

# 12-Hour Virtual Prayer Vigil for Justice, Reconciliation, and Peace



offered by



THE DIOCESE  
OF VIRGINIA

June 6, 2020  
9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Dear Friends in Christ,

When people of faith are thrown into the wilderness of hurt, fear, anger and pain, one of our first impulses is to pray. Our biblical witness is full of the cries of God's people, some of them quite eloquent, some little more than inarticulate screams from the heart.

God, help us!  
How long, O Lord?  
Answer me when I call, O God!  
Give ear to my cry, O Lord!

We pray because God puts it into our hearts to do so. God desires to be in deep communion with us, and prayer builds that communion. Prayer draws us close to the beating heart of God.

We pray because we have seen and experienced that prayer is concrete action for the sake of the world. God hears our prayers, and God answers. Our words do not return to us empty, but prepare a way for God to do in the world all that God intends.

We pray because at times we can do no other.

We pray knowing that it is risky to pray. God may well answer our prayer by sending us out to be what we want to see in the world. God may well choose to change us and use us according to the prayers we have uttered.

We take the marvelous risk of praying for justice in our world now, opening ourselves to God for the sake of a world so in need of God's presence, God's love, God's transforming power.

I am grateful to the community of Deacons in the Diocese of Virginia for calling us to this 12-Hour Virtual Prayer Vigil for Justice, Reconciliation and Peace. It is part of the role of a Deacon in worship to call God's people to prayer, and our Deacons are faithful in calling us from our individual congregations to a wider community of prayer together.

The resources on these pages, prepared by our Deacons, are intended to support you in your prayers. Use whatever is helpful to you. Add a song as you are called. Read some of the Psalms, which are quintessential cries of the heart. Follow the ways that God is leading you.

May God's blessing fall richly upon you as you share in this time of vigil. May God bless us all as God works in and through us in the power of prayer.

Your sister in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Susan E. Goff", with a small cross symbol above the first letter 'S'.

The Rt. Rev. Susan E. Goff  
Bishop Suffragan and Ecclesiastical Authority

*Please take a moment to center yourself.  
Be present to God. Be present to yourself.  
Be present to anyone with you.  
Take a deep breath and exhale.  
When you are ready, please begin to pray.*

**Let us not rush to offer a bandaid**, when the gaping wound requires surgery & complete reconstruction.

Let us not offer false equivalencies, thereby diminishing the particular pain being felt in a particular circumstance in a particular historical moment.

Let us not speak of reconciliation without speaking of reparations & restoration, or how we can repair the breach & how we can restore the loss.

Let us not rush past the loss of this mother's child, this father's child...someone's beloved son.

Let us not value property over people; let us not protect material objects while human lives hang in the balance.

Let us not value a false peace over a righteous justice.

Let us not be afraid to sit with the ugliness, the messiness, & the pain that is life in community together.

Let us not offer clichés to the grieving, those whose hearts are being torn asunder.

Instead...

Let us mourn black & brown men & women, those killed extra judicially every 28 hours.

Let us weep at a criminal justice system, which is neither blind nor just.

Let us call for the mourning men & the wailing women, those willing to rend their garments of privilege & ease, & sit in the ashes of this nation's original sin.

Let us be silent when we don't know what to say.

Let us be humble & listen to the pain, rage, & grief pouring from the lips of our neighbors & friends.

Let us decrease, so that our brothers & sisters who live on the underside of history may increase.

Let us pray with our eyes open & our feet firmly planted on the ground.

Let us listen to the shattering glass & let us smell the purifying fires, for it is the language of the unheard.

God, in your mercy...

Show me my own complicity in injustice.

Convict me for my indifference.

Forgive me when I have remained silent.

Equip me with a zeal for righteousness.

Never let me grow accustomed or acclimated to unrighteousness."

The Rev. Dr. Yolanda Pierce, Director of the Center for Black Church Studies & Associate Professor of Religion & Literature at Princeton Theological Seminary

## **Litany of Repentance**

Dear people of God, our history is marred by oppression, by the enslavement of those who differ from us, and by the forces of racism that attack human dignity. The sin of racism is woven into our lives and our cultures, in small and great ways, in things done and things left undone.

As followers of Christ, we reject racism and the oppression of other human beings. In building Christ's beloved community, we must strive to love all people, respect all people, and work for the good of all people. We must stand alongside God's children of every race, language, and culture, and work together as agents of justice, peace, and reconciliation.

In the assurance of our forgiveness, let us kneel before God and humbly confess our sins: our participation in racism, our privilege based on racism, and our perpetuation of racism.

*A period of silence follows.*

God the Father, you freed your people from slavery in Egypt, yet the legacy of slavery deforms our lives today.

