

Prayer of the Month • June 2010

FOR OUR CHILDREN

O God of love and mercy, help us to understand our children as they grow in years and in knowledge of your world. Make us compassionate for their temptations and failures, and encouraging in their seeking after truth and value for their lives. Stir in us appreciation of their ideals, and sympathy for their frustrations; that with them we may look for a better world than either we or they have known, through Jesus Christ our common Lord and Master. Amen.

Massey H. Shepherd, Jr. 1913-90

It is tempting for our prayers to be framed in a way to let God know what he ought to be doing. In praying for children it is good to be aware of our own limitations and to begin with a plea for understanding. Understanding on its own can be too distant, though, for we need to have feeling too. In compassion we can appreciate the difficulties children have, and then through encouragement we can with greater appreciation and realism urge them on and guide them in their own spiritual journey. We can learn from them as well, and together we can live more hopefully towards a better world.

An influential liturgist within the Episcopal Church of the USA (which is part of the worldwide Anglican Communion), Massey Shepherd was ordained in 1941, serving as Professor of Church History at the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, from 1940 to 1954, and then as Professor of Liturgics at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, California. His Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary (1950) is the standard reference work on the American 1928 Book of Common Prayer. Among his other books are *The Living Liturgy* (1946), and *The Worship of the Church* (1952). He was a member of the Commission on Ways of Worship of the World Council of Churches; an Associate in Council of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis; and a member of the editorial board of the *Anglican Theological Review*. He died in 1990.

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