

Opening worship

Prayer: O God, lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth.
Lead us from despair to hope, from fear to trust.
Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace.
Let peace fill our hearts, our world, our universe. **Amen.**

Satish Kumar

Psalm 146

Alleluia. Praise the Lord, O my soul: while I live I will praise the Lord; *

as long as I have any being, I will sing praises to my God.

**Put not your trust in princes, nor in any human power *
for there is no help in them.**

When their breath goes forth, they return to the earth; *
on that day all their thoughts perish.

**Happy are those who have the God of Jacob for their help, *
whose hope is in the Lord their God;**

Who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them; *
who keeps his promise for ever;

**Who gives justice to those that suffer wrong *
and bread to those who hunger.**

The Lord looses those that are bound; *
the Lord opens the eyes of the blind;

**The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; *
the Lord loves the righteous;**

The Lord watches over the stranger in the land; he upholds the orphan and widow; *
but the way of the wicked he turns upside down.

**The Lord shall reign for ever, *
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Alleluia.**

Glory to God, Source of all being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit; *
**as it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever.
Amen.**

Reading: Deuteronomy 26:1-11

When you have come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, 'Today I declare to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our ancestors to give us.' When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the LORD your God, you shall make this response before the LORD your God: 'A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labour on us, we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me.' You shall set it down before the LORD your God and bow down before the LORD your God. Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house.

Canticle: A Song of the Heavenly City:

Refrain: **By the river stood the tree of life, with healing for all the nations.**

1. I saw no temple in the city. *
for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.
2. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it*
for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb.
3. By its light the nations shall walk,*
and the rulers of the earth shall bring their glory into it.
4. Its gates shall never be shut by day, nor shall there be any night;*
they shall bring into it the glory and honour of the nations.

5. I saw the river of the water of life, bright as crystal,*
flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb.
6. And either side of the river stood the tree of life, yielding its fruit
each month,*
and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.
7. The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be there, and his
servants shall worship him;*
and they shall see his face and his name shall be on their
foreheads.

**To the One who sits on the throne and to the Lamb*
be blessing and honour and glory and might, for ever and
ever. Amen.**

**By the river stood the tree of life, with healing for all the
nations.**

Revelation 21: 22-26; 22:1-4

Prayers:

Lord Jesus, help us by your grace,
to banish fear from our hearts, that we may embrace each of your
children as our own sister and brother;
to welcome migrants and refugees with joy and generosity, while
responding to their many needs; to realise that you call all people
to your holy mountain, to learn the ways of peace and justice;
to share of our abundance as you spread a banquet before us;
to give witness to your love for all people, as we celebrate the
many gifts they bring.

We praise you and give you thanks for the family you have called
together from so many people. We see in this human family, a
reflection of that life and love to which you are drawing all
creation, and in which you share within the mystery of the Holy
Trinity, in whom we make our prayer: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (altered)

Silence for our own unspoken prayers.....

Wilderness God: whose Son was a displaced person in
Bethlehem, a refugee in Egypt, and had nowhere to lay his head
in Galilee. Bless all who have nowhere to lay their head today,
who find themselves strangers on earth, pilgrims to they know not

where, facing rejection, closed doors, suspicion and fear. Give them companions in their distress, hope in their wandering, and safe lodging at their journey's end. And make us a people of grace, wisdom and hospitality, who know that our true identity is to be lost, until we find our eternal home in you. Through Christ, our rejected yet risen Lord. **Amen.**

*From St Martin in the Fields, London - commended by
Archbishop Justin Welby*

The Lord's Prayer: *(in whatever language you prefer)*

May the grace of the Holy Spirit enlighten our hearts and minds. Alleluia. Amen.

Learning to see and respond as God does

"I do believe that God gives sight to those who would see; that he cures the extraordinary blindness from which we all suffer in different aspects of our lives and personalities; that he grants the great gift of imagination if we will dare but ask him for it. And imagination is power."