**Have mercy on us.**

God the Son, you prayed that all would be united in your love and service, yet the divisions among us rend your body.

**Have mercy on us.**

God the Holy Spirit, you inspire us to live peaceably with all, yet the stain of genocide and internment mars our striving for justice.

**Have mercy on us.**

We have harmed one another and the earth through negligence, greed, and self-interest.

**Have mercy on us.**

We have failed to condemn discrimination that leads to unrest.

**Have mercy on us.**

We have decried violence, while overlooking inequity and frustration from which it rises.

**Have mercy on us.**

We have practiced injustice for economic gain and have oppressed others to make a false peace.

**Have mercy on us.**

We have sought comfort in advantage for ourselves at the cost of injustice for others.

**Have mercy on us.**

We have welcomed solace over conflict and ignored the cries of those harmed by our comfort.

**Have mercy on us.**

We have grasped for this world's goods, and been arrogant toward those who have little.

**Have mercy on us.**

We have not shared the good things we have been given, and blamed the poor for their poverty.

**Have mercy on us.**

We have been fearful and distrustful of those who are different from us.

**Have mercy on us.**

We have divided ourselves from others, and refused to listen to or believe their experience.

**Have mercy on us.**

We have been indifferent to the pain and suffering of our sisters and brothers.

**Have mercy on us.**

We have held in contempt those who need our help, and not loved them with our whole hearts.

**Have mercy on us.**

We have been self-satisfied in our privilege, and denied our oppression of others.

**Have mercy on us.**

We have preferred order over justice, and isolation over the struggle for peace.

**Have mercy on us.**

We have quietly held good intentions, and kept silent the message of reconciliation.

**Have mercy on us.**

We have failed to act with courage for the sake of love.

**Have mercy on us.**

Lord have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

May Almighty God have mercy on us, grant us courage and conviction, and strengthen us to love others who are unlike us. May God, the Holy and Undivided Trinity, make us compassionate in our actions and courageous in our works, that we may see Christ's Beloved Community in our own day. Amen.

## **Prayers for Social Justice**

### **For Social Justice**

Almighty God, who created us in your image: Grant us grace fearlessly to contend against evil and to make no peace with oppression; and, that we may reverently use our freedom, help us to employ it in the maintenance of justice in our communities and among the nations, to the glory of your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (BCP, p. 260)

### **For Social Justice**

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart [and especially the hearts of the people of this land], that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP, p. 823)

## **Episcopal Litany for Social Justice**

Brothers and Sisters: God commands us through Jesus Christ to love one another. In baptism, we promise to "seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as ourselves and to strive for justice and peace, and respect the dignity of every human being." Let us now honor those vows and pray for our nation in this election season, for wise and just leaders, and for the needs of others throughout our country and the world.

We pray for continued blessings on all peacemakers, on leaders who value peace, and on everyone who promotes nonviolent solutions to conflict. We pray for a speedy end to all violence and warfare around the world.

God of peace and gentleness,  
**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for the strength of heart and mind to look beyond ourselves and address the needs of our brothers and sisters throughout the world; for the rural and urban poor; for the rebuilding of our communities; and for an end to the cycles of violence that threaten our future.

God of generosity and compassion,  
**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for all nations, that they may live in unity, peace, and concord; and that all people may know justice and enjoy the perfect freedom that only God can give.

God of liberty and freedom,  
**Hear our prayer.**

We pray that the Holy Spirit may embrace the most vulnerable members of our society; we pray also for an end to the growing disparity between the rich and poor; and for the grace and courage to strive for economic justice.

God of all gifts and blessings,  
**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for an end to prejudice throughout our country and the world; that we will respect all people as precious children of God; and that racism, sexism, and all other forms of discrimination will be forever banished from our hearts, our society, and our laws.

God of fellowship and equality,  
**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for a reverence of creation; that we will have the tools and the will to conserve it; that we will use its bountiful resources in the service of others; and that we will become better stewards of all that has been entrusted to us.

God of nature and the universe,  
**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for all immigrants, refugees, and pilgrims from around the world, that they may be welcomed in our midst and be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect.

God of outcasts and wanderers,  
**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for the sick, the aged and the infirm; for those with physical or mental disabilities;

that all may have access to proper health care; and that God's loving embrace may be felt by all who suffer.

God of comfort and healing,  
**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for all prisoners and captives; that a spirit of forgiveness may replace vengeance and retribution; and that we, with all the destitute, lonely, and oppressed, may be restored to the fullness of God's grace.

God of absolution and mercy,  
**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for all children and families, and particularly for the orphaned, neglected, abused, and those who live in fear of violence or disease; that they may be relieved and protected.

