

A Liturgy for Those Battling Fear

Do not be afraid, your angels proclaimed
to those shaking shepherds,
and you whisper the same, generation after generation,
to us.

But disease ravages our world,
heartbreak turns commonplace,
and nameless grief settles deep in our bones.
Is it any wonder we tremble so easily?

You remember that we are made of dust and breath,
and how our unnaturally natural tendency is to cower
in the dark places of our minds,
pointing fingers at one another,
forgetting the shadow of safety you offer under your wings,
wide enough to hold us all.

Our groaning is not hidden from you, O Holy Father.
Do not ignore our weeping cries
and quaking knees
and besieged hearts.
For you alone hold power to pull us from the miry pit,
the one from which fear has stolen our ladder.

How long, O God?
When will we see your goodness in the land of the living?

Remind us, Jesus, that you lay sleeping in the boat
in the middle of the storm at sea.
You are neither surprised nor distressed
by the mounting chaos.
You are not a God who panics.

O Christ, who defeated the sting of death
upon the cross, be near
and calm the sea within us with one word,
so that we may then comfort others
with the same comfort you give to us.
Out of your lovingkindness you do not condemn our fear,
but rather call us into something far more magnificent:
wild, glorious trust in the One who holds
the whole world together.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Luke 2:8-10

Genesis 2:7

Psalms 103:14

Psalms 91:1-4

Psalms 36:7

Psalms 38:9

Psalms 27:3

Psalms 40:2

Psalms 13

Psalms 27:13

Mark 4:35-41

1 Cor. 15:55-57

2 Cor. 1:3-4

A Liturgy for *Those Consumed by Media*

Amidst the glowing screens
and talking heads
and blaring headlines
and laymen-turned-experts,
our hearts grow weary and fingers turn sore
as we refresh our feeds, scrolling to numb the swelling tide
rising within, threatening to topple and overwhelm.

Liberate us, O God, from our gluttonous tendencies
to hoard knowledge
and feast upon information as if it is our daily bread.
Remind us, O Father, that our screens are
but clouded mirrors.
Sift the important news meant to equip us
toward movement and compassion
from the distorted facts and fear-mongering headlines,
designed only to divide and destroy the hope we have in you.
Keep us from banging our gongs and clanging our cymbals.
If we post with the tongues of men and angels,
but have not love,
help us to log out.

O Loving God, you see the gravity with which
the world's suffering pulls us inward.
Extend us grace to grieve for the broken world you adore,
then wash our faces and turn, clear-eyed, to our windows,
through which we can see the trees still clapping
the sparrows still flying
the stones still crying out praise to you.

Grant us wisdom to discern what you deem true
and right
and noble
and pure
and praiseworthy
and lovely,
and give us grace to share accordingly.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Matthew 6:9–13
1 Corinthians 13:12
John 10:10
Romans 16:17–19
1 Corinthians 13:1–3
Isaiah 55:12
Luke 19:40
Philippians 4:8

A Liturgy for Those Worried for their Physical Health

Every ache and pain
sniffle and cough
fever and shallow breath is a threat,
enlarging in our minds until we are consumed with anxiety
for the health of our bodies.

Our interior selves become children afraid of the dark,
covers pulled up to our noses,
eyes darting from shadow to shadow, flinching at every sound,
until we are certain there is a monster in the closet
or a bad guy on the stairs.

O God, may our minds not run away with what-ifs or irrational fears.
Help us breathe, wait, and listen to the bodies you formed
from the dust of the ground and the breath of your nostrils.
Help us observe our symptoms (or lack thereof) correctly.
Help us discipline our minds to not despair at worst case scenarios,
but instead, to accurately interpret our current moment,
seeking your wisdom for the next rational step.

May we trust you with our bodies that creak and groan with mortality.
May our physical fragility remind us of our dependence on You.
May we rejoice in our weakness, knowing that you are strong.
May we develop a robust courage that does not fear
our weakening bodies.
May we look forward to the day when we will receive everlasting bodies
and be reunited with you.

God, you are the One who forgives our sins and heals us of disease.
We ask for physical healing when we need it,
for a correct perspective of the brevity of sickness in light of eternity,
for deep joy to well up in our souls because we know we are secure,
for hearts that look forward to boundless shalom.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Genesis 2:7

Psalms 94:19

2 Timothy 1:7

James 1:5

Romans 8:18-30

2 Cor. 12:9-10

1 Cor. 15:35-58

Psalms 103:1-3

A Liturgy for Those Concerned for Loved Ones

O High Priest, who can sympathize
with our weaknesses,
who had flesh-and-blood community
of your own,
you point our eyes to the lilies of the field
and birds of the air
and remind us of your detailed care.

