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INTERCULTURAL
ENCOUNTERS



Weekly Devotions: Tuesday June 16, 2020

Initial Prayer:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace
Where there is hatred, let me sow love
Where there is injury, pardon
Where there is doubt, faith
Where there is despair, hope
Where there is darkness, light
And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may
Not so much seek to be consoled as to console
To be understood, as to understand
To be loved, as to love
For it is in giving that we receive
And it's in pardoning that we are pardoned
And it's in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.ⁱ
Amen

Reflection: A Prayer in a Time of Anger, Unrest and Injustice

Holy One, whose Spirit is poured out upon all flesh, whose children you empower to prophesy, whose youth see visions and whose elders dream dreams, we cry out to you with a loud “Hosanna!” Where else shall we go, O Savior? All else has failed us. You alone have the words of eternal life.

You came that we might have life more abundantly, but that abundance eludes too many of us, O God, and hate and bigotry are ever present. Our news cycles are filled with despair. Our hearts ache as we wade through a global pandemic, reaching grim milestone after grim milestone. But even as we navigate a new threat, old ones still linger. Communities of different color and races bear the uneven weight of a new disease, yet we see that racialized violence and the systemic injustice undergirding it have by no means given way to the demands of a pandemic. We speak some of the most recent names: **[as we read the names, we light a candle in remembrance]**: Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud, Arbery, George Floyd and Tony McDade. We add them to the litany already in our macabre collection: Dominga Ramos (Mayan community advocate), Bishop Juan José Gerardi (Human Rights Defender), Berta Cáceres (Honduran environmental activist, indigenous leader), Domingo Choc (Mayan Scientist expert on Maya Q’eqchi’ medicine) Claudia Patricia Gómez, killed in the border of Texas, the girls burned at the “Safe Home” in Guatemala City, and the myriad others in far too long a list. This great cloud has witnessed persistent injustice and our perseverance in the face of it. Yet, how can they rest when so many keep joining their ranks?

We live in a world in which Indigenous, Black and Brown siblings are expected and compelled to offer forgiveness at a discount. Far too often, life continues as if nothing has happened while our gaping wounds are still open. When the cheeks are turned, they are met with another hand to the face, gun to the head — or knee to the throat. Forgiveness is too infrequently met with repentance. This, O God, we name as sin. It is our sin. Many of us lament and strive against that sin. Help and empower us to continue that work with diligence and faith. Too many of us still waver and are unconvinced that there is a problem. Remove our hearts of stone and replace them with hearts of flesh that are softened toward our siblings. Help us

to reckon not only with our personal failings, but also with our institutional history and the ways the church has helped to create systems of inequity. By your Spirit, help us to corporately live into our creeds and confessions and provide sanctuary for all God's children. When we say that "that God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged"* and that "the church labors for the abolition of all racial discrimination,"** help us to truly mean it.

We humble ourselves and cry out to you in the hope that you will hear us and heal us. We lift the communities from the United States and Guatemala, and all where racialized violence has occurred and unrest has been stirred. Open our hearts, minds and understanding to your movement in the margins, so that when your people speak, they are indeed heard, and when they tell the truth about your deeds of power, they are not dismissed as something other than sober and of a clear mind. In this way, let the fires of uprising give way to the fires of your Spirit, where your people hear the Good News of your kingdom, hear it with joy, and make haste to take part in it. Let us release our attachment to our current world order and walk bravely into the world you've intended for us, even and especially when it costs us something.

Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus is still Lord. To the one and only God, our Divine Parent, Jesus, our Gracious Sibling and Holy Spirit, be the honor and the glory for ever and ever. Amen." .ⁱⁱ

To conclude, we want to share a statement taken from Desmond Tutu:

Dear Child of God, before we can become God's partners, we must know what God wants for us. "I have a dream," God says. "Please help Me to realize it. It is a dream of a world whose ugliness and squalor and poverty, its war and hostility, its greed and harsh competitiveness, its alienation and disharmony are changed into their glorious counterparts, when there will be more laughter, joy, and peace, where there will be justice and goodness and compassion and love and caring and sharing. I have a dream that swords will be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, that My children will know that they are members of one family, the human family, God's family, My family." (Desmond Tutu, *God Has A Dream – a vision of hope for our time*, p. 19)

ⁱ Prayer of Saint Francis

ⁱⁱ Adapted to our Guatemalan context, and original version: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/A-Prayer-in-a-Time-of-Anger-Unrest-and-Injustice.pdf>