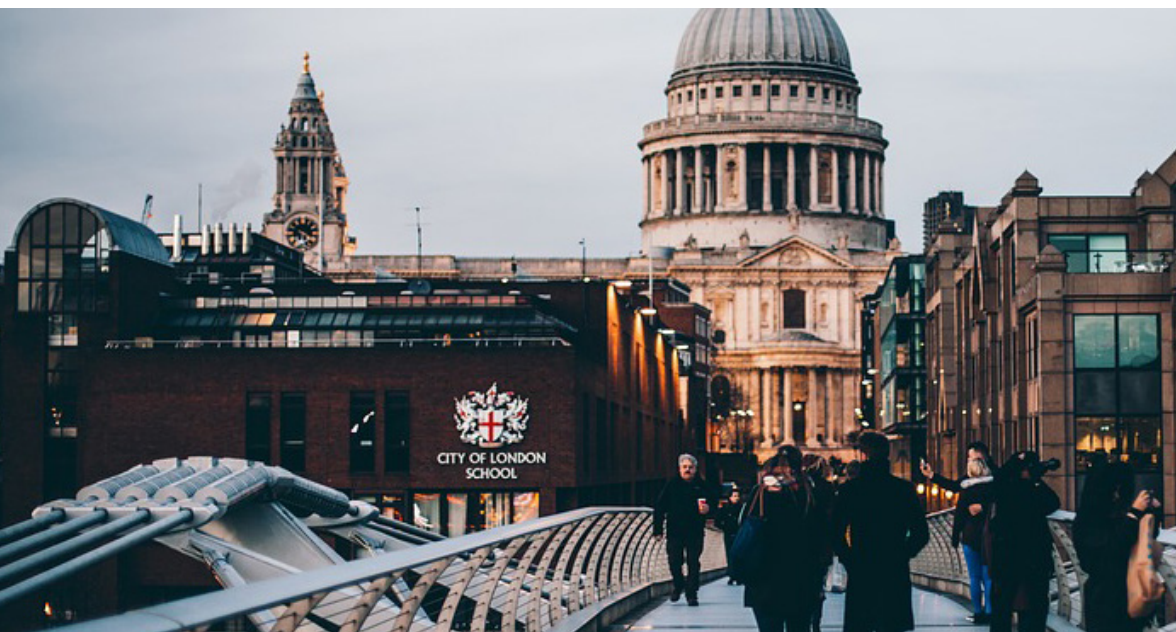




# Swiss Church News

Summer 2017

Swiss Church in London  
Eglise Suisse de Londres  
Schweizerkirche in London  
Chiesa Svizzera a Londra  
Baselgia Svizra a Londra



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Dear Reader,

Nearly nine million people live in London, and we are connected with the world through the internet more than ever before in the history of humanity. Yet we are lonely. Loneliness is a universal phenomenon and it affects everyone at some time. Days can be long when no one calls you on the phone or knocks at the door. Many people go days or even weeks without talking to anyone. Often we associate loneliness with certain stages in life, particularly with old age. The loss of mobility and of a daily structure leads many into isolation. Moving to a new country or city can be a trigger for loneliness. We fail to understand the social codes of our new home or even the language and we have to build up a new social environment. The first years after starting a family or to care for a sick relative can also be isolating as the social network changes and there is much less flexibility to go out and meet people. In reality, loneliness is a phenomenon that affects people across the ages, cultures and classes. It affects more and more young and middle-aged people who do not seem particularly lonely, but if we dig a little bit deeper, we come to understand that loneliness is a widespread feeling.

I remember my utter loneliness after having moved to Strasbourg in France at the age of 26 to start my first job after university. It was so exciting to move abroad and embrace a new culture! I met a lot of people straight away and

made a real effort to go out and become part of a new circle of friends. But despite all my efforts and people's kindness, I was lonely. I would often sit at home in the evening crying. I became depressed, although I did not realise it at the time, and found it hard to get out of bed on some days. However, it is an experience I would not want to miss, because it made me realise that ultimately we are alone. No one can ever truly understand what it means to be you, to experience all the things that you have experienced. For some people, loneliness is a sporadic feeling, for others it is an underlying feeling that follows them all the time.

