**Prayers for Sorrow**

By The Rev Anthea Ballam

Do not despair

Do not despair
Though you hear the cries of suffering and sadness around you
Though you walk through the valley of death with fear in your heart
Do not despair

Do not despair
If the one you love has been taken from you
If the divine flower of life has been extinguished
Do not despair

In the darkest hour
In the moment of empty desolation
There shines a light:
You may not see it, but it is there
It is the light of the One that made you
The One that made your beloved
And the one that shaped the world

In the world of shadows there is a seed of light
So when you step into the gloom
Do not be afraid
A hand will guide you
It is my hand and also the hand of another
It is the hand of your angel
It is the hand of the One that made us
Bringing us together in this moment
Now and forever

More glorious than hope
More radiant than joy
We are loved
We are at one with the One
We will walk from the darkness together into the light
Knowing that darkness and light are within us and around us

We are beings from a world of summer and winter, day and night
Put aside fear and sadness
So that we may be healed
By the spirit of all things
Now and forever

Prayer of departure

It is the hour of the final journey
the moment of release
When your soul bids farewell
Leaving us in this world

This is your journey
Just as it was when you arrived
Now... you will recall the return
For you have travelled this path before
It is the voyage of destiny

In this moment
When you and I are together
The material gives way to the spirit
And your spirit
Flies free beyond the elements of earth
Now you can cast off the old
Leaving behind a husk, a shell
In a world we once shared

Here in our time and place
We see your departure
And share the last steps
And in this hour and beyond
We recollect your essence
Cherishing you
In a thousand moments and memories

Now we make our declaration and invocation:

May your journey be sweet
May the way be loving
May the path be joyful
While we who remain on earth
Hold you
Like the most perfect flower
In our heart of hearts.