(Francis Wilson Professor of Economics, Cape Town University in 1975 quoted in Focus on Refugees 2)

The Humility of God:

" 'The Word was made flesh' (John 1:14 These words give expression to that heavenly mystery... that the eternal God has humbly bent down and lifted the dust of our nature into unity with his own person "

Bonaventure: Sermon on the Nativity of the Lord
Col 1:15 Christ is the first born of all creation –Christ is the masterpiece of love in midst of creation designed for love.

God's deepest purpose in creation is to enable the Incarnation, and thus the enfolding of all things into the life of the Holy Trinity. Creation is preparation for incarnation which God willed from all eternity.

Love overflows from heart of God through all creation and back to God, gathering everything into the heart of God the Holy Trinity . This means the ultimate reality is loving relationship. It is dynamic, not static. Trinity as Dance. "Lord of the Dance"

Rom 8:22 “We know the whole creation groaning in labour pains til now.”

Philippians 2: 1 – 8 “.....Let the same mind be in you, that was in Christ Jesus....”

Imaginative prayer with gospel stories – Allow the Holy Spirit to lead you. Be one of the characters, or an on-looker. Absorb how Jesus sees and responds

As we’re transformed more fully to clearly reflect God’s image we play our part in transformation of the world.

Praying with news media – Recognising Christ in vulnerable, marginalised, flawed and broken people “Just as you did it to one of the least... (*Matthew 25: 40*)

Including the wounded, flawed and broken areas of our own lives, communities, institutions etc. “Just as I am O Lamb of God I come”.

Where is God in this situation? What is God doing? What is my /our response?

“The humility of God is really about God’s relationship to the world, and God’s fidelity to the world, even when everything in the world seems to fail”

*Ilia Delio OSF “The Humility of God” –
St Anthony Messenger Press*

Men go to God when they are sore bestead,
Pray to him for succour, for peace, for bread,
For mercy for them sick, sinning, or dead;
All men do so, Christian and unbelieving.

Men go to God when He is sore bestead,
Find him poor and scorned, without shelter or bread,
Whelmed under weight of the wicked, weak, the dead;
Christians stand by God in his hour of grieving.

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945)
Letters and Papers from Prison*

Tools for prayer around social justice issues

Bible Passages about Social Justice:

If in any of the towns in the land that the Lord your God is giving you there is a fellow-Israelite in need, then do not be selfish and refuse to help him. Instead, be generous and lend him as much as he needs. *(Deuteronomy 15:7-8)*

I, the Lord, command you to do what is just and right. Protect the person who is being cheated from the one who is cheating him. Do not ill-treat or oppress foreigners, orphans, or widows; and do not kill innocent people in this holy place. *(Jeremiah 22:3)*

No, the Lord has told us what is good. What he requires of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God. *(Micah 6:8)*

Rich people who see a brother or sister in need, yet close their hearts against them, cannot claim that they love God.
(1 John 3:17)

Suppose there are brothers or sisters who need clothes and don't have enough to eat. What good is there in your saying to them, "God bless you! Keep warm and eat well!" – if you don't give them the necessities of life? *(James 2:15-16)*

Learn to do right. See that justice is done — help those who are oppressed, give orphans their rights, and defend widows.
(Isaiah 1:17)

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind; to set free the oppressed and announce that the time has come when the Lord will save his people." *(Luke 4:18-19)*

None of you should be looking out for your own interests, but for the interests of others. *(1 Corinthians 10:24)*

Share your belongings with your needy fellow Christians, and open your homes to strangers. *(Romans 12:13)*

Don't take advantage of the poor just because you can; don't take advantage of those who stand helpless in court. The Lord will

argue their case for them and threaten the life of anyone who threatens theirs. (*Proverbs 22:22-23*)

There are very many more! For suggestions see https://www.openbible.info/topics/social_justice

Prayer Resources on Line:

From Roman Catholic sources:

Fr. Richard Rohr OFM, a globally recognised ecumenical teacher is a Franciscan priest of the New Mexico Province and founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation (CAC) in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Fr. Richard's teaching is grounded in the Franciscan alternative orthodoxy—practices of contemplation and self-emptying, expressing itself in radical compassion, particularly for the socially marginalized.

