

The Prayer of the Six Directions

A Lakota prayer as understood by John Staudenmaier, sj

The West:

Whence the Thunder Beings come, bringing storm and crisis, requiring courage and decisiveness. I face the West and commit myself to the commitments I have made.

The North:

Where the Great White Giant lives, who brings purification and testing. I face the North and commit myself to the purifications that come to me from my commitments.

The East:

The place of the rising sun, source of wisdom to help me find my way. The place of my allies. I face the East and commit myself to my allies and their wisdom.

The South:

The place where the people turn to find life; the place of our dying and hearts' desires. I face the South and commit myself to the longings and the poverty of my desires.

The Sky:

The place of the Grandfather and Father; whose animal is the eagle, the immortal one who sees all. I lift myself to the sky and commit myself to the Grandfather and Father.

The Earth:

The place of the Grandmother and Mother, whose animal is the buffalo, the source of our lives, our food, our lodging, our clothing, our tools, our fuel. I stoop to touch the earth on which I stand as I have pray the directions and commit myself to the Grandmother and Mother.

By turning in the same place of the earth to all the directions I gather all of reality into this one holy place in which I now stand so that all becomes unified in me and I become the holy center so that the prayer comes true, "everything is my relative."

And, as I turn to the four directions, I can call to mind all those whom I have been given to know and love who live in that direction and I can be united with them. So that, as I commit myself to each direction, I share my commitment with all of these kin of mine. And so I pray for them all.