

PRAYER OF APPROACH, CONFESSION, & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Holy God,
We give thanks that you are a God who invites
and gives visions new shape in this world.
Your invitation has encouraged
the opening of arms,
the changing of hearts,
and the acceptance of what had long been thought
wrong, untouchable, profane.
Continue to invite, O God,
so that we might more freely join hands
and work to build a community willing to share
in the care of all your creation.

God of Mercy,
In this world we do not always accept your invitations.
We are quick to judge.
We succumb to the status quo.
We give into apathy.
We ignore the plight of our siblings who are neatly tucked off to the sidelines, all alone.

Weaver of Justice,
Forgive our transgressions.
When we become aware of differences,
help us to acknowledge, accept and respect them.
Break down those protective barriers that we use as an excuse
not to learn more, do more, be better to all of our siblings in Christ.
Transform us by your Spirit.

Help us to recognize ourselves
in not just the righteous heroes of the Bible,
but in the people
who make mistakes, who sin, who demean, who are unjust and angry

and willing to turn away from you in order to abuse power.
Help us to hold a mirror up to ourselves and observe how we can sometimes be like the Pharisees, like Judas, like all-powerful Egypt.

Individually, we uniquely reflect your glory and express your love,
but things like homophobia, transphobia, racism,
and a general apathy towards social justice
have blocked many from recognizing your beauty in all people.
All of creation suffers from the effects of such hate, fear, and violence.

Guide us, Loving One.
Grant us the vision needed to change and grow,
so that through your transforming Spirit
we can become followers with depth of understanding;
followers who are willing to dismantle the walls we've built around ourselves and reposition
the stones into bridges that meet others;
followers who are ready to be vulnerable to love.

God, help us seek justice for those who are treated unjustly.
Use your Spirit to open our hearts to what is different.
Assist us in meeting our goal of equity and equality for all people
so that everyone can live fully in your love.
We pray this in the name of Christ Jesus who taught us to love and who taught us to pray,
saying,

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name;
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever...

May the Peace of Christ be with you all... And also with you...