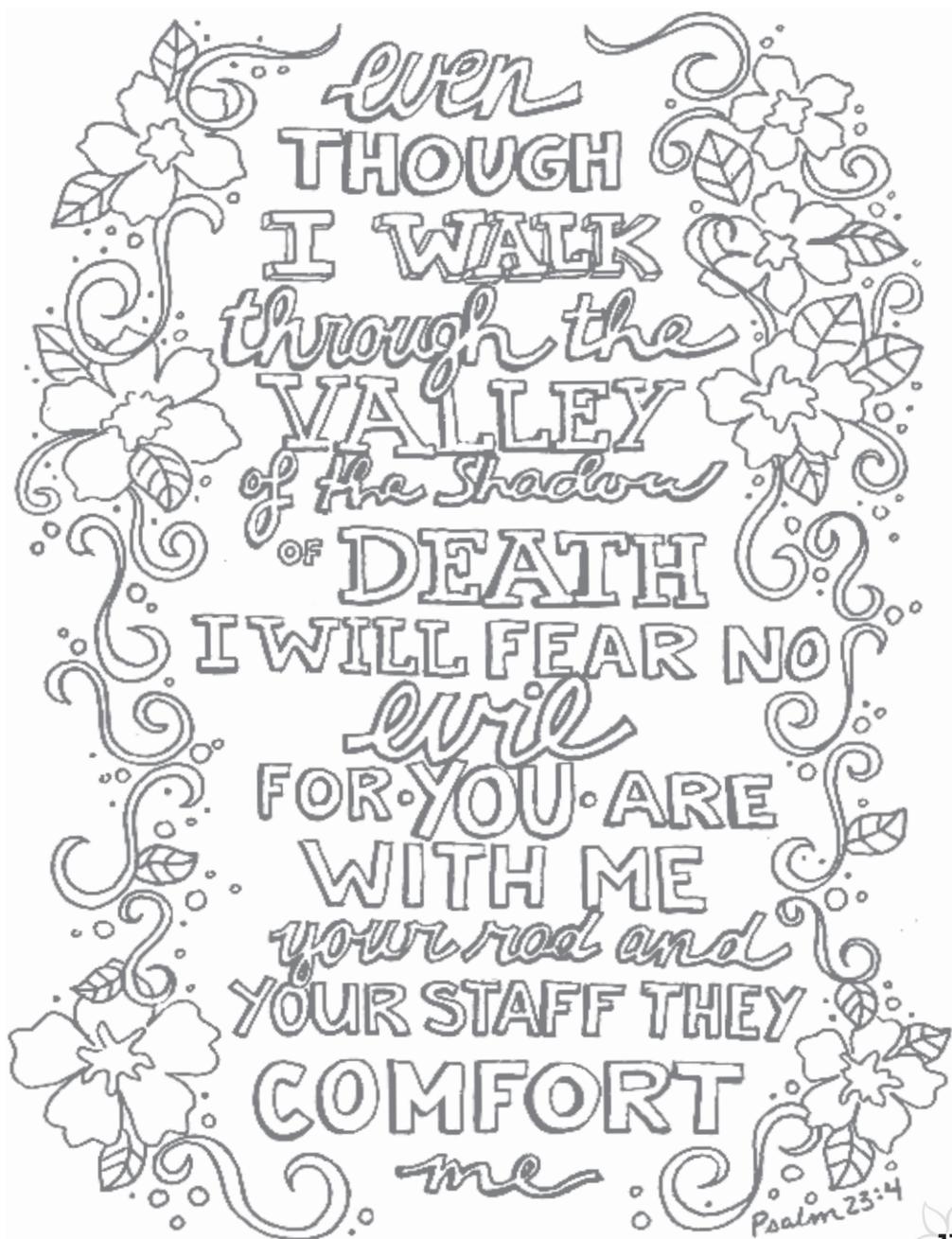
Contemplation : Psalms 6:2-9

Lord Jesus, how do you want me to move onward now? By myself I really do not know the way! However, I trust and believe You will give me the LIGHT to see: the strength and wisdom even in my pain and sorrow to thank You for this moment. It is a time of great blessing and with Your help I "let go" of my dear (name) to freely go through this open door to LIFE and LOVE ETERNAL!

As you contemplate on God's WORD, discover a new creation in you



when you bring colour back into the empty spaces of your heart.



prayer

Giver of all Gifts,

Help me to hold even those I most cherish with an open hand. Let this loss not diminish me, but break open my heart and teach me what I need to learn that all life is Yours, that death is not the end, that You will find us and bring us home. Help my grief to melt into gratitude in due time, and teach me complete reliance on Your holy will. Amen.

Holy Spirit,

You dwell within us and among us. Deepen our hope of heaven. Make that hope sure and certain, sturdy and resilient. Come like wind and lift us into a wider life. Come like fire and ignite our appetite for the life we are given. Come like a still small voice to comfort us in these hard times. Amen.

