



# FAITH IN ACTION

“Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you ...” — 3 John 1:2 (NIV)

Olga Teslenko, Mary Raber, Vera Umnova, Natal'ia Svistun (Department Chair for Christian Education) and Tat'iana Filipova at Odessa Theological Seminary graduation, June 18, 2021. The three women in blue academic gowns each received a BA in Applied Theology (Christian Education). Photo by Sharon Norton.

## Refrigerator pictures prompt prayers

By Laurie Oswald Robinson

**M**ary Raber, who recently retired from serving in Ukraine with Mennonite Mission Network, feels deeply grateful that her prayer card found a place on a refrigerator in Kansas.

“A woman kindly wrote to me and told me my photo is on her fridge and that she prays for me every time she reaches for her daily food,” Raber said. “Because she took the time to pray and to let me know she was praying, I knew that, no matter what I might be experiencing, I was being prayed for. I hoped that she never went on a diet!”

As a result of those prayers, and others, Raber said her spirit was often filled with the “manna” of strength and peace. And the practical provisions she needed to fulfill her ministry at Odessa Theological Seminary appeared seemingly out of nowhere. Those sudden, unexpected uplifts happened frequently, as she served with Mission Network from 2009 to 2021, as a theological educator, administrator and writer/editor.

Because prayers are often uttered in the hiddenness of someone’s heart and don’t always yield immediate, dramatic results, God’s people can be tempted to think of prayer as Plan B. This should not be so, however, said Raber, who

believes that the countless prayers of supporters, friends and staff members empowered her ministry when energies waned.

For example, Raber’s spirits dropped as she prepared to leave

terrible at,” Raber remarked. “But, then, a light bulb went on, and I remembered, *Oh yeah, I can ask someone to pray for me ...* So I contacted a praying friend in the States and asked her to pass around my need for calm organization. It’s not that everything got super easy, but by reaching out to her and trusting she would be faithful to pray, I immediately felt better, at least psychologically.”

And the shipping process turned out to be manageable.

Raber said that, on the mission field, she learned that “there is not a blessed thing we do alone, and every detail is mediated through people. This is what our Christian creed calls the communion of the saints. We are part of a big community, and we don’t always take that seriously enough.”

Praying for others is a practice that does not have to be perfect, or complex, to reach God’s heart and to touch people’s lives.

“The best advice I ever heard on the subject is this:

pray as you can and not as you can’t,” Raber said. “Don’t be self-conscious or think it has to be a big deal. Make it routine. If you can’t do a big prayer, do a little one. Just go ahead and do it. Those so-called little prayers have made a huge difference in my life.” ■

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Mary Raber between Aleksandra and Viktor Sapegin on graduation day. Viktor was awarded a master’s degree.

Ukraine and return home to St. Louis, Missouri. She felt overwhelmed by the chores of sorting out her belongings and collecting the official documents required by the shipping company in Kyiv, Ukraine.

“This is the kind of project I am

**PRAY** that God’s people prioritize daily time to pray for mission workers.



# 7 ways to pray for mission workers

1. **Place** a worker's prayer card on your refrigerator or bedroom mirror to be prompted to pray regularly for that person.
2. **Become** a Mission Network prayer partner, and receive the monthly *Prayer Vine* newsletter. Sign up at [MennoniteMission.net/Prayer](http://MennoniteMission.net/Prayer).
3. **Use** the *Mission Mosaic* book as a prayer guide for mission workers and associates. Order a free copy at [Mennonitemission.net/Mosaic](http://Mennonitemission.net/Mosaic).
4. **Create** a family prayer calendar that includes pictures of mission workers and other original artwork from your children, and use it for prompts during family prayer.
5. **Gather** weekly or monthly with a small group to engage in prayer for various mission workers, along with morning coffee or evening dessert.
6. **Keep** a prayer card of mission workers near your Bible or devotional materials, and intercede aloud for provision and protection.
7. **Send** an email or a letter of encouragement to mission workers, including the ways you are praying for them and/or asking for specific prayer requests. (Find email addresses and addresses in *Mission Mosaic*).

**"A**s a former mission worker, I can testify that the prayers from people supporting us were greatly needed and appreciated. Mission work is incredibly fulfilling, as well as challenging. So knowing that people are standing with you before God's throne strengthens one's spirit and resolve to keep going. Revelation 5:8 describes how the prayers of the saints are like golden bowls full of incense in the throne room. Prayer draws us closer to God as we pray, and God's senses are touched by it like incense touches our sense of smell. Never underestimate the impact of your prayers for mission workers!"



**Sharon Norton**  
Co-director for Africa and Europe

Cut out or fold over, post and use this verse for contemplation and prayer over the next month.

The Spirit  
intercedes with sighs too deep for words

Helps  
us  
in  
our  
weakness.

— Romans 8:26

Be the Gospel.



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