Loneliness is not the same as solitude. Sometimes we choose to be alone for a time of our choosing because we need time off for our own thoughts. Some people need more alone-time than others. Silent retreats have become very popular to connect with our inner self, and with God and the world. This can be a satisfying, eye opening experience that makes us stronger and more rooted. In contrast, loneliness is the absence of relationships, the impossibility to be with people we trust and feel good to be around. We all have a need to belong; the same as to eat, to sleep and to breathe. Relationships give us emotional health. We can share our problems and joys with others. Every person has a different level of hunger for social interaction. There is no right or wrong and it is important that we recognise our needs and communicate them. Loneliness can lead to serious physical

and mental health damage and is not to be taken lightly.

For this Swiss Church News edition I went to meet people who were happy to speak freely about their loneliness. I am very grateful for the trust they put in me to raise awareness for this important topic. At the Swiss Church, building community is one of our top priorities, and as Symeon describes in his article on page 6, we feel that sharing a meal with others is one way of breaking the vicious circle of loneliness. Everyone is welcome on the first and third Sunday of the month to join us for a sit down lunch after the service. If you miss your Swiss home, come and celebrate Swiss National Day and meet new friends on the 1st of August. Your non-Swiss friends are of course very welcome too! If you wish to speak to someone confidentially about your wellbeing, do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach me on my mobile phone on 07968 530 380 or via email: [carla.maurer@swisschurchlondon.org.uk](mailto:carla.maurer@swisschurchlondon.org.uk) I look forward to hearing from you!

Yours,  
Rev Carla Maurer

# From the Consistoire

## ✚ Farewell by President Johannes Reich

Diplomats are globetrotters. And so are, inevitably, their families. This is why our four years in London will come to an end in July. The Swiss Church played a formative role for our whole family during this time. This is something for which we all are most grateful – especially to our Minister Carla Maurer but also to the members of the Consistoire, the staff, the many volunteers and to all the members of the church we regularly met at the Sunday Services. It was an honour and privilege for me to serve as a member of the Consistoire and as the President of the Swiss Church over those past years. I am well aware that our church will face further challenges in the coming years as the generous

funding by the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches will phase out completely. Still, our church is in a much better position to pass these testing times as it has been some years ago. Our church has regained the required stability and is governed by a team which brings together different talents and perspectives all being committed to a common goal: to provide for a dedicated, lively, inclusive, broad and open church rooted in the tradition of Swiss Protestantism. This is a wonderful task and, I am deeply convinced, a highly worthy cause to be embraced in a spirit of trust, confidence and delight. I trust that all of you and many others will carry

the torch forward: “For God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of self-control.” (2 Timothy 1, 7).



The congregation said goodbye to Lilian Jost, Andrea Vedolin and Johannes Reich and the Benesch family.

## ✚ From the venue



### By Nat Breitenstein

I approach managing venue hire like hosting someone in my own home. I want the clients to feel welcome and comfortable ensuring that everyone's needs are handled with equal weight and respect.

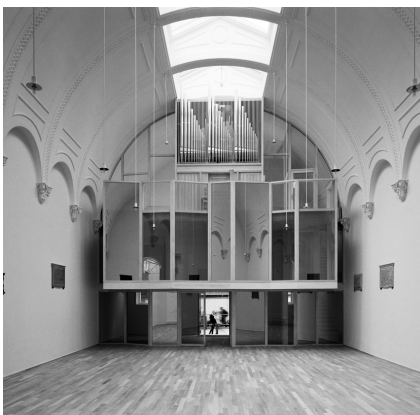
Our most recent bookings – a dinner extravaganza by up-and-coming Chef Edward Lumb from GrubClub, and designer Grace Wales Bonner's show for London Men's Fashion Week (produced here by the marvelous team at Gainsbury and Whiting) – were exemplary.

Having worked as a caterer myself I can foresee what a catering client requires for the operation to run smoothly, like knowing that if a client needs to be out by 11pm when their guests are still seated enjoying one more glass of wine at 10pm, it's going to end later than planned!

Having produced television commercials around the world, I have an affinity for the attitude and approach required when there is 'no room for mistakes'. I am not ruffled by ridiculous requests and don't panic if something goes wrong. A calm venue manager makes for a calm client! I believe that this approach has a part to play in the success of both the recent hires mentioned.