God of all comfort,

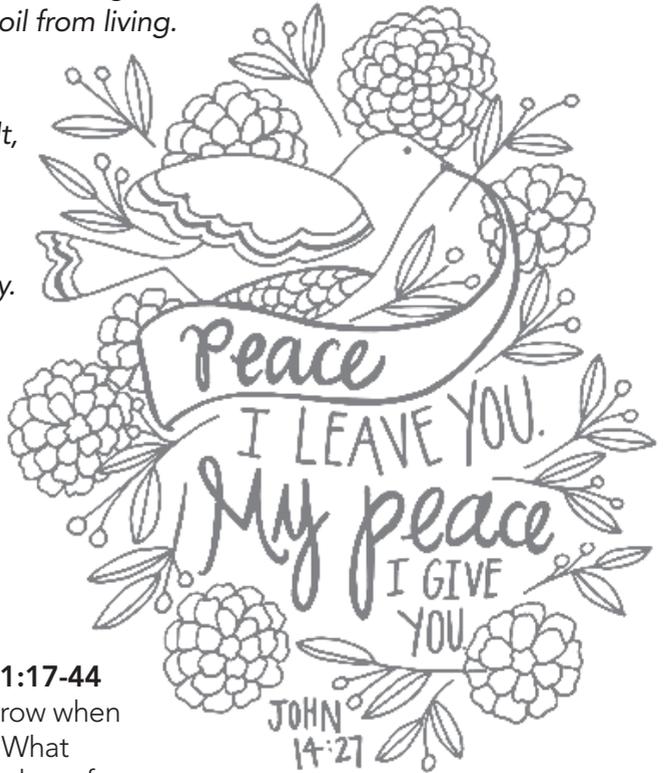
Help us find comfort even in the hard tasks of this season: the caregiving, the waiting, the preparing, the grieving. Help us to accept what comes in due time without hurry or fear, and to accept Your gracious permission to address our own needs along the way. Amen.

Contemplation:

Bring yourself before the Holy Eucharist and sit in quiet surrender. REMAIN in His embrace.

prayer

Dearest Jesus,
who wept at the death of your friend
and taught that they who mourn shall be comforted,
grant us the comfort of your presence in our loss.
Send Your Holy Spirit to direct us
lest we make hasty or foolish decisions.
Send Your Spirit to give us courage
lest through fear we recoil from living.
Send Your Spirit
to bring us Your peace
lest bitterness, false guilt,
or regret
take root in our hearts.
The Lord has given.
The Lord has taken away.
Blessed be the name
of the Lord.
Amen.



Contemplation: John 11:17-44

Jesus WEPT. He felt sorrow when His friend Lazarus died. What comforting words do you have for Jesus? What comforting words does Jesus have for you?

intercessory prayers

O sweet Mother Mary, who knew the sadness of mourning those your heart loved most, Jesus, your Son, and Joseph, your devoted spouse. Pray for us in our time of loss. Amen.



*** That God's love and presence surround us day and night.**

Rom 8:38-39

For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nothing already in existence and nothing still to come, nor any power, nor the heights, nor the depths, nor any created thing, whatever, will be able to come between us and the love of God, known to us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

***That we will accept God's wisdom, knowledge, judgments and ways.**

Prov. 3:5-6

Trust wholeheartedly in Yahweh,
put no faith in your own perception;
acknowledge Him in every course you take,
and He will see that your paths are smooth.

***That guilt and depression will not overtake us.**

Phil 4:8

Finally, brothers, let your minds be filled with everything that is true, everything that is honourable, everything that is upright and pure, everything that we love and admire -- with whatever is good and praiseworthy.

***That we would not feel alone, but sense God's presence, and lean on the Holy Spirit as our Helper and Comforter and Truth.**

John 16:13

However, when the Spirit of truth comes He will lead you to the complete truth, since He will not be speaking of his own accord, but will say only what He has been told; and He will reveal to you the things to come.

***That we would experience His peace like never before, and grace sufficient for each day, each hour, each minute.**

Phil 4:6-7

Never worry about anything; but tell God all your desires of every kind in prayer and petition shot through with gratitude, and the peace of God which is beyond our understanding will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

intercessory prayers

***That the Lord would guard our hearts from words that hurt instead of comfort.**

Psalms 139:23-24

God, examine me and know my heart;
test me and know my concerns.
Make sure that I am not on my way to ruin;
and guide me on the road of eternity.

***For wisdom to discern “what to do next”
and know “where to go from here.”**

James 3:17

Whereas the wisdom that comes down from above is essentially something pure; it is also peaceable, kindly and considerate; it is full of mercy and shows itself by doing good; nor is there any trace of partiality or hypocrisy in it.



Contemplation:

Choose one of the scripture passages and contemplate on it. GOD is beside and before you. Express your feelings ... now, this minute, this hour...

prayer

"O Sacred Banquet in which Christ is received, the memory of his Passion is renewed, the mind is filled with grace, and the pledge of future glory is given to us."

