

World Health Day Prayer Sunday 7 April 2024

With the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, we pray for the people and churches of Romania, Hungary and Bulgaria.

*World Health Day is April 7 when the World Health Organization commemorates its 76th anniversary. This year the theme is **'My Health, My Right**, which reminds us to advocate for equitable access to health services and work towards a healthier, more inclusive world.*

Opening Prayer

O Lord, our God,
who by word alone healed all diseases,
who cured the kinswoman of Peter,
you chastise with pity and heal according to your goodness;
you are able to put aside every malady and infirmity,
you are the same Lord,
grant aid to your servants
and cure them of every sickness which grieves them;
lift them up from their bed of pain,
send down upon them your great mercy,
and if it be your will,
give to them health and a complete recovery;
for you are the physician of our souls and bodies,
and to you we offer glory;
to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
both now and evermore, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

(Pilgrim Prayer, 271)

Prayer of Confession

“Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” (Acts 9:4)

We claim that we are part of one body.

Yet we are insensitive to pain that part of us suffers...

Why do we persecute you?

Why do members of the church, which is your body, reject and abhor you?

“...in your heart you devise injustice,
and your hands mete out violence.” (Ps. 58:2)

O Lord, we know who the vulnerable sister and brother is.

Yet we close our eyes.

We know what we know what is good and what needs to be done to prevent the spread of the disease.

Yet we are motionless or slow to act.

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will also be.” (Matt.6:21)

**O Lord, we have all the resources that we need,
yet we forget what it is for.**

Money that stays in the bank.

Medicine that stays on the shelf.

Food that remains out of reach.

Initiatives that stay on paper...

O Lord, why do you allow this to happen?
Why do you still tolerate us who call ourselves your children
yet do not care enough to love you and love one another?
Forgive us, Lord, for our complacency to suffering that is happening right now.

**Forgive us, Lord, for our complicity in oppression and sin.
Give us the strength in your grace to transform ourselves
and transform people and the society around us.**

O Lord of the universe,
O Lord of the tiny dew drop,
we do not comprehend you fully.

**Help us to discern you in the thunder and the whisper.
Help us to see you in your angels, your prophets, and your wounded healers.**

God help us to be good strategists in discerning issues that impacts global health.
Help us to be the salt, the yeast, the ambassadors, and the prophets,
to ‘talk the talk and walk the walk’
But help us also to be humble and to realize
that many a time we are not the prophets,
but the dry bones waiting for the Spirit’s breath.

**Help us Lord to be listening, learning servants,
to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with you. (Micah 6:8)**

(Pilgrim Prayer, Health & Wellness 269-270)

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Responsive Psalm *(based on Psalm 147: 1,3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11)*

Praise the Lord!

How good it is to sing praises to our God;

God is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting.

Great is our Lord, and abundant in power;

God's understanding is beyond measure.

**God heals the broken-hearted,
and binds up their wounds.**

The Lord lifts up the downtrodden;

God casts the wicked to the ground.

God covers the heavens with clouds,
prepares rain for the earth,
makes grass grow on the hills.

**God heals the broken-hearted,
and binds up their wounds.**

God's delight is not in the strength of the horse,
God's pleasure is not in the speed of a runner;
but the Lord takes pleasure in those who are in awe of God,
in those who hope in God's steadfast love.

**God heals the broken-hearted,
and binds up their wounds.**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Scripture Reading: John 20: 19 – 31

¹⁹When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." ²²When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

²⁴But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

²⁶A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." ²⁸Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. ³¹ But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Reflection by a leader

Questions for personal reflection.

Jesus the wounded healer, calls us to be a channel of ‘shalom’, forgiveness and healing in this world.

What does this mean in our lives and communities?

Do our actions as followers of Christ promote the fulness of life and promote the access and rights to health among most vulnerable and give them an enabling environment to live a life of dignity?



Prayers of Intercession

O Lord, we face great inequity and injustice, with more than half of the world population (approximately 4.5 billion people) remain underserved, lacking full coverage of essential health services. We pray that we, as congregations and communities consistently promote health and healing. Provide us with the grace, courage and resilience to strive to keep the world safe and to serve the vulnerable, stressing the sacredness of human existence and our obligation to care for the well-being of each person as an expression of God’s philanthropic love.

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayers

With those locked in poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and violence who each day feel their dignity seep away, with those exposed to conflicts, exploitation, abusive relationships and working conditions, we cry out and pray to you. We were reminded that nothing – not death, life, things present, or those to come- and all existential challenges we face can separate us from God's love. (*based on Romans 8: 32-39*). Help us to identify and name the barriers that prevent people from experiencing the love of God and lead abundant and healthy lives. Help us advocate and work to remove these barriers so all people can live dignified lives.

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayers

We pray for our world, your whole creation, to be renewed and transformed. Stand by your children! Especially we pray today for the churches and people in Romania, Hungary and Bulgaria. Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayers

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Commitment

For all the progress,

We thank you, God of life.

For all scientists, researchers, organizations, movements and enterprises that contribute to the well-being of people in their physical, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions and advocating against all barriers that inhibit access to it,

We rejoice, gracious God, that you set us free from fear.

For the doctors, nurses and health workers taking care,
the policymakers and implementers figuring out how to get resources where it is most needed,
for Community leaders who lead by example challenging inequity and injustice,
for teachers with open hearts and minds that allow for honest exploration and at the same time point to wisdom and knowledge that protect and give worth,

We celebrate, loving God, those doing good work.

God of the forgotten, God of the forsaken,
encourage our voices to cry out, so that no one is left out. Teach us to live simply, so that others can simply live following the example of your Beloved, Jesus Christ.

To strive and to make our resources life-giving for others,
so, your love becomes real to those who feel forsaken, forgotten,
and no one is left with crumbs, but all are healed, and are able to live full and fulfilling lives.

(Adapted from prayers written by Terry MacArthur)

Lord's Prayer *(each in our own language)*

Benediction

**May the blessings of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit –
in the mystery of the Holy Trinity –
Make us whole in every way now and for evermore. Amen**