Center for Action and Contemplation <https://www.cac.org>

Daily: Meditations@cac.org; Weekly: Summary@cac.org

Praying with the Jesuit Refugee Service <https://en.jrs.net/Prayers>

From Anglican & Ecumenical sources:

United Society Partners in the Gospel USPG:
<http://www.uspg.org.uk/resources/prayerdiary/>

A Heart for Mission – 5 week study looking at the Anglican Communion's Five Marks of Mission

Church Mission Society:
<http://www.churchmissionsociety.org/resources>

Church Urban Fund: <https://www.cuf.org.uk/lent-course>

Christian Aid:
<http://www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/churches/daily-readings>

Closing Worship

Hymn: **Christ's is the world in which we move;
Christ's are the folk we're summoned to love;
Christ's is the voice which calls us to care,
and Christ is the one who meets us here.**
*To the lost Christ shows his face,
to the unloved he gives his embrace,
to those who cry in pain or disgrace
Christ makes, with his friends, a touching place.*

**Feel for the people we must avoid -
strange or bereaved or never employed.
Feel for the women and feel for the men
who fear that their living is all in vain.**
To the lost.....

**Feel for the parents who've lost their child,
feel for the women whom men have defiled,
feel for the baby for whom there's no breast,
and feel for the weary who find no rest.**
To the lost.....

**Feel for the lives by life confused,
riddled with doubt, in loving abused;
feel for the lonely heart, conscious of sin,
which longs to be pure but fears to begin.**
To the lost.....

Tune: Dream Angus (Scottish traditional)
©1989 WGRG, Iona Community, Govan, Glasgow G51 3UU, Scotland

Reading: Isaiah: 58:6-9

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and

he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

Prayers: Eternal God, in whose perfect realm no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, and no strength known but the strength of love: so guide and inspire the work of those who seek your kingdom that all your people may find their security in that love which casts out fear and in the fellowship revealed to us in Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

Adapted from Parish Prayers©Frank Colquhoun 1967

A Prayer for the People of Syria from Christian Aid

Holy God, creator of the world and the nations
We bring before you all those caught up in the conflict in Syria.
We pray for an immediate ceasefire, for an end to violence against all civilians. Give humanitarian organisations the space to assess the needs of those living in poverty and insecurity.
Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

We pray for those who are experiencing the pain of personal loss, for families who are mourning the loss of loved ones.
Comfort especially those who have friends and family members missing. We pray for those caught up in the cycle of violence and bloodshed: give them a just peace. We pray for those forced to flee their homes: keep them safe on their travels and arrival in foreign lands.
Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

We pray for Christian Aid partners in neighbouring countries: guide them in their response to this situation.
We pray for those in positions of power who have the means to make a difference: Guide the United Nations, and governments whose intervention might bring about peace.
Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

We pray for the future of all countries where people have been willing to challenge unfair and unjust governments
We ask that the outcome will be a better future for all, and that the poor and marginalised will experience new lives of dignity and hope.
Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

And we pray for ourselves, that we will not ignore their pleas for help That we may play our part in bringing about the change that they want to see. We make our prayer in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Responsive Reading: *Matthew 25: 34-36, 40;*

Come you that are blessed of my Father,

Inherit the kingdom prepared for you.

I was hungry and you gave me food,

I was thirsty and you gave me drink.

I was a stranger and you welcomed me,

I was naked and you clothed me.

I was sick and you took care of me.

I was in prison and you visited me.

When you did it to one of the least of these, who are members of my family

You did it to me.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore.

Amen.



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