Are not our loved ones more valuable than they?

How marvelous that you have given us
others to love.
But Lord, with this great love comes
sorrow upon sorrow,
as we confront each other's mortality
and bodies broken since the exit from Eden.

Remind us, Jesus, that for those who know you,
no sickness ends in death.
You always live to intercede for us,
so increase our faith to believe
you do the same for our people
when we cannot.
Multiply our hours and energy
to serve our families
with an attitude of humility and selflessness,
and help us to love from a place without fear.

For we know:
There is no fear in love.
There is no fear in love
There is no fear in love.

We ache for those far away,
whom we cannot embrace the way we want to.
We grieve for those we love who live alone,
whose tears we cannot dry with our sleeves.
We lament for those prone to sickness,
whom we ask that you anoint
with your healing touch,
O God of Mercy.
We mourn for those precious ones
who do not know you yet,
in front of whom we will continually
exalt your praises and
serve and love ever deeper.

We rejoice in the knowledge that one day,
when sin and sickness and sorrow subside,
we will love and know each other as we are
fully loved and known.
Until then, Gracious God, help us to care
for our loved ones
wholeheartedly and freely,
trusting that the One who counts the sparrows
will hold them fast.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Hebrews 4:15
Matthew 6:26–30
John 11:4
Hebrews 2:14–15
Hebrews 7:25
Philippians 2:1–11
1 John 4:18
Luke 8:49–55
Psalms 145
1 Corinthians 13:12
Revelation 21:4
Luke 12:6–7

A Liturgy for Those Who Feel Stuck

We have placed the weight of the world's suffering
upon our shoulders
instead of yours, O Deliverer.
We are mired in hesitation,
overwhelmed by stagnancy.
Our city groans with need,
suffering multiplies by the hour,
and it is not the call of your children to ignore our neighbors' cries.

*But, O Savior, how do we wash another's feet
when we cannot touch?*

Where our understanding falters,
where our knowledge dwindles,
where our expertise ends,
O Lord, you meet us there.
Your word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path
when we cannot see the next right step.
O Loving God, you have said this is your will:
to be joyful always
to pray continually
to give thanks
to do justice
to love kindness
to walk humbly with you.
Our portion is you and your redemptive work.

Show us how to be your ambassadors to this hurting world.
Teach us how to use our hands and resources when words fall short.
Define your ministry of reconciliation for each of us, Jesus.
Bless those who have not the time or privilege of feeling stuck:
those on medical frontlines
those stocking shelves
those teaching their children
those caring for the vulnerable
those turning the gears of our beloved city.

O Author and Perfecter of our faith, you use us
to write a beautiful story amid crisis.
As parts of your body, appointed by the same Spirit,
we do not receive your grace in vain,
and trust we have everything we need to abound
in every good work.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Psalms 3:8

Mark 12:30-31

John 13:12-17

1 Cor. 13:8

Psalms 119:105

1 Thess. 5:16-18

Micah 6:8

Psalms 16:5-8

Lam. 3:22-24

2 Cor. 5:16-21

Hebrews 12:2

1 Cor. 12:12-31

2 Cor. 6:1

2 Cor. 9:8

A Liturgy for Those Who Mourn a Loss

We pause and hold unashamed space
for these days beset with disappointments
 we could not see coming,
and reminders of what could have been.
O Loving Maker, restore our belief that you redeem
 what is lost,
but also, that our grief is safe with you,
and that lamenting is not a waste of our precious time.

O Christ, you do not scorn our disappointment,
but rather remind us that you are a God who was enrobed
 in human flesh
and has felt salt run down your own divine face.

*O, how glorious! How wonderful to have a Savior who
 understands!*

Hope deferred makes our hearts sick,
so we ask that you remind us, O Sweetest Friend,
that what we grieve—
the canceled event
the lost job
the health of a loved one or ourselves
the paused relationship
the postponed trip
the end of a project that stirred our hearts—
was never the source of our hope to begin with.
You say we are blessed when we mourn,
 for we shall be comforted.
Come near and be our deepest consolation now, Father.
Tend to our grief-stricken hearts,
 and lead us into the warmth of your relief,
the tenderness of your word,
the marrow-deep peace of your presence,
the greater intimacy we can enjoy with our Suffering Savior.

