

Meditations for Economic Justice, Healing and Racial Unity

These meditations are offered as aides to persons who want to observe a period of prayer, fasting and witness to support the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and to end the ravages of racism. The 10 meditations are designed to fall between two major events that have been designated by the Episcopal Church as important observations in response to the needs of our world. September 25 has been appointed as a day of prayer, fasting and advocacy for the millennium development goals as the United Nations meets to consider progress towards these goals. October 4 has been set aside as a day of repentance to apologize for the sin of slavery and the segregation and discrimination that has followed it.

These meditations are developed for daily use by individuals or groups. The meditation uses the ancient practice of *lectio divina* (Holy Reading) to invite people to reflect on scripture and to listen to its challenge to action. Following the four-step process of *lectio divina*, each day includes a reading (*lectio*), a meditation (*meditatio*) involving a series of reflection questions, a prayer (*oratio*) and an invitation to silence (*contemplatio*). All of the scripture texts have been taken from Matthew's Gospel for coherency and to correspond with the focus on Matthew in this year's Sunday lectionary.

These meditations are meant to accompany and support a daily time of prayer and reflection. This 10-day period of witness may be accompanied by additional disciplines of fasting or acts of charity and service.

The Prayers of the People that follow these meditations are included for use on Sunday morning on either Sept. 28 or Oct. 5 or both. These prayers are adapted from the "The Bidding Prayer to End Global Poverty and Instability" provided by the Episcopal Church, Office of Government Relations. These prayers and many of the statistics for each challenge section can be found on the website of Episcopalians For Global Reconciliation at www.e4gr.org and the Episcopal Public Policy Network (EPPN) <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/eppn.htm>.

Meditations for Economic Justice, Healing and Racial Unity

September 25: A Day of Prayer, Fasting, and Advocacy for the Millennium Development Goals

The Provinces of the [Anglican] Communion call for a day of prayer and fasting and witness on 25th September 2008 when there is a [special session of the United Nations to discuss the Millennium Development Goals.](#) (2008 Lambeth Conference Reflections Document)

The Challenge: The world's richest 1 billion people use 80% of the world's resources. That means that the other five billion plus people use only 20% of the world's resources. The richest 20% of the world's population have 74% of the income. The poorest 20% have only 2% of the income. In 2000 more than 1 billion people lived on less than \$1 a day. (Source: gapminder)

The Goals: The Millennium Development Goals call for a worldwide effort of rich and poor to work together to eradicate poverty and provide resources for health and education in the poorest communities of the world.

The Reading:

Matthew 19:16 Then someone came to him and said, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?"

17 And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments."

18 He said to him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness;

19 Honor your father and mother; also, You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

20 The young man said to him, "I have kept all these; what do I still lack?"

21 Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."

22 When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

23 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

25 When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astounded and said, "Then who can be saved?"

26 But Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible."

The Meditation:

What does this passage say to you about the challenges of wealth? What does this passage teach you about Jesus? Does this passage have a message to you about the balance of wealth in our world? What does this passage challenge you to do?

The Prayers:

Let us pray for all nations and people who already enjoy the abundance of creation and the blessings of prosperity, that their hearts may be lifted up to the needs of the poor and afflicted, and partnerships between rich and poor for the reconciliation of the world may flourish and grow.

Merciful God, you have bestowed upon us gifts beyond our imagining and have reminded us that all that we have belongs to you alone and is merely held in trust by human hands: we give you thanks for those moments of reconciliation and grace we see in our world, of wrongs that are made right, knowing that in your love all things are possible. Inspire in our nation, its leaders and people a spirit of greater sacrifice and devotion in the use of our treasures for the reconciliation of your world; that, in forsaking wealth and giving up ourselves to walk in the way of the Cross, we may find it to be none other than the way of life and peace.

Silence**September 26: The Call to Feed the Hungry**

The Challenge: 1.2 billion people live on less than \$1 a day. 800 million people go to bed hungry every day. More than 6 million children under the age of five die each year from malnutrition.

Millennial Development Goal: Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty.

The Reading:

Matthew 15:29 After Jesus had left that place, he passed along the Sea of Galilee, and he went up the mountain, where he sat down.

30 Great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the maimed, the blind, the mute, and many others. They put them at his feet, and he cured them,

31 so that the crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

32 Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way."

