



Tell Out My Soul

Even Our Bodies Tell Our Stories

In 6th grade, I started writing poetry and continued doing so well into my 20s. When I was ordained at age 28 and preaching regularly, I stopped writing poetry. Sermons became my creative outlet. When I started going through fertility treatments, I started writing again. I was taught that we should preach from our scars and not our wounds, and I didn't want to burden people about my pain about infertility. We are overwhelmed with scripture that tells us that women who were barren but also faithful would one day conceive. I wanted to provide a counter narrative and dreamed of writing a book. While I never wrote a whole book about it, I coauthored a book with three other clergy women. We wrote about doubt, loss, grief, parenting, grace and infertility.

While that book was in the process of being published, I contracted MRSA and almost died. I was in the hospital for a month. My best friend was in remission from lung cancer and she and I talked about how hard it was to pray when we were so sick. We decided to write a book called: *Irreverent Prayers: Talking to God When You're Seriously Sick*. Before writing that book, I never wrote my own prayers. With so many beautiful prayers out there, what could I possibly add that would be worth hearing? Despite the fact that I had been a priest for 17 years at that point, I had no confidence in my ability to pray. The greatest gift that came from the book is the prayers that readers wrote in response. I realized that our gift was not merely a book of prayers that others could read, it was liberation to pray from places of pain and despair. tens.org



Questions for Reflection:

We are taught that our “gifts” are the things that we are good at. What if we gave from places of vulnerability and fear instead of strength and confidence?



Samantha Vincent-Alexander is the rector of Christ Episcopal Church in Philadelphia and the co-author of *Grace in the Rearview Mirror* and *Irreverent Prayers: Talking to God When You're Seriously Sick*.



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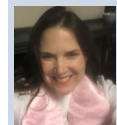
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