The key to success from the venue side comes from giving it that little extra, the hours problem solving prior to the event and then being flexible and available to trouble shoot calmly when the need arises. It's all in a days work and I love it!

## ✚ Help us maintain the Swiss Church building



Six years have gone since the Swiss Church was reopened in its new glory, renovated by Swiss Architects Christ & Gantenbein. The beauty and serenity of the space attracts many groups to use the church for their events and we can proudly say that the building in 79 Endell Street has become a popular venue that is cherished by a number of businesses, charities and individuals and of course by our church congregation and the wider Swiss community.

Over the past years we have seen a decline in funding from the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches which will come to an end in 2018. Thanks to our dedicated congregation and team

we have found new ways to raise sufficient income for the day to day running of the church. However, the building needs regular maintenance and we urgently need to raise additional funds to get these works done. The walls need painting, blinds installed and the floor treated, just to mention a few. The maintenance of the building costs £250 per day. If you have the possibility to support our building fund or you know people that you could ask, we would very much appreciate your help. You can make donations earmarked 'building fund' to the Swiss Church account.

Account number: 61410512  
Sort code: 40-03-15



# Greetings from Switzerland



**By Salome Fischer (27),  
Science and  
Innovation  
Officer at the  
Swiss Embassy**

When I decided to move to London from Basel, my father told me that there was a Swiss Church and that I should get in touch with them. He is an architect and knew about the renovation by Christ & Gantenbein. He kept asking me on the phone if I had been there! I finally got in touch with the Swiss Church first

through a work colleague at the Embassy. She told me that the Minister sometimes invites young professionals to her house for a party. That is how I met Carla, and soon after also Lili. Together with Nicole I helped organising the Fondue fundraising dinner in February.

I am from the City of Basel, but I have travelled quite a bit. I worked and lived in India, China and Guatemala before settling in London. I love the city and its diversity! Everyone can more or less dress, believe and live as

they wish and there is a community for every interest and hobby one has. Having experienced life in more conservative societies with a lot of do's and don'ts, I value the openness and tolerance even more!

When I was younger we regularly went to church with my parents. Spirituality is important for me, as it gives life more depth and meaning. Places like the Swiss Church do play an important role, not only as a community centre but also as a platform where all kinds of different

opinions and thoughts can be exchanged and discussed.

As a next project, Carla, Lili and I are exploring a pilgrimage path through London for a group from Switzerland. It is a collaborative project with the pilgrimage Minister from Zurich, Michael Schaar and will take place from 20-25 August 2018. I am looking forward to it and I hope we will be able to pass on our enthusiasm we have for this amazing city!

For more informations about the city pilgrimage contact Carla.

## ☑ Nat's recipes

### 'Tegliata di Biete'

Wash the chard by soaking in a large amount of water with at least 3 changes to make sure you get all the grit out!

If you do not have the small young variety make sure you slice the chard off the stalk. You can then prep the stalks for a separate dish (I love having them sauteed on toast with olive oil and a squeeze of lemon! Note, they also need to be boiled first)

Once the chard is clean add to salted boiling water and simmer for approx. 15-20minutes. Drain and once cool enough to handle squeeze out all the excess water with your hands, this takes a little effort too!

After excess water is squeezed out finely chop the chard and sautee in olive oil and onion (I usually start the onion going while I'm squeezing the water out of the chard to give the onion a bit more cooking time)

When the chard is cooked allow to cool and then combined with pine nuts, soaked raisins, grated parmesan and eggs.

In a loose-based tin, spread breadcrumbs and olive oil and then add the chard mixture evenly across the base (you will need to press it out - it won't pour as such). Top with more breadcrumbs and olive oil and bake in 350 degree for approx. 40 minutes while checking that it's not too hot so the breadcrumbs don't burn!

\*If you are going to be pressed for time, clean, boil and chop the chard the day before. This can be kept in the fridge over night and then added to the other ingredients as above.

Please note - once the torte is cooked it does not fare well in the fridge! It can be kept out at room temperature for a day or so as there's nothing in it that will go off and it is best served at room temperature. Enjoy!