We mourn for the loss and death of our good dreams,
 O Creator,
and ask that you resurrect them, if your gracious will allows.
But for now, we look toward the day
when every tear will be gone
and we meet you, the One in whom all our hope resides.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Deut. 30:3

John 11:33–36

Matthew 26:38

Proverbs 13:12

Psalms 25:5

Psalms 42:11

Matthew 5:4

Psalms 119:50

Revelation 21:4

A Liturgy for Those Falling Asleep

Meet me, O Lord, as I close my eyes,
ready to exchange toil for rest,
noise for quiet,
exhaustion for restoration.

The troubles of my heart have multiplied,
but I lay each one at the feet of the One
who never slumbers.

O God of Refuge, you are greater than my
buzzing thoughts
and caffeinated veins
and unchecked lists
and regrets from a day in which I feel I did
nothing great for you.

I do not earn my sleep, but rather receive it like a child
from you, Abba, who calls me Beloved.

The predictability of sleep falters now,
but I rest in the One who is the same yesterday,
tonight, and forever.

Remind me, O Christ, that you will finish
what I have left undone.

I lay under the starry hosts that you call by name,
and trust that when I awake, I am still with you.

O Great Shepherd, thank you for leading this worn body
beside quiet waters,

for asking me to cease striving.

Tonight, lead me in the way everlasting,
so when I awake, I can love my neighbors

and serve your world

with readiness

and vigor

and rested love.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Matt. 11:28–30

Psalm 25:17

Psalm 121

Psalm 4:8

Psalm 127:2

Romans 8:15

Hebrews 13:8

Isaiah 40:26

Psalm 139:18

Psalm 23:1–3

Psalm 139:24

A Liturgy for Those Contemplating Mortality

In a time where our bodies feel fragile,
our time feels short,
our inevitable end looms largely before us,
we remember that from dust we came
and to dust we will return.

We feel it now more than ever, O Lord.
Unrest and uncertainty reveal to us that
you are sovereign and we are not.
Our bodies groan with sickness and fear,
longing to die so we can be reborn.

*Who will deliver us from this body of death?
Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

Though our bodies are perishable,
they will be raised imperishable.
Though we are sown in weakness,
we will be resurrected by the power of the Spirit.

Holy Father, may the knowledge of our mortality
not terrify us.
Instead, may this unveiling relieve us to remember
that we depend on You.
Though our bodies will expire, help us fix our eyes
on what is unseen.
We are at your mercy, O God.
Thank you for this opportunity to remember
our humanity.

We need your help, God,
to rejoice in everlasting hope,
to persevere through temporary suffering,
to be unceasing in prayer.

With faithful trembling, we know that the perishable
cannot inherit the imperishable.
This is certainly a mystery,
but though our bodies die
we will not be swallowed up by death.
We will all be changed.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Genesis 3:19

Psalms 31:14–15

Romans 8:22–23

Romans 7:24–25

1 Cor. 15:42–58

2 Cor. 4:16–18

Romans 12:12

A Liturgy for Those Struggling with Food

For those stuck at home, whose unhealthy eating habits are creeping back in, you are not alone.

For those triggered by a lack of control to return to disordered eating, you are safe and you are seen.

For those who eat to assuage a troubled heart, there is a comfort beyond what food can give.

For those who feel like they cannot escape from their thoughts, there is freedom in the Spirit who quiets our hearts.

For those who feel like they keep failing, there is abundant grace to stumble and fall.

O God, in this unprecedented time where we feel out of control and struggle to manage unstructured time and have access to our pantries at all hours, help us to care for our Temples with your kindness.

Prompt us to seek help when we need it. Teach us to nourish our bodies when we feel ashamed of them.

Help us turn away from the deceptive voice of loneliness and run to you as our true friend and companion.

When we are disgusted by our appetites, help us embrace and accept our hunger with gentleness.

When we are threatened by food, help us remember that food is not the enemy.

When we are tempted to starve ourselves, help us to ask you for the courage to be filled.

When we are tempted to eat too much, help us pause, breathe, and acknowledge that we are satisfied in you.

When we turn to food for comfort, help us acknowledge our spiritual hunger and surrender our emptiness to you.

May we pull our struggles and shame into the light, sharing our burdens with one another and receiving the help we can't find alone.

O God, you satisfy us as with the richest of foods.

Thank you for providing our daily bread. We have tasted and seen that you are good.

May everything we eat bring glory to you. May we choose foods that give nourishment and delight.

May we eat slowly, savoring the gifts of taste and flavor.

May we swallow with gratefulness, receiving strength and energy with joy.

