A Vigil of Prayers & Readings
For the Victims of Terrorism & For World Peace

Call to Worship (opening sentence from Morning Prayer)

The hour is coming and now is, when the true worshipper will worship the Father in Spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him.

Opening Hymn # 433 (1982) We Gather Together

Collect
0 God, great is the misery that has come upon our nation and the world;
Our cares overwhelm us, and we do not know what to do.
0 God, be gracious to us and help us. Grant us strength to bear what is taking place in the world and in our land this day
And let not fear rule over us.
As a loving God, take care of our loved ones and us.
Forgive us all the sins we have committed against you, and against one another.
We trust in your grace and place our lives wholly into your hands.
So do with us as seems best to you and as is best for us.
Whether we live or die, we are with you, and you are with us, our God.
Lord, we wait for your salvation.
All: Amen.

First Reading – A reading from Lamentations 3:22-26, 31-33
22 The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, †
his mercies never come to an end;
23 they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
24 “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul,
“therefore I will hope in him.”
25 The LORD is good to those who wait for him,
to the soul that seeks him.
26 It is good that one should wait quietly
for the salvation of the LORD.
31 For the Lord will not reject forever.
32 Although he causes grief, he will have compassion
according to the abundance of his steadfast love;
33 for he does not willingly afflict
or grieve anyone.
Here ends the Reading

Hymn # 719 (1982) America

Psalm 23 (Unison)
The Lord is my shepherd;
    I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
    he leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul;
    he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his
    name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
    I will fear no evil;
    for thou art with me;
    thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
Thou preparst a table before me in the presence of
    mine enemies;
    thou anointest my head with oil;
    my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days
    of my life,
    and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Second reading – A reading from Revelations 7:9-17

9 After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. 10 They cried out in a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!” 11 And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 singing, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

13 Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?” 14 I said to him, “Sir, you are the one that knows.” Then he said to me, “These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. 16 They will hunger no more, and thirst no
more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; 17 for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” Here ends the Reading
Silence

Hymn #717 (1982) My Country ‘tis of thee

Celebrant The Holy Gospel according to Matthew - 5:43-48
43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, † what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Celebrant The Gospel of the Lord

Dialogue Homily

Litany

Leader: The hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class.
All: Father, forgive.
Leader: The covetous desires of humans and nations to possess that which is not their own,
All: Father, forgive.
Leader: The greed which exploits human labor, and lays waste the earth,
All: Father, forgive.
Leader: Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others,
All: Father, forgive.
Leader: Our indifference to the plight of the homeless and the refugee,
All: Father, forgive.
Leader: Our pride which leads to trust in ourselves and not in God,
All: Father, forgive.
Leader: In the midst of hunger and war,
All: We celebrate the promise of plenty and peace.
Leader: In the midst of oppression and tyranny,
All: We celebrate the promise of service and freedom.
Leader: In the midst of doubt and despair,
All: We celebrate the promise of faith and hope.
Leader: In the midst of fear and betrayal,
All: We celebrate the promise of joy and loyalty.
Leader: In the midst of hatred and death,
All: We celebrate the promise of love and life.
Leader: In the midst of sin and decay,
All: We celebrate the promise of salvation and renewal.
Leader: In the midst of terrorism, injury, suffering and death,
All: We celebrate the promise of the living God with us.

Hymn #608 (1982) Eternal Father

Closing Prayers

Leader: Let us now pray for our own needs and the needs of others.

Almighty God, you have given us this land for our heritage: We humbly beseech you to help us prove ourselves a people who are mindful of your favor and happy to do your will. Bless our nation with honorable industry, sound learning, and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride an arrogance and every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought this place out kindred and tongue. Endue with the spirit of wisdom those to whom we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that, through obedience to your law, we may show forth your praise among the nations of the earth. In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, do not allow our trust in you to fail.

All: Amen

Almighty God, we commend to your gracious care and keeping all the men and women of our armed forces at home and abroad. Defend them day by day with your heavenly grace; strengthen them in their trials and temptations; give them courage to face the perils which beset them; and grant them a sense of your abiding presence wherever they may be; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

All: Amen
O God, the father of all, whose Son commanded us to love our enemies: Lead them and us from prejudice to truth; deliver them and us from hatred, cruelty, and revenge; and in your good time enable us all to stand reconciled before you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  

_All: Amen_

Holy One, you do not distance yourself from the pain of your people, but bear that pain with us and bless all who suffer at others' hands. Hallow our flesh and all creation, with your cleansing love. Bring healing and strength to the people of this land; and by your justice, lift up the victims of terrorist attacks, that in the body you have given them, they may again rejoice.  

_All: Amen._

Lord, we pray for all who are charged with the urgent mediation of your healing power and who are feeling overwhelmed by the numbers of the suffering. Uphold them in their fatigue and banish their despair. Let them see with your eyes, so they may know all their patients as precious. Give comfort, and renew their energy and compassion.  

