

The background of the image is a photograph of a beach. The top half shows a light blue sky filled with white and grey clouds. Below the horizon, the ocean's surface is a vibrant turquoise color, with white-capped waves crashing onto a light brown sandy beach at the bottom. In the top corners, there are decorative, semi-transparent circular patterns in shades of blue, teal, and white, resembling stylized sunbursts or mandalas.

FINDING *Peace* THROUGH *Prayer*



PRAYING

the Unity Day

Rev. Edith Washington-Woods

I looked down from the eight-foot ladder I was standing on. I could see my foreman being intentional with his steps as he walked toward me. It had happened again! This was layoff day.

As a licensed electrician working in commercial and industrial areas, when a job was coming to an end, we were accustomed to getting a layoff slip in an envelope along with our final checks. As an electrician who happened to be Black and female, these yellow slips were a common occurrence.

I could feel my sadness and disappointment. I yearned to be seen and recognized as a skilled tradeswoman.

What would I do with myself until the next job? I drove to the bank, deposited my paychecks, drove five minutes home without music, and opened the door to my home.

This time would be different.

I walked into the house, put my tool bucket and hard hat away, proceeded to my bedroom, took off my work boots, and changed into sweatpants and a T-shirt. I looked over in the corner. I had been attending a Unity church, learning how to pray and meditate. There was the sanctuary I had set up to practice inner peace.

I sat down in a comfortable chair with a pillow for my back. I picked up my *Daily Word* to start relaxing and turned to a reading that affirmed peace. Then I began the Unity five-step prayer process toward freedom as taught by cofounder Charles Fillmore.

The first step invited me to *relax*. This was a way to shift from the events of the day

and take a journey to open my heart. I practiced this by taking a few conscious breaths, in and out. As I continued to breathe, I focused my attention on the top of my head, directing my breath there, then focused breath down through every area of my body until I reached my toes. I could feel my entire body relaxing into the nothingness of the moment.

The next step of becoming free was to *concentrate*. In that moment, I affirmed: *God is*. I recognized this Presence is everywhere. It is infinite, the universal life force and the wind beneath the wings of all that is, was, and ever will be. *God is*.

Then, I moved into *meditation*. I integrated my humanness with my divine essence by affirming these words as my mantra: “God is source, flowing in, through, and as me. I feel the presence of God.”

In the sacred container I had created, I *realized*. In this realization, I became very silent. So silent that I could hear the sounds of life all around me. The crickets, space between the words, space to experience the Divine as me. I realized all that I had been yearning and searching for was already within me.

As I concluded this expansive time with myself, I gave *thanks*. I was grateful for this new and different way of releasing the day. I was thankful to have a new way to celebrate and affirm my life.

Unity Five-Step Prayer Process Toward Freedom

This five-step prayer process allowed me to have peace instead of being anxious or worried about being laid off. Instead, I intuitively knew everything was going to work out, and it did! I have been able to return countless times to this prayer practice in times of despair and in times of joy.

I am the point at which all of the universe rises up to bless my space, thoughts, actions, and reactions.

Rev. Edith Washington-Woods is senior minister at Unity of Gaithersburg, Maryland.

HARMONY

The universe sings in harmony. Each morning when I awaken, I look out my window and observe the unfolding of a gloriously beautiful day. I may see a brilliant sunrise, a verdant garden, or even a bustling city street. Wherever my attention goes, I notice harmony at work. Whether in the cheerful chirping of birds or the seeming cacophony of traffic, I recognize divine order, and I feel peace. I affirm: *The universe sings in harmony.*

I breathe deeply and feel peace flowing through my body. With each breath, I say, “I live in harmony with life.” My thoughts, words, and acts of kindness add to the song of the universe by rippling out to become part of the synchronized whole. I bless each person I see with a silent *namaste* and observe each aspect of my day without judgment, remembering that divine order is always at work, creating a harmonious world where I live in peace.

—Rev. Carolyn Warnemuende

Through my thoughts, words, and actions,
I create harmony and peace.



THE MANY FORMS *of Prayer*

BEING IN NATURE

Whether it's walking in the woods, canoeing on a lake, or the meditative focus of gardening, being in nature can be a form of prayer. It reminds us we are part of a planet thriving with living things. We are God's creatures like the birds and flowers. We are all part of something larger than ourselves, and we are all one.

I relish my place on the planet.

A PRAYER FROM SILENT UNITY

Breathing in, peace.

Breathing out, peace.

In the knowledge of God and my divine nature, I cease mental confusion. I come into swift agreement, my mind and heart sure and steady.

Nothing can disturb my peace of mind or my harmonious heart, for I am anchored in divine peace.