#### Ingredients :

- 2 1/2 lbs young Swiss chard (a bit more if the chard is more mature - make sure to remove stalks using only the green leaves which should then equal 2 1/2lbs in weight)
- 1/4 cup Extra virgin olive oil
- 2/3 cup onion chopped fine
- 1 cup grated parmesan
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/4 cup pine nuts
- 1/3 cup yellow or green raisins soaked in water for 30mins
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 10" loose based tin
- 2/3 heaped cup unflavoured bread crumbs, lightly toasted



# Focus: Loneliness

## ✚ 'Let's meet for coffee sometime...'

**By Carla Maurer**

It is a sunny day in June, one of those days that British people call 'summer'. Like many others I put on my summer skirt ignoring the slight chill. It might be the only opportunity to get the summer wardrobe out. I board a train at London Bridge station to meet Gabriella (28)\* in Brighton where she is the head teacher of a language school. Gabriella is from a small suburban town in Switzerland and we start to chat in Swiss German straight away. We are meeting to talk about loneliness.

Gabriella is lonely. She agreed to talk to me because she wants to raise awareness. "People often think that I have a well-established social life", she says. "I live in a closely knit neighbourhood, I know a lot of people and have a successful career with responsibilities. I am an outgoing and communicative person. Yet I am lonely."

Groups of people having a good time together are a common sight in places like London or Brighton. The pubs, cafes and squares are full of people laughing, drinking or having lunch. Gabriella is often part of it. "I am interacting with people every day, but most encounters remain non-committal. 'Let's meet for coffee soon' or 'let's do something together on Sunday' are flowery phrases and in reality that coffee never happens. I feel there is not really a social safety

net that would catch me if things went wrong."

Gabriella has moved around quite a bit before settling in England. She knows from experience that new friendships are often fleeting. They have a short life span and often fade out if someone moves on. At the same time, old childhood friendships suffer because of the geographical distance. "To open up to new people is always a risk", Gabriella says. "There are expectations and hopes that can easily be disappointed and cultural differences complicate things."

I ask Gabriella what the symptoms of loneliness are. "I get really tired and I find it hard to concentrate and perform. Women, especially, tend to internalise loneliness and lose their self-worth. I can get really angry at people when I am disappointed and that is of course not something one wants to see in a person. It is a vicious circle. My impression is also that instead of talking about their loneliness, many people just go out drinking."

A conversation about loneliness is intimate and requires courage. It makes a person vulnerable. Gabriella says that she has tried to speak to new acquaintances. "It is definitely not something people want to hear and they



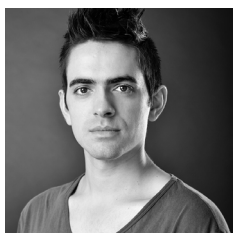
turn away from you. It is a bit like talking about death which is also a big taboo."

Although behaviour is slowly changing, and awareness is increasing, it takes a lot to recognise the loneliness in oneself and in others. What can we do? "When someone reaches out to you, answer", Gabriella says. "If you offer to meet for coffee, mean it, or don't say it. If you are feeling lonely, try not to become bitter. Things will change again."

I have to run to the train station to make my train. My mobile phone vibrates. "Did you make your train?" – "Yes, just about! It was great to meet you, not just for the interview, but generally. Let's meet for coffee sometime." – "Really." – "Yes, really."

*\*Name and place are changed to protect the identity of Gabriella*





## By Symeon Kyriakopoulos

London is a great place with many exciting things to do and interesting people to meet.

Multiculturalism

is one of the reasons that London is great but there is a downside to it. And that is creating deep and meaningful connections. We might meet many people daily, we might lead busy lives but when it comes to meaningful connections things get more difficult. One of the things I greatly miss in my daily life is sharing meals with other people. But not random people. But the ones that I love. I mostly eat on my own even when sharing a flat with others. Now I live with a dear friend which has improved my life a lot, but we still don't manage to eat often together. That's why I was positively surprised that the congregation at the Swiss Church have lunch together after

Sunday service. It's such a soulful and meaningful act.

Loneliness for me is the lack of community and not being part of a community can have a big impact. The purpose of a community is to work together for the greater benefit and to utilise our inherent gifts for the greater good. To feel useful is fundamental to have a feeling of self-worth. The opposite has shown to be one of the greatest causes of anxiety. Community is not just a one-off thing, but a deep connection in your daily life that does not go away. I find that the Swiss Church contributes a lot to create a community with all sort of different events that bring people together. I have very fond memories from these events.