May we eat in community, trusting that food is enjoyed more at your table with your people.

May we celebrate fullness, knowing that it is you who provides.

May we fill our bodies, our minds, and our souls with good things.

May we hunger and thirst for righteousness, knowing we will be filled.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Zephaniah 3:17

2 Cor. 3:17

1 Cor. 6:19

Matthew 4:4

Matthew 5:6

1 Cor. 10:31

Psalms 107:9

Galatians 6:1-2

James 5:16

Psalms 63:1-8

Matthew 6:11

Psalms 34:8-10

Acts 2:46

A Liturgy for Those Struggling to Believe

When we question everything we thought
we once believed,
help us, gentle Teacher, to be brave seekers of truth.
When doubts multiply in our mind,
help us not to be afraid but curious.
When questions arise about your existence,
your goodness, your salvation,
help us press in and believe that you can be found.

Teacher, we're longing for someone to tell us
what to believe.
We arrogantly measure you with our own intellect,
looking for answers in books, academia,
pop culture, and critics.
But faith is impossible when we seek it within
the realm of our understanding.
We become fools when we claim to be wise.
So help us reach beyond what we know.
Help us step into wonder
into learning
into trusting you for flourishing.
The adventure of faith is there.

We are like sheep without a shepherd, O God.
We have listened to the wisdom of the world.
We have allowed ourselves to become discipled
by culture.

Would you convict us of any unrighteousness
suppressing the truth?
Would you gently lead us
to the freedom of confession?
Would you give us humility to accept
that some parts of reality are beyond
our understanding?
Would you help us hold space for not knowing?
For being wrong?
For trusting you with what we don't understand?
Give us a spirit of humility all the days of our life
so we keep coming back to you.

God, your truth vaults across the skies
from sunrise to sunset.
Please warm our hearts to faith.
We wait for you,
though you may be hiding your face.
We wait though the discomfort of doubt
threatens to unravel us.
We believe that truth exists,
though it seems impossible.

*With man, this is impossible.
With God, all things are possible.*

Help us seek truth with urgency and wonder,
with childlikeness instead of childishness,
until a foundation of faith, sturdy and timeless,
is revealed.

Keep us alive in our famine of faith until
we become what we believe.
In weakness, yes, we do believe.
Help our unbelief.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Matt. 7:7-8
Ps. 139:1-6, 17-18
Romans 1:21-23
Jeremiah 17:7-9
Isaiah 53:6
Psalms 19:1-14
Psalms 27:13-14
Hebrews 11:1-3
Ephesians 5:12-14
Matthew 19:26
Matthew 18:2-4
Matthew 9:27-30
Mark 9:23-25

A Liturgy for *Those Looking for Joy*

Inspired by Henri Nouwen's The Return of the Prodigal Son

When the world expects sadness,
help us, Creator of Light, to look for pockets of joy.
When the world is overwhelmed by darkness,
give us eyes to see little delights.
When the world is caught up in sensationalism,
help us speak of the hidden wonders we've discovered,
holding them up for others to see.

The sacred stillness of the early morning,
a quiet moment in the sun,
small children laughing on scooters,
trees bursting into bloom and lillies opening at the corner bodega.
These "small joys" reveal the truth of the world we live in.

No, there is not peace everywhere
and all pain has not been removed.
But there are still people returning home,
voices that pray,
moments of forgiveness,
signs of hope.
We don't have to wait until all is well
to celebrate the glimpses of your Kingdom at hand.

Let us not deny sadness,
but transform it into fertile soil for more joy.
Let us not deny the darkness,
but choose to live in the light.
Cynics seek darkness wherever they go,
but joy is the mark of the people of God.

Help us discipline ourselves to choose joy
for the reward is joy itself.
Help us renew our minds until they default to joy and not fear,
for there is so much to frighten us.
Help us believe that the Light can be trusted,
for there is so much darkness to mislead us.

Jesus, you are both the Man of Sorrows and the Man of Complete Joy,
help us to hold both sorrow and joy in the ways you've shown us.
Help us to remain in your love
so that your joy may be in us
and our joy may be complete.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Philippians 4:4-9
Psalms 22
Psalms 19:1-2
John 14:27
2 Corinthians 6:4-10
Ephesians 5:8-14
Romans 12:1-2
John 1:5
Isaiah 53:3-5
John 15:9-11

A Liturgy for Healthcare Workers

Oh Healer and Restorer of life, we are weary.
You have called us into work that, at times,
feels like more than we can bear.
We have seen a devastating amount of people die;
we have sat at the bedsides of patients
struggling to breathe;
we have held up phones for loved ones
to say good-bye;
we have come home exhausted and discouraged
as the end does not seem near.

