**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.