



A Passage from *The Brothers Karamazov* by Fyodor Dostoyevsky

Young man, do not forget to pray. Each time you pray, if you do so sincerely, there will be the flash of a new feeling in it, and a new thought as well, one you did not know before, which will give you fresh courage; and you will understand that prayer is education. Remember also: every day and whenever you can, repeat within yourself: "Lord, have mercy upon all who come before you today." For every hour and every moment thousands of people leave their life on this earth, and their souls come before the Lord- and so many of them part with the earth in isolation, unknown to anyone, in sadness and sorrow that no one will mourn for them, or even know whether they had lived or not. And so, perhaps from the other end of the earth, your prayer for his repose will rise up to the Lord, though you did not know him at all, nor he you. How moving it is for his soul, coming in fear before the Lord, to feel at that moment that someone is praying for him, too, that there is still a human being on earth who loves him. And God, too, will look upon you both with more mercy, for if even you so pitied him, how much more will he who is infinitely more merciful and loving than you are. And he will forgive him for your sake.

Dostoyevsky was not only a great Russian novelist, but one of the greatest Christian storytellers of all time. A constant theme in his writing is the nightmare quality of unredeemed existence and the heartbreaking glory of the incarnation, whereby all human hurts can find their place in the living and dying of Christ our risen Saviour.