God of Jacob, cast Your gaze upon us;
see our sorrow and our tears.
You promised that when we pass through
the waters, You will be with us;
and though the rivers rage,
they will not overwhelm us;
and though we walk through fire,
we will not be burned.

But we have only so much energy,
only so much compassion,
only so much endurance
to carry on in our own strength.

Therefore, God of all comfort, turn and be
gracious to us, for we cry to You and only You.
Refuge and Strength, renew our trust in You
until we mount up with wings of eagles.
Man of Sorrows, lead us in lament, for You are
well acquainted with grief.

When we are empty, would You lead us
to Your wellspring of living water?
When we are hopeless, would You lift up our eyes
to see the unseen?
When we are lonely, would You give us life-giving
communities to remind us that we
are not fighting alone?
When we are on the front lines,
would You protect us from this virus and keep it
far from our bodies and families?

Would You heal the sick, both physically and
spiritually, as they cope, often alone,
in bare hospital rooms?

Would You give us the words to speak to patients
and families who are grieving?

Would You give us wisdom to discern
the best treatments and ways to serve?

Would You grant us perseverance even as we are
burning out and daily bearing the
suffering of others?

We thank You for the patients who have recovered,
and we grieve for those who have not.

We thank You for the researchers seeking treatments
and vaccines, and we ask You to guide them in
the right direction.

We thank You for our leaders who are doing their
best, and we pray for an outpouring of unity
and wisdom.

We thank you for this drought, Oh Lord, though
we confess that we are discouraged.

Even now, in our lament, we wait for You,
more than watchmen wait for morning.

Even now, in our sorrow, we learn the way
of gentleness through your humble heart.

Even now, in our despair, we hope in a better future,
believing you are making all things new.

Even now, in our weakness, we are oaks of
righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the
display of His splendor.

Oh God who holds our times in Your hand,
We ask that you hasten this pandemic to a swift end.
May a period of rest, peace, and bounty follow
when the days of mourning are ended and we are
restored to life.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Psalm 25:16–21

Isaiah 43:1–2

2 Cor. 1:3–5

Psalm 46

Isaiah 40:31

Isaiah 53:3

John 4:10

James 1:5

Habakkuk 3:17–19

Psalm 27

Psalm 91

Psalm 23

Matt. 11:28–30

Isaiah 61:1–4

Jude 1:24

Psalm 130:6

Rom. 5:3–5

Psalm 31:15

Revelation 21:3–5

A Liturgy for Struggling with Secret Sin

Oh God who sees in the dark,
we are lonely.

We crave comfort, pleasure, and connection
to fill the sense that something is missing.
We long to be seen, delighted in, wanted, and loved
to confirm that we are enough.

Our brains and bodies grasp
for immediate gratification
when what we really need is You.
Oh, Fountain of Living Water,
well up in our hearts until we are overflowing
with everlasting life.

When we are broken,
You make us whole.
When we are consumed with desire,
You fill the gap.
When we stumble again and again and again,
You forgive.
When our flesh fails, You strengthen our hearts.
God, we want to choose You forever.

But our flesh is weak and will lead us to death
if we let it,
and we have let it.
We have accumulated heavy weights of guilt.
We have fled to the shadows of isolation and shame.
We have relied on our own willpower to free us from
this prison of flesh.

Oh Jesus, who knows what it is to be human
and tempted,
teach us how to die to our flesh
and ask Your Spirit for help.
Lead us to Your heart of grace and compassion.
Lead us out of darkness and into the blinding
freedom of Light.
Lead us out of hiding and into beautiful
communities of confession,
even if we are confessing the same thing
over and over for a while.

May we fill our minds with true and noble things.
May we sit in beautiful spaces,
consuming Your loveliness.
May we consider what is excellent and praiseworthy.
May we practice thanksgiving
and receive Your peace.
May we contemplate Your kindness
and be led to repentance.

Oh Healer and Redeemer, reach into the darkest
corners of our heart,
and shine your light there.
We cry out to You in the midst of our sin
and fall on Your mercy.
We come into your presence for healing,
longing to hear the words:
“Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.”