33 The disciples said to him, "Where are we to get enough bread in the desert to feed so great a crowd?"

34 Jesus asked them, "How many loaves have you?" They said, "Seven, and a few small fish."

35 Then ordering the crowd to sit down on the ground,

36 he took the seven loaves and the fish; and after giving thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

37 And all of them ate and were filled; and they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full.

38 Those who had eaten were four thousand men, besides women and children.

39 After sending away the crowds, he got into the boat and went to the region of Magadan.

The Meditation:

What does the feeding of the 4,000 teach you about the nature of Jesus? This second feeding story takes place in Gentile territory; the first was in Jewish territory. What does this indicate about Jesus' ministry? The need of the hungry was great, and the providence of God even greater. What does this teach us about God's care and your ministry? The meager gifts of seven loaves and a few small fish fed the multitude. What can you do with your gifts to feed those who are hungry?

The Prayers:

Let us pray for the poor, hungry, and neglected all over the world, that their cries for daily bread may inspire works of compassion and mercy among those to whom much has been given.

Almighty and most merciful God, you command us to offer food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted: Grant that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart; that, following in the steps of your blessed Son, we may give of ourselves in the service of others until poverty and hunger cease in all the world, and all things are reconciled in the reign of Christ.

Silence

September 27: The Healing of Women and Children

The Challenge: Close to 11 million children die every year before reaching the age of five. That's 20 children dying per minute -- 30,000 per day. Nearly four million of these die in the first 28 days of life. Every year, at least 529,000 women die in pregnancy or childbirth. 99% of these occur in the developing world. (Source: WHO)

Millennium Development Goal: Reduce child mortality; Improve Maternal Health.

The Reading:

Matthew 9:18 While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader of the synagogue came in and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live."

19 And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples.

20 Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak,

21 for she said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well."

22 Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." And instantly the woman was made well.

23 When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion,

24 he said, "Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him.

25 But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up.

26 And the report of this spread throughout that district.

The Meditation:

What does this passage say to you about Jesus? What does this story teach us about the healing of God's people? What is the invitation or call of these two healings on followers of Jesus today? What can you do reduce childhood mortality and improve maternal health?

The Prayers:

Let us pray for the health of women, children and families around the world, especially for an end to maternal and child mortality, that in building healthy families, all God's people may be empowered to strengthen their communities and repair the breaches which divide nations and peoples.

Almighty and ever-living God, giver of life and love, and Sanctifier of all families: Protect the health and safety of all women in childbirth and the children whom they bear, and inspire your people to work for an end to the deadly conditions which fuel maternal and child mortality throughout the world; that, in building strong and healthy families and communities, all may be strengthened to do your will on earth until the day when you gather us into one heavenly family.

Silence

September 28: The Call to Heal the Sick, Eliminate HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases

The Challenge:

Every day, 8,000 people die of AIDS-related conditions – that's about three million deaths per year. Only 400,000 of the five to six million people in the advanced stage of the disease had access to the anti-retroviral therapy in developing countries at the end of 2003.

There are 8.8 million new cases of tuberculosis (TB) a year. There are 5,500 deaths a day, or a million deaths worldwide each year from TB. Some 80% of this morbidity and mortality from TB falls on 22 high-burden countries.

There are almost 300 million cases of acute cases of malaria each year. More than a million cases of malaria are fatal each year. Some 90% of the burden falls on tropical Africa, where malaria is a major cause of mortality and morbidity in children under five years of age.

Millennium Development Goal: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

The Reading:

Matthew 8:1 When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him; 2 and there was a leper who came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean."

3 He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I do choose. Be made clean!" Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

The Meditation:

What does this story teach us about the nature of Jesus in his concern for the leper? Because persons with HIV/AIDS are often cast aside, they are sometimes compared with lepers in Jesus time. Do you think this is an apt comparison? How does this passage challenge Christians to ministry today? How does it challenge you?

The Prayers:

Let us pray for an end to pandemic disease throughout the world, particularly the scourges of HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and Tuberculosis; that plagues of death may no longer fuel poverty, destabilize nations and inhibit reconciliation and restoration throughout the world.