As a freelance Pilates teacher and choreographer I often work alone. Everyone I know has a very different schedule and it is so easy to neglect each other. It's certainly not my intention, but life just drives

you in different directions. We are tricked by technology to believe that communication is very easy. And it is on one level. But we have to be very conscious of how we use it. Otherwise we run the risk that technology uses us. Because of a supposedly easy access to communication, we neglect our responsibility to connect with people both daily and on a deeper level. To work against that and use the technology for my benefit I have been thinking of starting a diary that would remind me to call people I care about more often and meet up with close and extended friends more often. I am also hoping that I can start developing friendships with older adults and perhaps support their daily living (shopping for them, visiting them, spend some time with them) We have to protect relationships in every possible way. Because what are we without each other?

## Prayer

(written by a friend of the Swiss Church, 69 years)



*Speak to me Lord, I am listening!*

*I know you are there but where are your hands, where are your eyes, where is your touch?*

*But then, in a flash of insight - or was it you speaking to me - I realise that I am not the only one languishing in solitude*

*In my city, there are millions of people crowded together, living in high rise flats, knocking against each other without ever meeting each other.*

*And I know what you want Lord: make your people into one family*

*Jesus, my own suffering tells me a lot about the suffering of others and I can hear their cries which are louder than my own*

*I often feel useless and capable of so little but at last I have understood that healing of solitude happens when we reach out to each other.*

*Lord in your mercy hear our prayer*

*Amen*

*There is a party going on downstairs  
and I am alone*

*I switch on the tele but realise that it creates an illusion of presence*

*I hear footsteps on the stairs... maybe someone is coming up to invite me but no-one knocks on my door.*

*Jesus, I need a helping hand, I need someone who touches me, like a bird on my shoulder*

*I need lips on my forehead; the warmth of a kiss.*

*I need a glance so I can see that I exist for someone, a few words which say someone is caring for me*

*But I am alone and the party is going on downstairs.*





## ✚ Parish trip to York

By Andi Stooss, Liestal



Some months ago, when I was planning a 2-week-trip to England as a part of my sabbatical, I asked Carla if

I could pop in some time to get some impressions of the Swiss Church in London. „Why don't you just join in our parish trip to York“, she answered – and this is how I happened to be a part of the Swiss Church travel group to York. And that was indeed a very good decision, as I could get a much deeper insight into the parish in that way, even although being far away from London. Furthermore, I visited some beautiful places in the northeastern part of England, where I most probably wouldn't have gone on my own. So that was a great opportunity!

Having served for 10 years as a minister in the Swiss Reformed parish of Liestal (Baselland), I didn't really have a strong idea about how a Swiss Reformed parish could look like in the largest city of Europe. I was very impressed to find a piece of

Switzerland in England – still very Swiss, but at the same time very metropolitan. A home not only for German speaking people in London, but also to many others, as neighbours, friends or homeless people, open to people of any confession of faith. The travel group, consisting mostly of women with only four men including me, was full of open minded, friendly people. I felt that most of them had spent much precious time together over many years, what resulted in a very laid back, peaceful and amicable atmosphere where I as a « stranger » felt at home at once.

In my view, the Swiss Church is a very good model for our church's future. Small, but yet with a powerful and meaningful influence on society. Not very wealthy, but yet with great ideas how to find new manners of raising money. Theologically open minded, but yet strongly based in the theology of the Bible and of the protestant tradition. Offering to most different kind of people what they are looking for spiritually and simply as human beings.

Oh, I almost forgot to mention some facts about the

trip! On the first day, we had the chance to gain some very interesting insights about the world famous York minster, followed by an touching Evensong ceremony. In the evening, we enjoyed a wonderful dinner in an Italian restaurant. Those who found it too early to go to the hotel spent the rest of the evening in one of York's 365 pubs. On day two, we had the chance to have a ride on the steam train from Pickering to Whitby, right across the beautiful scenery of the Yorkshire Moors. Some of us were adventurous enough to enjoy a walk from Grosmont to the nice little coast town Whitby, where we were rewarded with some gorgeous fish and chips. On day three we could spend some time on our own. Most people of the travel group took the chance to join in a guided tour around York's beautiful city center. Three wonderful and most memorable travel days ended when we arrived in King's Cross Station in the evening – thanks for the great time !