God of children and families,  
**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for the reconciliation of all people, and for the Church throughout the world, that it may be an instrument of your healing love.

God of outreach and restoration,  
**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who have died as a result of violence, war, disease or famine, especially those who died because of human blindness, neglect, or hardness of heart.

God of eternal life and resurrecting love,  
**Hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, you have promised to hear what we ask in the name of your Son. Watch over our country now and in the days ahead, guide our leaders and all who will vote, guide them in all knowledge and truth and make your ways known among all people. In the passion of debate give them a quiet spirit; in the complexities of the issues give them courageous hearts. Accept and fulfill our petitions, we pray, not as we ask in our ignorance, nor as we deserve in our sinfulness, but as you know and love us in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *AMEN.*

Prepared by the Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations  
[http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/eppn/107568\\_43992\\_ENG\\_HTM.htm](http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/eppn/107568_43992_ENG_HTM.htm)

## **Prayers of the People with Confession**

Let us pray for the Church and for the world.

God of love, we pray for your church: For Michael, our Presiding Bishop; for Susan and Jennifer our bishops; for all lay and ordained ministers; and for all who seek you in the community of the faithful. Equip us with compassion and love, to carry out your work of reconciliation in the world.

God of love, **hear our prayers for the church.**

*Silence — Add your prayers, silently or in your hearts*

God of freedom, we pray for our nation, and all the nations of the world: For peace and unity across barriers of language, color, and creed; for elected and appointed leaders, that they would serve the common good. Inspire all people with courage to speak out against hatred, to actively resist evil. Unite the human family in bonds of love.

God of freedom, **hear our prayers for the world.**

*Silence — Add your prayers, silently or in your hearts*

God of justice, we pray for the earth, your creation entrusted to our care: For the animals and birds, the mountains and oceans, and all parts of your creation that have no voice of their own. Stir up in us a thirst for justice that protects the earth and all its resources, that we may leave to our children's children the legacy of beauty and abundance that you have given us.

God of justice, **hear our prayers for the earth.**

*Silence — Add your prayers, silently or in your hearts*

God of peace, we pray for this community: For our local leaders; for our schools and markets; for our neighborhoods and workplaces. Kindle in every heart a desire for equality, respect, and opportunity for all. Give us courage to strive for justice and peace among all people, beginning here at home.

God of peace, **hear our prayers for this community.**

*Silence — Add your prayers, silently or in your hearts*

God of mercy, we pray for all in any kind of need or trouble: For those whose lives are closely linked with ours, and those connected to us as part of the human family. For refugees and prisoners; for the sick and suffering, the lonely and despairing; for those facing violence; for all held down by prejudice or injustice. Awaken in us compassion and humility of spirit, as we seek and serve Christ in all persons.

God of mercy, **hear our prayers for all who are in need.**

*Silence — Add your prayers, silently or in your hearts*

God of grace, we pray for those who have died: For the faithful in every generation who have worked for justice; for prophets who called us to racial reconciliation; for martyrs who died because of hatred; and for all the communion of saints. Make us faithful to your call to proclaim your Good News, by word and example, and bring us at last into the glorious company of the saints in light.

God of grace, hear our prayers for those who have died.

*Silence — Add your prayers, silently or in your hearts*

Hear our prayers, Holy God. Breathe your Spirit over us and all the earth, that barriers would crumble and divisions cease. Make us more fully your co-healers of the broken world. Unite us with all people in bonds of love, that the whole earth and all its peoples may be at peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Confession**

Let us confess our sins against God and one another.

Almighty God, Source of all that is, Giver of every good gift:

You create all people in your image and call us to love one another as you love us.

We confess that we have failed to honor you in the great diversity of the human family.

We have desired to live in freedom, while building walls between ourselves and others.

We have longed to be known and accepted for who we are, while making judgements of others based on the color of skin, or the shape of features, or the varieties of human experience.

We have tried to love our neighbors individually while yet benefitting from systems that hold those same neighbors in oppression.

Forgive us, Holy God.

Give us eyes to see you as you are revealed in all people.

Strengthen us for the work of reconciliation rooted in love.

Restore us in your image, to be beloved community, united in our diversity, even as you are one with Christ and the Spirit,

Holy and undivided Trinity, now and for ever.

Amen.