O God, the strength of the weak and the comfort of all who suffer: Grant your saving health to all who are afflicted by disease throughout the world. Bless the labors of all who minister to the sick, and unite the wills of nations and peoples in seeking an end to the pandemics of our age; that sickness may be turned to health, sorrow turned to joy, and mourning turned to praise of your Holy Name.

Silence

September 29: Stewardship of our World

The Challenge:

One billion people do not have access to safe and sufficient drinking water; 2.4 billion people lack adequate sanitation. More than three million people, mostly the poor and children, die each year from insufficient and unsafe drinking water.

Millennium Development Goal: Ensure environmental sustainability.

The Reading:

Matthew 6:25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"

26 Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

27 And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?

28 And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.

30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you-- you of little faith?

31 Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' 32 For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

33 But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 "So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.

The Meditation:

What does this passage say about the nature of Jesus? What does it teach about Jesus' relationship to the creation? How does this passage challenge you? What does it say to you about the Christian's response to the environment?

The Prayers:

Let us pray for an end to the waste and desecration of God's creation, for access to the fruits of creation to be shared equally among all people, and for communities and nations to find sustenance in the fruits of the earth and the water God has given us.

Almighty God, you created the world and gave it into our care so that, in obedience to you, we might serve all people: Inspire us to use the riches of creation with wisdom, and to ensure that their blessings are shared by all; that, trusting in your bounty, all people may be empowered to seek freedom from poverty

Silence

September 30: The Call for Universal Education

The Challenge:

One in four adults in the developing world – 872 million people – is illiterate. (Oxfam UK – Education Now Campaign) More than 100 million children remain out of school. (Source: [UNFPA](#)) Nearly half of the girls in the world's poorest countries have no access to primary education. More than one in four adults cannot read or write: two-thirds are women. Universal primary education would cost \$10 billion a year – that's half of what Americans spend on ice cream. (Source: [ActionAid](#))

Millennium Development Goal: Achieve universal primary education.

The Reading:

Matthew 19:13 Then little children were being brought to him in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them;

14 but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs."

The Meditation:

What does Jesus mean when he invites the "little children to come to me?" What does he mean when he says "to such as these belong the kingdom of heaven?" What does this teach us about our response to the children of the world? How can you emulate Jesus' invitation to the children? How can you help achieve primary education for all?

The Prayers:

Let us pray for schools and centers of learning throughout the world, for those who lack access to basic education, and for the light of knowledge to blossom and shine in the lives of all God's people.

Eternal God, the author and source of all knowledge and Truth: bless all who seek to learn and those who teach them, and inspire us to break down barriers that withhold education from your children; that, enlightened with the bright beams of Wisdom, all may be equipped to seek the blessings of liberty, justice, and peace.

Silence

October 1: Promoting Gender Equality and Empowering Women

The Challenge:

Women represent half of the almost 40 million people infected with HIV worldwide. In Africa, this number is growing. Two-thirds of the world's illiterate

people are female. The employment rate for women is two-thirds that for men. Women held 15.7% of seats in national parliaments in 2005. (Source: WH0)

Millennium Development Goal: Empower women and promote gender equality.

The Reading:

Matthew 28:1 After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.

2 And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.

3 His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow.

4 For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men.

5 But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified.

6 He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.

7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you."

8 So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

9 Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him.

10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

The Meditation:

Does the resurrection have a message for justice and reconciliation in our time today? Does the witness of the women have implications for the role of women in our church? How can we work for gender equality?

The Prayers:

Let us pray for an end to the divisions and inequalities that scar God's creation, particularly the barriers to freedom faced by God's children throughout the world because of gender; that all who have been formed in God's image might have equality in pursuit of the blessings of creation.

O God, in whom there is neither male nor female, Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free: Unite the wills of all people, that the walls which divide us and limit equality among your children may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; so that all may live together in justice, harmony, and peace.

Silence

October 2: Jesus' concern for the "least of these"

The Challenge:

The United Nations estimates that unfair trade rules deny poor countries \$700 billion every year. Less than 0.01% of this could save the sight of 30 million people. (Source:[ChristianAid](#)). The poorest 49 countries make up 10% of the world's population but account for only 0.4% of world trade. Their share has halved since 1980. (Source:[ChristianAid](#))

Millennium Development Goal: Create a global partnership for development.

