

1030
1962

Midday Prayer - 428

11.8.75

20.8.79

19.8.91

Haril Stadden; Light [Rev. Anth. G.]
Yes Lord (Ard. Dahn P)

Prayer of S. Francis ANGELS OUR FATHER
(Another Dawn)

A friend of mine ^{had} spent the greater part of her young life on the flat of her back, in plaster, or getting around on crutches. She was already a young woman when, for the first time since early childhood, she was at last able to walk normally, like the rest of us. And of course people asked how it felt to walk freely again, without crutches. But what most bothered her about it (so much so that she had to ask a close lady friend) was, what to do with her hands now that they were freed from having to hold on to her crutches. Her hands: would you have thought that could be a problem? There are times, I suppose, when most of us become self-conscious about our hands and what to do with them: and we've all learnt, by habit, culture, social custom, certain tricks to eliminate such self-consciousness — a man's pipe or briefcase, a lady's handbag or purse, the unnecessary cigarette and a whole host of others. But mostly we never think about these extraordinary and so delicate instruments which we use and rely on so much in so many ways, our own and others'... the hands that make the music you listen to on your radio, and those that turn the control knobs in the studios so that you can hear anything at all. Our hands have a language of their own, and often unwittingly, they say so much about us to others. And for those who cannot speak or cannot hear, the language of hands is a really vital link to other people and from them. Our spoken language

too, is full of the imagery of hands — so many ordinary words and phrases that keep on recalling our dependence on hands, not only physically but for understanding too: we talk of people being open-handed or tight-fisted, underhand or giving a hand. I remember seeing some years ago a beautifully-made silent film which was just hands, expressing so much of human emotion, feeling and even the whole history of a man. And we speak of the hand of God in the events of the world and in our own lives — our darkness and trouble, the shade of His hand outstretched evernighly. There's the famous etching of Dürer you probably know, of hands joined in prayer — it's become a popular reproduction all round the world. And people turn to their hands, and their lives are steeped, to try to read their fortune, their lives and future prospects. So much of our literal contact with reality comes through the sensitiveness of our hands — the sense of touch & feeling; and the expression of another person's mood, emotion and personality that hands convey. For something we take so much for granted, our hands are so much ourselves. Let us reflect a little more on the gifts of God to us, and their words, and be grateful & thankful for all his gifts. And a new song now, in the same spirit "Father I put my life in your hands"

Jared Reed
"Our Father"

NHK Apr 17 1950

MUSIC - PRAYERS

To conclude today, an episode in the life of the prophet Elijah, Q 1 Kg 19
(19th Sun Yr. A)

(added
20.8.79)

There's a short prayer of wonder at the beauty of nature which I've used occasionally in these programmes. It takes its start from looking at a leaf, and seeing the wondrous delicacy and complexity of its form, texture and colour. And likens a leaf to the human hand. Such a common, ordinary, thing, both of them. But do you ever look at your hands, in wonder, joy and praise to God for His power and beauty, His goodness to you? Look now, and try to see with fresh eyes: the story of your life reflected there, and what you've made of it — the work you've done and do: the love and caring you've expressed through them: perhaps the pain you've given, too: what you've given to others, and received from them. Your hands are uniquely your own, of all the billions of people on earth. And they're your instruments for staring, giving, working with other people, making contact and keeping in touch. You can gather and hold together jewels, or grain, or sand: can open your fingers and let them all drop as water trickles through your cupped palms. A symbol for you of what your life is meant to be — like Christ's hands healing the sick, touching the little children, taking loaves and fishes and dividing them among people so that no one was hungry: taking bread and wine ^{in His sacred hands} and giving thanks to His Father: opening His arms on the cross: inviting His doubting disciple to put his finger in the place of the nails — and, since then, the generations of Christians who've handed on their faith in the helping hand they've given to others in need of care. Your hands, God's gift to you, with their skills, ability, potential. Your hands in which, in a real way, your life lies — and the lives of others too. Your hands, to offer praise to God and give to others as He's given to you.