## **For Those Imprisoned**

### **For Prisons and Correctional Institutions**

Lord Jesus, for our sake you were condemned as a criminal: Visit our jails and prisons with your pity and judgment. Remember all prisoners, and bring the guilty to repentance and amendment of life according to your will, and give them hope for their future. When any are held unjustly, bring them release; forgive us, and teach us to improve our justice. Remember those who work in these institutions; keep them humane and compassionate; and save them from becoming brutal or callous. And since what we do for those in prison, O Lord, we do for you, constrain us to improve their lot. All this we ask for your mercy's sake. Amen. (BCP, p. 826)

### **For Prisoners**

Almighty God, Heavenly Father, you are the only One who creates each one of us to have life. And you are the only One who can forgive us of our sins no matter what we have done or will do because you are the only One who truly loves us. Some of children, Lord, are spending time in prison to try to correct themselves. Often times, Lord, some of us on the outside become aware of conditions in prisons that are unacceptable and harsh. Lord, we ask for justice to be done but done with the rights of compassion and humanness to be carried out with care by those with authority, and that the living conditions be acceptable. We also pray, Lord, that you will strengthen those of us who are in prisons around the world to come to know You and to walk the path of love. All this we pray through Your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. AMEN. (Written by The Rev. Deacon Sally W. P. Gunn,)

## **Prayers in Time of Conflict**

### **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. (BCP, p. 823)

### **In Times of Conflict**

O 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; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP, p. 824)

### **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. (BPC, p. 816)

**For the Oppressed**

Look with pity, O heavenly Father, upon the people in this land who live with injustice, terror, disease, and death as their constant companions. Have mercy upon us. Help us to eliminate our cruelty to these our neighbors. Strengthen those who spend their lives establishing equal protection of the law and equal opportunities for all. And grant that every one of us may enjoy a fair portion of the riches of this land; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP, p 826)

**For Police Officers and for National Guard Members**

Almighty God, we commend to your gracious care and keeping all the men and women in law enforcement and the National Guard in our neighborhoods, cities, and on our highways. Defend them day by day with your heavenly grace; protect their families; strengthen them in their trials; 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. (Adapted from “For Those in the Armed Forces of our Country, BPC, p. 823)

**For Small Business Owners and Workers**

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ in his earthly life shared our toil and hallowed our labor: Be present with your people where they work; make those who carry on the industries and commerce of this land responsive to your will; and bring comfort and peace to those who have lost their businesses and livelihoods in the midst of protests; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (Adapted from “For commerce and industry, BCP, P. 259)

**For Those who Participate in Peaceful Demonstrations**

Lord God Almighty, you have made all the peoples of the earth for your glory, to serve you in freedom and in peace: Give to the people of our country a zeal for justice and the strength of forbearance, that we may use our liberty peacefully to protest injustice, to fight for justice, and to work for reconciliation, in accordance with your gracious will; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (Adapted from “For the Nation”, BCP, p. 258)

**For Those who are Angry and Outraged, and Those who Work for the Common Good**

Gracious God, you created us in your image: give us the grace to turn our anger and outrage to justice and compassion. Transform our pain so that we may transmit love. Strengthen our bodies and our minds and our hearts for the long, hard, holy work of reconciliation and justice. Enable us, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to bring about the Reign of God; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**For Victims of Violence, Looting, Vandalism, and Attacks**

Loving God, your son Jesus Christ said, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.”; look with compassion and mercy on all victims of violence, looting, vandalism and attacks. Bring healing and relief to the injured and suffering; bring justice to their cause; bring forgiveness towards their attackers; and give your peace to them and to their families; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## **Prayers for Reconciliation**

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Matthew 5:23-24

### **For the Human Family**

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP, p. 815)

### **Psalm 121**

I lift up my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come?  
My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.  
He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.  
He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.  
The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand.  
The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.  
The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.  
The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore.

## **Prayers for Peace**

Be still, and know that I am God!  
I am exalted among the nations,  
I am exalted in the earth. Psalm 46:10 (NRSV)

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. John 14:27 (NRSV)

### **A Collect for Peace**

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to know you is eternal life and to serve you is perfect freedom: Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP p. 99)

**For Peace**

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominion and glory, now and forever. Amen. (BCP p. 815)

**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. (BCP p. 816)

**Prayer of 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. (BCP. p. 833)



### **The Song of Mary**

My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.

### **A Franciscan Blessing**

May God bless me with discomfort, at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships so that I may live deep within my heart. Amen.

May God bless me with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that I may work for justice, freedom and peace. Amen.

May God bless me with tears, to shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger and war, so that I may reach out my hand to comfort them and to turn their pain to joy. Amen.

And may God bless me with enough foolishness to believe that I can make a difference in the world, so that I can do what others claim cannot be done: to bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor. Amen

### **Dismissal**

Our time of prayer has ended. Our true worship begins.  
Let us go into this world in peace, to love and to serve the Lord!