_All: Amen._

We entrust to your care, 0 God, all who have died due to terrorism. May they go forth from this world embraced in your abiding love. May they rest in peace and rise in the glory of your eternal home, where grief and misery are banished, and light and joy abide.  

_All: Amen._

Lord, we lift up the families and friends of those who were injured or killed by terrorists. Deal graciously with them in their grief. Surround them with your love, that they may not be overwhelmed by their losses, but have confidence in your goodness, and strength to meet the days to come.  

_All: Amen._

0 God, you have bound us together in a common life. Help us, in the midst of our struggles for justice and truth, to confront one another without hatred or bitterness, and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect. We pray all these things in your most holy name.  

_All: Amen._
The Peace
All stand. The Celebrant says to the people
The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People And also with you.

The Great Thanksgiving

Eucharistic Prayer A (BCP 361)

Hymn #720 (1982) Star Spangled Banner

Celebrant Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
For Guidance
O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light rises up in darkness for the godly: Grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what you would have us do, that the Spirit of wisdom may save us from all false choices, and that in your light we may see light, and in your straight path may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For our Country
Lord God Almighty, you have made all the peoples of the earth for your glory, to serve you in freedom and peace: Give to the people of our country a zeal for justice and the strength of forbearance, that we may use our liberty in accordance with you gracious will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For Peace Among the Nations
Almighty God our heavenly Father, guide the nations of the world into the way of justice and truth, and establish among them that peace which is the fruit of righteousness, that they may become the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

For our Enemies
O God, the Father of all, whose Son commanded us to love our enemies: Lead them and us from prejudice to truth; deliver them and us from hatred, cruelty, and revenge; and in your good time enable us all to stand reconciled before you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For the President and National Leaders
O Lord our Governor, whose glory is in all the world: We commend this nation to your merciful care, that, being guided by your Providence, we may dwell secure in your peace. Grant to the President of the United States, his advisors and our national legislators, wisdom and strength to know and to do your will. Fill them with the love of truth and righteousness, and make them ever mindful of their calling to serve this people in your fear; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

For those in the Armed Forces of our Country
Almighty God, we commend to your gracious care and keeping all the men and women of our armed forces at home and abroad, especially those whose job or assignment place them in harm’s way. Defend them day-by-day with your heavenly grace; strengthen them in their trials and temptations; give them courage to face the perils which beset them; and grant them a sense of your abiding presence wherever they may be; through Jesus Christ our Lord to strengthen and protect all those in the armed forces of our country. Support them in the day of battle, and in times of peace keep them safe from evil. Endue them with courage and loyalty, and grant that they may serve without reproach; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For Service men and Servicewomen
Almighty Father, we commit to your loving care all those servicemen and servicewomen upon whose faithfulness the
welfare of our Armed Forces depends (especially N.) In the fulfillment of their duties give them patience, loyalty, and courage; and grant that those who are sustained by their toil may remember them with gratitude; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**For a Day of Battle** Heavenly Father, on a day of battle I commit myself body and soul to your keeping. When I am in peril of life give me courage to do my duty. When I am tempted to sin give me strength to resist. If I am sick or wounded grant me healing. If I fall, of your mercy, receive me to yourself, forgiving me all my sins. Bless all who are near and dear to me and keep them in your fatherly care. And in your good providence, out of this evil bring a lasting peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**For Prisoners**
We beseech you, O God, for all prisoners and captives, and all who suffer from oppression, that you will show them your mercy, and make the hearts of all people as merciful as your own; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**In Time of War**
O God, who sees that in all warfare we are seeking to serve you, and yet in the waging of it must, by necessity, do many things that are an offence against your love; Accept, we pray, our imperfect offering. Arm us with you Spirit that our warfare may further the victory of your justice and truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(A Prayer attributed to St. Francis)
Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we 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; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

**For those who suffer for the sake of Conscience**
O God our Father, whose Son forgave his enemies while he was suffering shame and death: Strengthen those who suffer for the sake of conscience; when they are accused, save them from speaking in hate; when they are rejected, save them from bitterness; when they are imprisoned, save them from despair; and to us your servants, give grace to respect their witness and to discern the truth, that our society may be cleansed and strengthened. This we ask for the sake of Jesus Christ, our merciful and righteous Judge. Amen.
President Jimmy Carter, commenting on war as a “necessary evil,” said that even though war may be called “necessary”, war is always evil. He went on to say that killing each other’s children is never right and will never resolve relationship issues between nations and people. What it will do is fuel long standing hatred, the kind of hatred that has bred the terrorists of today, the kind of hatred that will breed the terrorists of tomorrow.

War encourages us to place patriotism above all other allegiances and to think of enemies as less than human. We who call ourselves Christians, however, are called by a higher authority. The Gospel of Jesus Christ encourages us to think of all people, everywhere in the world, as brothers and sisters, who share with us in the dignity of being children of God. Indeed, this call is so core to our identity, that it is incorporated into our Baptismal Covenant with the following words, “Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?”

---

1 Paraphrased from *A Pastoral Letter to be Read at All Services on The Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany February 23, 2003*, The Right Reverend J. Michael Garrison, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Western New York.