The Reading:

Matthew 25:31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory.

32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats,

33 and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

34 Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;

35 for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,

36 I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

37 Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?

38 And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?

39 And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?'

40 And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

41 Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels;

42 for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,

43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'

44 Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?'

45 Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'

46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

The Meditation:

What does this passage say to you about the nature of Jesus? How does it challenge Christians to ministry? How does it challenge you? Where does God pull at your heart to respond to "the least of these?" How can you better respond to God's call on your life to care for those in greatest need?

The Prayers:

Let us pray that God will awaken the hearts of those who have much to the needs of those who have little. Let us pray for a more equitable sharing of wealth, that world wide hunger will be eliminated and preventable illnesses will be overcome.

*God, your concern for the poor is unrelenting -draw our concern into yours;
Your compassion for the poor is limitless -draw our compassion into yours;
As you long for justice, may we also strive for it. Forgive our doubt, forgive our neglect. Open our eyes to structures of oppression and free us from apathy and indifference. Give us courage to accept our responsibility, wisdom to chart a sound course amid complexity, perseverance to finish our work, and the gift of your Spirit to do what alone we cannot do. So may we serve to your honor and glory and the wellbeing of your beloved people throughout the world.
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

Silence

October 3: The Call to Eliminate Racism

The 2006 General Convention declared that the institution of slavery in the United States and "anywhere else in the world" was and is a sin, and mandated that the church acknowledge and express regret for its support of slavery and for supporting "de jure and de facto segregation and discrimination" for years after slavery's abolition. The Convention also asked the Presiding Bishop to call for a "Day of Repentance and Reconciliation." This two-day solemn observance has been planned for Oct. 3-4.

The goal: Repent of the sin of slavery in our nation and work to eliminate racism.

Racism continues to be a major issue in our culture as reflected in these statistics: In 1999, according to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, 33.1 percent of black children lived in poverty compared with 13.5 percent of white children. The disproportionate representation of black Americans in the U.S. criminal justice system is well documented. Blacks comprise 13 percent of the national population, but 30 percent of people arrested, 41 percent of people in jail and 49 percent of those in prison. Racial disparities in incarceration increased in the 1980s and 1990s as the number of blacks sent to prison grew at a faster rate than the number of whites. Nationwide, black men are incarcerated at 9.6 times the rate of white men. (Human Rights Watch)

The Reading:

Matthew 7:1 "Do not judge, so that you may not be judged.

2 For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get.

3 Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?

4 Or how can you say to your neighbor, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' while the log is in your own eye?

The Meditation:

What does this passage say to you about the nature of Jesus? How has bigotry and prejudice infected our society? Are there consequences of the ravages of slavery that still affect our society? What should the Christian response be to bigotry? In what ways is judging others an issue in your life? How can we repent of the evils of slavery and racism in our nation?

The Prayers:

Let us pray for the elimination of the racism and bigotry that divide us. Let us pray that people of faith might unite to overcome the divisions of prejudice that continue to oppress people and restrict their opportunities.

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.

Silence**October 4: Reconciliation**

The Goal: Work for God's kingdom where all people are treated with equality and respect.

The Reading:

Matthew 22:34 When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together,

35 and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him.

36 "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?"

37 He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

38 This is the greatest and first commandment.

39 And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

The Meditation:

What do the great commandments say to you about the nature of Jesus? What does it say to you about the nature of Christianity? How do you live these commandments in your life? How do you fail to live them? What do you need to repent of and ask for God's help to fulfill this invitation? How can you break down the barriers of prejudice in your life? In our society?

The Prayers:

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.

Silence

A Bidding Prayer to End Poverty and Racism

Brothers and sisters in Christ: Before he was crucified, our Savior Jesus Christ promised to draw to himself all things whether in heaven or on earth. Let us pray, therefore, that the peace accomplished through the Cross of Christ may be realized in our own world and our own relationships. Let us pray for the Church and the world God so loves, for peace among all nations, and for the reconciliation of all people and all things in the Name of Christ.

Silence

Almighty God, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ was lifted high upon the cross that he might draw the whole world to himself: Mercifully grant that we, who glory in the mystery of our redemption, may have the grace to take up our cross and follow him in pursuit of your work of reconciliation in the world.