– St Thomas of Aquinas



Contemplate on the Eucharistic Prayer and fix your thoughts on Jesus' RESURRECTION and His PROMISE. Know that it is in the Eucharist that we come into COMMUNION with Christ and all our loved ones:

Remember your servant (name) whom you have called from this world to yourself. Grant that he (she) who was united with your Son in a death like his, may also be one with him in his Resurrection, when from the earth he will raise up in the flesh those who have died, and transform our lowly body after the pattern of his own glorious body.

To our departed brothers and sisters, too, and to all who were pleasing to you at their passing from this life, give kind admittance into your kingdom. There we hope to enjoy for ever the fullness of your glory, when you will wipe away every tear from our eyes. For seeing you, our God, as you are, we shall be like you for all the ages and praise you without end, through Christ our Lord, through whom you bestow in the world all that is good. †

poem

On The Death of The Beloved

by John O'Donohue

*Though we need to weep your loss,
You dwell in that safe place in our hearts,
Where no storm or night or pain can reach you.*

*Your love was like the dawn
Brightening over our lives
Awakening beneath the dark
A further adventure of colour.*

*The sound of your voice
Found for us
A new music
That brightened everything.*

*Whatever you enfolded in your gaze
Quickened in the joy of its being:
You placed smiles like flowers
On the altar of the heart.
Your mind always sparkled
With wonder at things.*



*Though your days here
were brief,
Your spirit was live,
awake, complete.*

*We look towards each other no longer
From the old distance of our names;
Now you dwell inside the rhythm of breath,
As close to us as we are to ourselves.*

*Though we cannot see you with outward eyes,
We know our soul's gaze is upon your face,
Smiling back at us from within everything
To which we bring our best refinement.*

*Let us not look for you only in memory,
Where we would grow lonely without you,
You would want us to find you in presence,
Beside us when beauty brightens,
When kindness glows
And music echoes eternal tones.*

poem



*When orchids brighten the earth,
Darkest winter has turned to spring;
May this dark grief flower with hope
In every heart that loves you.*

May you continue to inspire us:

*To enter each day with a generous heart.
To serve the call of courage and love
Until we see your beautiful face again
In that land where there is no more separation.
Where all tears will be wiped from our mind,
And where we will never lose you again.*

Contemplation: 1 Corinthians 13: 4-13

LOVE is indeed the greatest of them all. For those who are no longer with us, the memory of their love will not only SUSTAIN us but INSPIRE us to see beauty in the present. Keep these memories of LOVE safe and visit them often. For in LOVE we will never be apart.

prayer

Holy One

*Immortal, invisible, unresting, unhasting,
Teach us to trust in Your inexplicable ways.*

Deepen our hope for a heaven

We can hardly imagine.

Appease the pain of loss.

As our hearts break, keep them open.

Widen our compassion for the many

Whose losses also seem unbearable.

Make them bearable.

And help us to bear them with patience and grace.

Amen.

Contemplation: 1 Timothy 1:12-17

Lord Jesus, I cry to You! O Holy and Immortal ONE!
I beg You now, to grant me the grace to experience
in this quiet space and time, Your comforting and
strengthening PRESENCE in my heart. To my
Eternal King, the undying, invisible and only God
be glory and honour forever AMEN.

acknowledgements

Remain in Me is inspired by writings and thoughts from various sources which have helped us in our healing and faith. PIETA wishes to acknowledge with thanks the following resources:

- *Catholic on line* www.catholic.org
- *Belief Net* www.beliefnet.com
- *Walking the Sacred Path - Spiritual exercises for today* by Dan Shutte
- *Your Sorrow is My Sorrow* by Joyce Rupp
- *Praying our Goodbyes* by Joyce Rupp
- *A Long Letting Go – Meditations on losing someone you love* by Marilyn Chandler McEntyre
- *Every Tear Will Be Wiped Away – Prayers for comfort in times of grief* by Gretchen L. Schwenker
- *Unknown authors who freely share their prayers and support for all grieving parents.*



We are grateful to PIETA's Spiritual Director Sr Elizabeth Lim of the Good Shepherd Sisters for her guidance in crafting the contemplations for deepening our faith and opening our hearts to GOD. We especially remember the late Mdm Lum Whye Hee, bereaved mother and grandmother, for her kind contribution towards this publication.

*" For I am convinced
that neither death nor life,
neither angels nor demons,
neither the present nor the future,
nor any powers, neither height nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us
from the love of God
that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

ROMANS 8:38-39

*This book was first distributed at PIETA's inaugural
memorial mass celebrated by Friar John-Paul Tan OFM
on 10th November 2017.*

*Mary stood at the foot of the cross
as her Son died. His last words
commended us to her care.
This mother suffered the darkness of grief
when the dead body of Jesus
was taken down from the cross.
In our grief we can call on her, cry with her.
We may quietly stay with her
in contemplation of the love that
God has given us and that
can never be taken from us.
She is with her Son in glory now and is a
sure sign of hope and comfort for every one of us.*

