

Pastoral Prayer

We come to you, God, wanting to be your people. We are the Church, among the people you have chosen to be an instrument you *need* to repair this broken world. And we confess that we have not yet made the Church the healing, reconciling, grace-filled, Spirit-filled force for good that you need it to be, that all the world needs for it to be.

We come as citizens of a world that holds, in the same week, acts of terrible violence in Baton Rouge and Munich and Afghanistan and Miami, and everyday acts of kindness and generosity among many people, in every place. We have witnessed parts of the human spirit that shame us. But we also see humanity in a way that humbles us with gratitude.

You are the God of all these things, and of all these people. You are the God who loves and weeps for each of your children who is lost. You are the God who still, through every act of terrorism and every deed of war, stands by us and says, "Do not be afraid, for I am with you."

We pray today for all those who died and who were injured this week, and for the families of those who were lost.

We pray for the people among us, and all over the world, who are afraid.

We pray for those who truly seek you in their own traditions, that they will be safe, and that we will not be tempted to paint them with the broad brush of hatred and fear.

We pray for a deeper connection throughout the whole human family. Make us aware that every day there are acts of violence, some seen and some not so visible; that every day a family somewhere loses their loved ones; that all over the world you have children who are dying.

We pray also for the people we know, those whose names we have mentioned today and those whose names are hidden in our hearts, who are grieving today the loss of loved ones, or struggling today with illness, or bearing heavy burdens of worry.

We pray for this church, *our* church: that together we might see you in one another, so that we will remember who and how to follow; and so that we might hear your call to us, so that we can step boldly into the work you need for us to do.

And finally, God, we pray for our enemies, even the people whose plans and guns and bombs injure innocent people. We pray for them not because we know what to ask for, but because you told us to. Because we want to be your people. Because we want this world to look like *your* kingdom.

We pray in the name and in the tradition of the one in whom we have seen your face, Jesus who is Christ to us.

Amen.