God of love, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for the poor, hungry, and neglected all over the world, that their cries for daily bread may inspire works of compassion and mercy among those to whom much has been given

Silence

Almighty and most merciful God, you command us to offer food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted: Grant that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart; that, following in the steps of your blessed Son, we may give of ourselves in the service of others until poverty and hunger cease in all the world, and all things are reconciled in the reign of Christ.

God of love, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for schools and centers of learning throughout the world, for those who lack access to basic education, and for the light of knowledge to blossom and shine in the lives of all God's people.

Silence

Eternal God, the author and source of all knowledge and Truth: bless all who seek to learn and those who teach them, and inspire us to break down barriers that withhold education from your children; that, enlightened with the bright beams of Wisdom, all may be equipped to seek the blessings of liberty, justice, and peace.

God of love, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for an end to the divisions and inequalities that scar God's creation, particularly the barriers to freedom faced by God's children throughout the world because of gender; that all who have been formed in God's image might have equality in pursuit of the blessings of creation.

Silence

O God, in whom there is neither male nor female, Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free: Unite the wills of all people, that the walls which divide us and limit equality among your children may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; so that all may live together in justice, harmony, and peace.

God of love, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for the health of women, children and families around the world, especially for an end to maternal and child mortality, that in building healthy families, all God's people may be empowered to strengthen their communities and repair the breaches which divide nations and peoples.

Silence

Almighty and ever-living God, giver of life and love, and Sanctifier of all families: Protect the health and safety of all women in childbirth and the children whom they bear, and inspire your people to work for an end to the deadly conditions which fuel maternal and child mortality throughout the world; that, in building strong and healthy families and communities, all may be strengthened to do your will on earth until the day when you gather us into one heavenly family.

God of love, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for an end to pandemic disease throughout the world, particularly the scourges of HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and Tuberculosis; that plagues of death may no longer fuel poverty, destabilize nations, and inhibit reconciliation and restoration throughout the world.

Silence

O God, the strength of the weak and the comfort of all who suffer: Grant your saving health to all who are afflicted by disease throughout the world. Bless the labors of all who minister to the sick, and unite the wills of nations and peoples in seeking an end to the pandemics of our age; that sickness may be turned to health, sorrow turned to joy, and mourning turned to praise of your Holy Name.

God of love, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for an end to the waste and desecration of God's creation, for access to the fruits of creation to be shared equally among all people, and for communities and nations to find sustenance in the fruits of the earth and the water God has given us.

Silence

Almighty God, you created the world and gave it into our care so that, in obedience to you, we might serve all people: Inspire us to use the riches of creation with wisdom, and to ensure that their blessings are shared by all; that, trusting in your bounty, all people may be empowered to seek freedom from poverty, famine, and oppression.

God of love, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for all nations and people who already enjoy the abundance of creation and the blessings of prosperity, that their hearts may be lifted up to the needs of the poor and afflicted, and partnerships between rich and poor for the reconciliation of the world may flourish and grow.

Silence

Merciful God, you have bestowed upon us gifts beyond our imagining and have reminded us that all that we have belongs to you alone and is merely held in trust by human hands: we give you thanks for those moments of reconciliation and grace we see in our world, of wrongs that are made right, knowing that in your love all things are possible. Inspire in our nation, its leaders and people a spirit of greater sacrifice and devotion in the use of our treasures for the reconciliation of your world; that, in forsaking wealth and giving up ourselves to walk in the way of the Cross, we may find it to be none other than the way of life and peace.

God of love, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for the elimination of the racism and bigotry that divide us. Let us pray that people of faith might unite to overcome the divisions of prejudice that continue to oppress people and restrict their opportunities.

Silence

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.*

God of love, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Let us pray for the departed, particularly those who have died as a result of poverty, hunger, disease, violence, or hardness of the human heart;

Silence

Almighty God, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ rose from the tomb and destroyed forever the bondage of sin and death: We commend to your mercy all your departed servants, particularly those who have died as a result of the brokenness of our world; and we pray that we, too, may share with [the Blessed Virgin Mary, _____ and] all the saints in the joy of your heavenly reign.

God of love, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect:

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 together and reconciled under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominion and glory, now and forever. *Amen.*

Adapted from Bidding Prayer to End Global Poverty and Instability (Episcopal Public Policy Network)