



REFLECTION from *Practicing Peace*, p. 238

March 18, 2020

The reflection is on page 4 in the bulletin, and follows the song.

The widest possibilities for growth lie in the give-and-take of everyday relationships. The truth of this is brought out sweetly in a story about Saint Francis of Assisi. Three young men approached Francis and asked his blessing to become hermits and seek God, each in his own cave, deep in the mountains of Umbria. Francis smiled. He instructed them to be hermits indeed, but hermits all together in a single hut. One should take the role of father; a second should think of himself as the mother; and the third should be their child. Every few months they should exchange roles. Living in this way they were to establish among themselves perfect harmony, thinking always of the needs of one another. We can almost see the three would-be recluses exchanging sidelong glances. Their teacher had issued them a greater challenge than any they had bargained for. Yet they carried out Francis's instructions, discovering that human relationships are the perfect tool for sanding away our rough edges and getting at the core of God within us. We need look no further than our own family, friends, acquaintances, or even adversaries, to begin our practice.



PRAYER INTERCESSIONS

March 18, 2020

The response is sung before the first bidding and between each that follows. Please read your assigned prayer in numerical order.

1. With your grace, teach us how to sand off our rough edges.
2. Teach us how to grow in our spiritual journeys through the nurturing of our relationships.
3. Help our government officials seek harmony in all of their interactions with leaders around the world, and in our communities.
4. Strengthen all who are struggling with illnesses, all who are seeking and all who are lost or alone, that they may find solace and strength through your grace.



CLOSING PRAYER

March 18, 2020

May God, our ultimate Father and Mother, strengthen us and bring us to seek harmony and love in all our interactions with others. May our practice of relationship delight our hearts and the heart of God. Amen.

BLESSING

Now,
Through the rain and the sun,
Go your ways with gladness:
With Love in your hearts,
Peace in your minds
And Beauty touching your soul. Amen.