

This Week in Prayer May 3, 2020

Dear Lord,

Sometimes we feel so alone and unprepared and exhausted.
Sometimes we feel forgotten and stepped upon.

Lord, remind us to breathe,
to look outward
and
to look inward.

Lord, remind us that in praying we are doing your will.
Help us to examine ourselves and to prepare for each day, knowing you are leading us, speaking to us and TOUCHING us with great love.

We are steeped in news, stories that make us weep and grow deeply sad, reminding us of so many vulnerabilities and so much human loss. Help us to set down our fears and burdens, to find sleep, to have healing dreams that connect us powerfully to you and all of your creation.

May we know what it means when our hearts are inscribed by the Holy Spirit. Guide us. Awaken us. Refresh us. Comfort us. May we come face to face with the unbidden stranger and understand this great wondrous mysterious love. For those who work in fire and rescue, emergency rooms and intensive care units with the ventilators and monitors, the beeping and lights, before them a feverish human completely dependent on their ministrations, God we ask for your compassion. Sustain those who give of the mind, body and spirit to care, to heal and restore. We grieve as we hear of more deaths and even suicides as the stress and risk of being on the front line accumulates. Shelter these intelligent, deeply caring souls in your eternal time. We grieve with families, the newly diagnosed, those passed, and those struggling to heal and find a new normal. So many directions to look. God have mercy. We hold the dead in a moment of silence...

For the firefighters in the **Ukraine**, battling forest fires around Chernobyl. where radioactive ash and smoke is ascending and spreading beyond borders. Lord have mercy on us. Forgive us for these seemingly unending man-made calamities.

For those who donate their money and talents, volunteering in all manner of ways, in shelters, at food banks, tending neighbors, providing care to children of essential workers; for summer camps turned to respite sites and places to quarantine and receive a warm meal. A little goes such a long way. A tear can be wiped or watched to fall. Help us to be present in those moments. Lord, have compassion for our desire to do everything we can. Love us when we feel we can't do enough or figure things out fast enough.

Help us to remember those who are forgotten, the "not newsworthy," the "last year's news," those in the "wrong" country. Break down our prejudices and hatred, shake apart our sinfulness and false righteousness that have nothing to do with compassion and good will.

Be with tribal peoples who are disproportionately suffering from this plague. School us in matching resources to need. Cause swift action to help, versus to deny and degrade. Be with the Dine' (the Navajo peoples of the **U.S.** Southwest). Be with all tribes and aboriginal peoples as they bury their dead, seek testing and shelter in place.

May our masks speak of our love and care – to be a symbol of openheartedness. Teach our eyes to smile, our eyebrows to lift in welcome and show those funny awkward distant embraces as we wrap our arms around ourselves when we see another. Cause us to wave and yell hello from windows.

Oh Lord, we ask that you breath your Pentecostal fire in us–now–in this moment. Help us take up our "plowshares" to address the emergency in our most fragile nations. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) reports this week that COVID-19 is eminent in over thirty so-called crisis countries unless we take swift action. Take us away from the podiums of falsehood. Direct us to the faces of those already suffering from war, displacement, those sheltered in dense refugee camps, those who lack water and sanitation, and those near famine. The IRC, with the Imperial College and the World Health Organization, have determined that if help is not forthcoming soon in those countries, 3 million deaths and 1 billion infections are likely.

We lay before you then, these our gravest fears. Burn through our dread and inaction. Create in us awareness and right action. We lift up our mighty resource of prayer to tend to the sorrows of **Syria, Yemen, South Sudan, Burkina Faso** and **Venezuela**, of refugee camps in **Greece**, of the peoples in **Afghanistan**.

Remind us that a virus can cause suffering and
that we can remove suffering in so very many ways.

May we do your will and see your kin-dom on earth as it is in heaven.
We pray, we work, we give and we shelter.

In your name.

Amen.