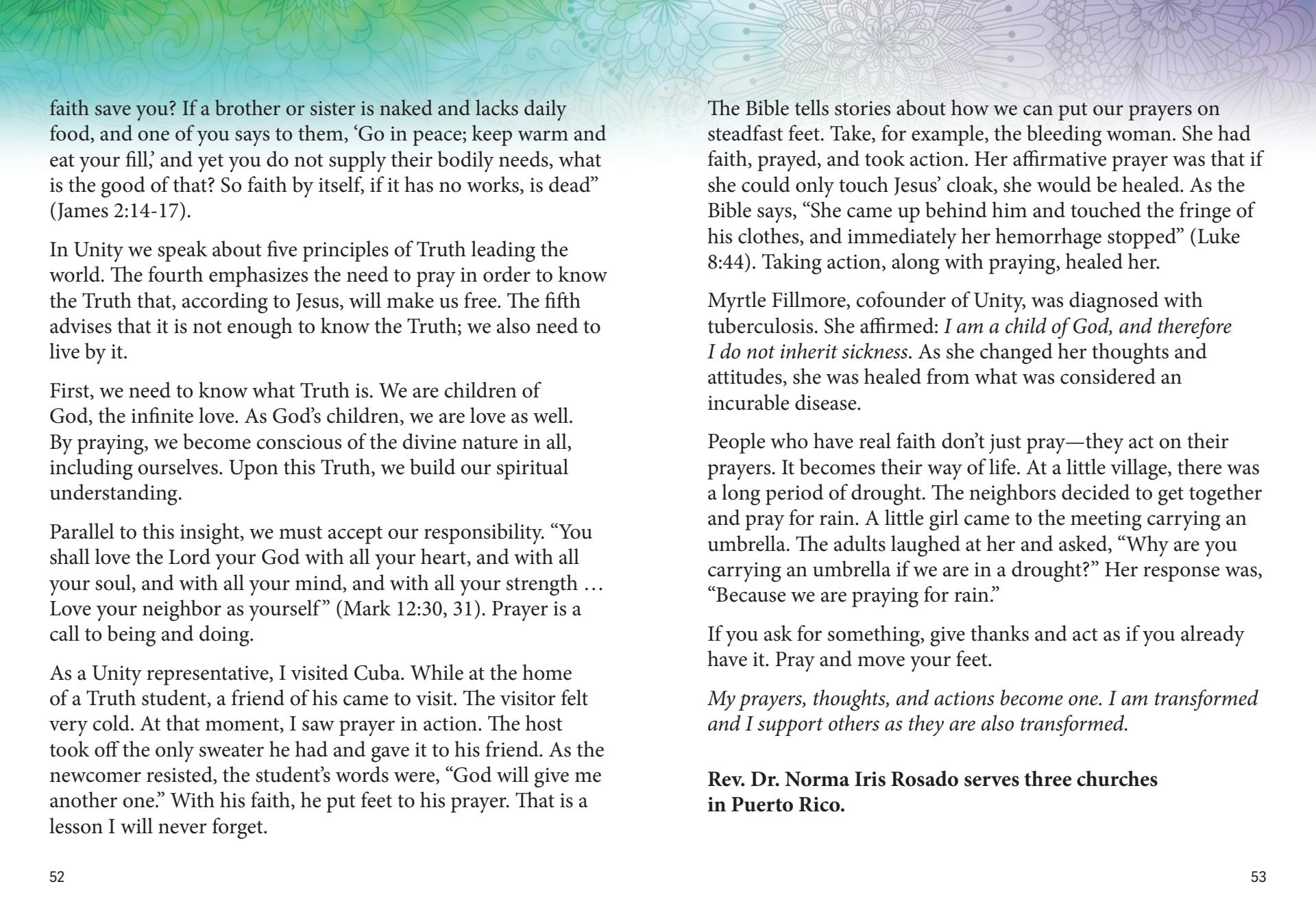


PRAY AND *Move Your Feet*

Rev. Dr. Norma Iris Rosado

Some time ago, I heard the following story. There were two girls walking to reach the school bus when they realized it was getting late. One of them said to the other, "Let us stop and pray that we make it." The other girl said, "Yes, let us pray, but let us also run." The anecdote is a lesson about the importance of praying and also the need to put steady feet on our prayers through concrete actions.

In James' letter, we read, "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can



faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill;’ and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead” (James 2:14-17).

In Unity we speak about five principles of Truth leading the world. The fourth emphasizes the need to pray in order to know the Truth that, according to Jesus, will make us free. The fifth advises that it is not enough to know the Truth; we also need to live by it.

First, we need to know what Truth is. We are children of God, the infinite love. As God’s children, we are love as well. By praying, we become conscious of the divine nature in all, including ourselves. Upon this Truth, we build our spiritual understanding.

Parallel to this insight, we must accept our responsibility. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength ... Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:30, 31). Prayer is a call to being and doing.

As a Unity representative, I visited Cuba. While at the home of a Truth student, a friend of his came to visit. The visitor felt very cold. At that moment, I saw prayer in action. The host took off the only sweater he had and gave it to his friend. As the newcomer resisted, the student’s words were, “God will give me another one.” With his faith, he put feet to his prayer. That is a lesson I will never forget.

The Bible tells stories about how we can put our prayers on steadfast feet. Take, for example, the bleeding woman. She had faith, prayed, and took action. Her affirmative prayer was that if she could only touch Jesus’ cloak, she would be healed. As the Bible says, “She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his clothes, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped” (Luke 8:44). Taking action, along with praying, healed her.

Myrtle Fillmore, cofounder of Unity, was diagnosed with tuberculosis. She affirmed: *I am a child of God, and therefore I do not inherit sickness*. As she changed her thoughts and attitudes, she was healed from what was considered an incurable disease.

People who have real faith don’t just pray—they act on their prayers. It becomes their way of life. At a little village, there was a long period of drought. The neighbors decided to get together and pray for rain. A little girl came to the meeting carrying an umbrella. The adults laughed at her and asked, “Why are you carrying an umbrella if we are in a drought?” Her response was, “Because we are praying for rain.”

If you ask for something, give thanks and act as if you already have it. Pray and move your feet.

My prayers, thoughts, and actions become one. I am transformed and I support others as they are also transformed.

Rev. Dr. Norma Iris Rosado serves three churches in Puerto Rico.