# Events @ the Swiss Church

## Swiss National Day 1st of August from 4-9pm at 79 Endell Street.

There will be family activities in the afternoon and food and drinks in the evening. We will sing the National Anthem and watch the Bundesrat speech. [www.swisschurchlondon.org.uk/community/1august](http://www.swisschurchlondon.org.uk/community/1august)

## Reformation on London's Doorsteps

**Sunday, 27 August**  
Lumen United Reformed Church  
Details tbc (check our webpage)

**Thursday, 14 September, 6pm**  
St Anne's Church CofE  
55 Dean Street, W1D 6AF  
"An experience of Anglican liturgy"

**Sunday, 1 October, 4pm**  
St Columban's Church of Scotland  
Pont Street, SW1X 0BD  
"Scotland and its Reformation"

## "I (don't) believe in God, but..." Exploring Christian faith – An evening course Monday, 25 September and 23 October, 7-9pm

With Rev Carla Maurer, Renate Rothwell and Symeon Kyriakopoulos  
Here is an opportunity to gain some basic biblical knowledge and to form opinions. It is an opportunity to learn, discuss and find words for our own faith.  
£8 per class, including a simple shared meal  
Please sign up: [carla.maurer@swisschurchlondon.org.uk](mailto:carla.maurer@swisschurchlondon.org.uk)

## Annual Mosimann Fundraising dinner Friday, 6 October, 7pm

Join us for a three course meal cooked by Mosimann's club in a unique atmosphere and help us raising funds for the church! Tickets are £120 per person, including a welcome drink, or £100 for Swiss Church members and concessions. Tickets can be purchased at the Swiss Church. Contact [info@swisschurchlondon.org.uk](mailto:info@swisschurchlondon.org.uk) for more details.

## Organ Recitals

**Saturday 9 September, 5pm**  
Lukas Hasler, Austria

**Saturday 21 October, 5pm**  
Ben Sheen, St Thomas, Fifth Avenue, USA

Free entrance, retiring collection.  
[www.swisschurchlondon.org.uk/culture/organ-recitals/](http://www.swisschurchlondon.org.uk/culture/organ-recitals/)

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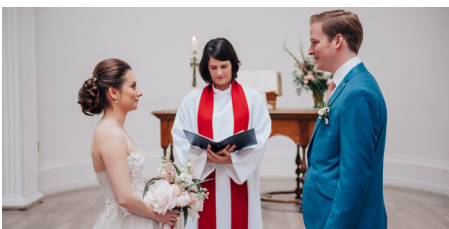
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You can download the latest Swiss Church News on our website.

# Announcements



## Wedding

Anamaria Craciun and Daniel Gartmann have tied the knot on 6 May at the Swiss Church. We wish the newlyweds many happy years together and an adventurous life wherever it may lead. Congratulations, Mr and Mrs Gartmann!

*"For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace." (Isaiah 55:12)*



## Baptism

Mareen Ellen Tomaschett was baptised on 4 June. Anna Felicie Hädrich, and brothers Caio Gian Moufflet and Ezio Felix Moufflet were baptised on 18 June. We wish them every blessing for their life's journey and much happiness for their families.

*"Strive first for the kingdom of God and God's righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:33)*

## Birthday

On 5 June 2017, Serenella Bertin celebrated her 85th birthday. We wish her much happiness and joy for the coming year and God's blessing. Tanti auguri, cara Serenella!

## Obituary

Gertrud (Trudi) Sandeman, born 11 August 1932, passed away on 20 June 2017 at the age of 84.

Trudi was a longstanding member of La Causerie and the Swiss Church and regularly attended concerts. Our thoughts are with her many friends and family.





Swiss Church in London  
Eglise Suisse de Londres  
Schweizerkirche in London  
Chiesa Svizzera a Londra  
Baselgia Svizra a Londra



*(Psalm 25:16-17)*

*Turn to me, Lord, and be merciful to me,  
because I am lonely and weak.  
Relieve me of my worries  
and save me from all my troubles.*

*“Our language has wisely sensed the two  
sides of being alone. It has created the word  
loneliness to express the pain of being alone.  
And it has created the word solitude to express  
the glory of being alone.”*

*(Paul Tillich, German-American  
Protestant theologian, 1886-1965)*

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