We are powerless to free ourselves from sin.
So set us free, Holy Spirit, set us free.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Psalms 139:11–12
Gal. 5:16–24
John 4:7–15
Ephesians 2:1–8
1 Cor. 10:13
1 Cor. 9:25–27
Psalms 73:25–26
Matthew 26:41
Romans 8:5–6
Psalms 25:11
Luke 4:1–13
Luke 9:23–24
John 16:7–13
Psalms 86:5
1 Peter 2:9–11
James 5:16
1 John 1:9
Philippians 4:8
Romans 2:4
2 Cor. 4:5–6
Isaiah 9:2
John 8:10–12
Romans 6:23
Romans 8:1–2
Acts 13:38–39
2 Cor. 3:17

A Liturgy for Those Who Have Not Belly Laughed Recently

O Christ, you have called us not servants but friends,
and is there any true friendship in which
laughter is not the glue that binds?
Much has been made of your reputation
as a man of sorrows,
acquainted with grief,
but perhaps you are a God who rises from the grave
and eats breakfast on the shore with friends,
your love-scarred side splitting with divine laughter,
sharing your joy.

We confess that we have not obeyed the command
to be joyful always,
and have forgotten that you exhort us
to become like little children,
careless in the care of you.
But like Sarah, we only laugh in our
barrenness
and the cavern of disbelief.

We acknowledge the ever-widening gulf inside us—
the stew of sin
and sorrow
and loneliness,
the pulse of Eden growing faint in our veins.
In the face of all that threatens,
we ask for the impossible:
the loudest, fullest,
belly-deep laugh,
a gift from our scandalously playful Father.
O Lord, we ask that you help us to,
as that poet suggests,
“Be joyful though we have considered all the facts.”

Envelop us in divine hilarity.
Take our cynicism and trade it for delight.
Teach us the language of levity.
Grief is but an interlude, a shadow,
and joy is the truest substance for those
who know you.
May we laugh deeply with those we love,
and alone, with you, in the secret place.
For in this, we rejoice with the tongues
of the redeemed,
and practice resurrection.

There is no shame in laughing with our sorrow;
for to laugh is to trust in you,
to believe that the rug we roll upon
will not be pulled out,
to understand that the Author has given us
a peek of eternity,
and we know how the story ends.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

John 15:15

Isaiah 53:3

John 21:1–14

1 Thess. 5:16–18

Matthew 18:3

Matthew 6:26

Genesis 18:12

Psalms 71:23

Matthew 7:11

Hebrews 12:2

A Liturgy for *Those Crying Out for Justice*

O merciful Father, our Author of justice,
the innocent blood of those slain
cries out to you from the ground,
open-mouthed, warm, ever-red.
Come down, O God, and see what has been done!
Our politics of fear and anger have
enslaved, abused, neglected, erased,
excluded, dismissed;
we confer second-class citizenship;
we legitimize the making of victims,
whom you have called your Beloved.

Don the sackcloth, sprinkle the ashes!
Bitter-weeping, we refuse to be comforted,
for there are those of us who are no more.
Will you forget us forever, O Lord?
How long until, with our own eyes,
we see your justice done?

O Christ, we confess that we have looked away.
Walk with us to the margins of our world,
where you have always been,
and abide in proximity with those
who are not forgotten.
Though the discomfort may break us,
O Healer, meet us where we lack
and repair us with gold.
We crave an easy way, but strengthen us
to rise above,
taking on each other's burdens as our own,
learning that we are inextricably tied
with our fellow image-bearers,
and we need each other on our march
upward toward Zion.

Son of God, born in a manger,
you came among us, where the lowly tread.
You identify with the oppressed,
and as we do to them, we do to you.
For you, the Lord, love justice; you require mercy.

Move now, in and through us, Holy Spirit.
Search the corners of our hearts for prejudice.
Break the spirit of racism and racial superiority.
Give us a powerful hope, so that we may speak
as those who do not shrink back.
Move on behalf of those who cry out to you.
We appeal to your throne of righteousness.

From the confines of our traditions, we the Church
repent of our long history of failure,
a system of sin, always before us.
Jesus Christ, alive in your people,
the heart and truth of our faith,
clear the way now, in us, to be a source of hope.
May we be a witness of Kingdom community.

With each new tragedy, despair seeps into our bones.
Renew in us, O God, a hopeful kindling,
fanned into flame,
for the work ahead.
Create in us the imagination for a new humanity:
our multitude too numerous to count,
standing at your throne;
a mosaic of every nation, tribe, people,
and language, none left out;
reconciled and singing free before the Lamb.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

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Genesis 18:21

1 John 4:7

Esther 4:1

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Isaiah 61:8

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Isaiah 35:10

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