

Thanksgiving Prayer for the World

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November 24, 2004

Let us be in the spirit of prayer –

The November days grow shorter,
today a warming radiance of sun,
but grey days are many.
Trees so recently aflame with brilliant color
now lift spiny fingers heavenward,
lashed by high wind,
shivering in the biting cold.

This is the time to remember and give thanks.
Another year is closing; the harvest is in; it is time to take stock.
On this day after national elections, we contemplate
our lives in this community,
this nation,
this world.

Having emerged from history's most violent century,
we find ourselves in this first decade of century 21
still at war,
still living with the myth of redemptive violence,
still pursuing strategies of war
rather than pouring resources
into the ways that make for peace.

Creator Spirit, we would be dreamers of an alternative world,
where no one would hurt or destroy
and all your children would dwell safely in peace.

We contemplate our world in your presence –
the human story so laced with strife,
vying for dominance
jockeying for advantage.

What a puzzle is our world.
How complex is the network of humankind –
families, tribes, nations;
how difficult it is for us to gain some perspective,

to sense the passion that pulses in the heart of someone
so far removed from any circumstance
we have ever encountered.

Enable us to recognize our own self-interest
woven into the tapestry of our political and economic idealism.
Make us sensitive to the potential for our power
to intimidate and manipulate
worldly arrangements, economic policies,
issues of trade, of borders, of production, of natural resources.

Dampen the decibels of our rhetoric;
deepen the dimension of compassion in us as a nation;
lace our engagement in global issues with humility
born of insight and integrity,
founded on the conviction that justice alone
can lead to genuine peace and human well-being.

Saturate our faith and devotion with worldliness,
that we may love the world
with sensitivity,
with awareness,
with openness and candor,
with care borne of insight into the world's agony,
with hope borne of the realization
of the world's wonder and potential.

Before the world's chaos, pain and anguish,
give us the wisdom to be silent before we speak;
to identify with and immerse ourselves before we offer remedies
too easy, too facile, too self-serving.

Give us insight and sensitivity
to discern that ominous thunder
of the shaking of the foundations,
to recognize the recurrent corruptions of power
that we see all around us.

Enable us to see beneath the skin of the world –
its heaving passion,
its loveliness and its horror;
a world that is a ridiculous mixture of good and evil,
of beautiful tenderness
and unspeakable brutality;
a world where flowers bloom on manure heaps,

and deadly cancer grows on a beautiful, young body;
a world under the dominion of death,
natural, yet often so unexpected, so violent, so absurd!

Ah, dear God,
this is the real world, the only world we have
with its dreams of Eden
and its portents of Armageddon.

O God, as you love the world,
we would love it too.
Teach us how to live in it,
how to speak to it,
how to love it.

Let us sense the truth of Jesus' word,
*that it is in losing our lives
that we will find life,
in serving that we will be fulfilled.*

Creator Spirit,
brood over this community of faith,
this Christ Community.
Keep us steady; keep us strong;
keep our spirits open, our hearts tender,
our whole being full of grace.

Sometimes we wonder;
sometimes we waver, sometimes we want to run,
to be done with it all.
But, where would that leave us?
Where would we run?
To whom would we turn?

So, good and gracious God, gather us in,
hold us close, steel our purpose.
Give us joy in the journey and undying trust
in your purpose for us.
Amen.

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