

A Solemn Good Friday Prayer During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Written by Chris Schoon

In many traditions, the Good Friday prayer of intercession serves as an annual opportunity to bring before God all the burdens and concerns of God's people. As such, this congregational prayer is often long and wide-ranging. This prayer has been written for Good Friday in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Leader: Beloved children of God, our Creator, who made everything very good, our Redeemer, who has reconciled us, our Comforter, who meets us in our weakness and time of need, calls us to come before the throne of God with confidence.

People: For Jesus, our Great High Priest, and the Holy Spirit are already interceding for us.

Leader: In response to God's Word, we come together in the Spirit, with our sisters and brothers in Christ around the world, carrying each other's burdens, praying for the healing of the

world, which God so loves, and for the coming of Jesus' kingdom among every culture, language, and nation, and in every heart.

People: Hear our prayer, O Lord.

Leader: Christ Jesus, head of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church, we lift your body before you, praying for unity and sacrificial love among all your people; for those among us who are following your call to shepherd your people through the anxiety and grief of these days,

to bear public witness to your love through their frontline work in the medical fields,

to secure the well-being of all people through leadership in government and business,

to extend your compassion and protection to the most vulnerable through those caring for the elderly, those with chronic illnesses, immigrants, and those in prisons;

to be your presence in apartments and homes, with friends, neighbors, and families, at grocery stores, among colleagues, and alongside those we interact with only through technology;

and that you will strengthen our faith, deepen our confidence in you, and assure all who call on your name of your abiding love.

People: Merciful God, save, equip, and send your Church in this time of need. Surround, fill, and preserve us with your peace in Jesus Christ.

[Silence]

Leader: Almighty God, who was and is and is to come, by your Son, Jesus Christ, we are cleansed from our sins, and by your Spirit we are being made whole and holy. In this crisis season, when tensions are high, when partisan politics bend toward demeaning and demonizing those who disagree with us, when fear fuels racism and xenophobia toward those who look, sound, smell, or eat differently than us, help us to see and to honor the dignity of each person,

whether in political office,

in the media, or down the street,

at a store, or under a bridge;

whether they spew hatred, lie repeatedly, or promote ideas we think are absurd,

whether rich or poor, healthy or sick,
whether they worship you or they are far from you,
for you are the Giver of life, and each person is made in
your image.

People: Guard our mouths, our minds, and our hearts in Jesus Christ, that we might not sin against you or our neighbors in our thoughts, words, or deeds during this crisis.

All: Jesus, have mercy upon us.

Leader: Teach us to act with love for the communities in which you have planted us, that our attitudes, priorities, and desires would be shaped by your love and not by our misguided longings for selfish comforts and security.

People: For you send us as agents of your renewal, ambassadors of your reconciliation, citizens of your kingdom, your beloved children, who cannot be separated from your love for us in Christ Jesus.

[Silence]

Leader: Loving God, only you can transform hearts. Bind up greed, lust, violence, hatred, and all that grows in our self-centeredness, fear, and uncertainty.

People: Change my heart, O God.

Leader: Thwart the plans of those who would take advantage of those who are sick and vulnerable, of those who are grieving and anxious.

People: Turn all of our hearts toward you, that we might live with generosity and open hands toward all whom we encounter.

[Silence]

Leader: We remember before you by name now those among us who suffer, whether in body or in spirit, whether known to others or hidden from sight.

[Silent prayers for those whom the Spirit brings to mind]

Leader: Grow within us the strength, courage, and humility to extend your love to those for whom we have prayed, that our faith might be evident in the way we live.

[Silence]

Leader: We pray for all who do not know you, who have not heard of your love, who have not met your Son, Jesus Christ.
People: Hear our prayers, O Lord.

Leader: We pray for all those who have been injured by the church, who have walked away from your people, who can no longer imagine that you are good and loving.

People: Hear our prayers, O Lord.

[Silence]

Leader: And now, our gracious and ever-faithful God, we ask you to

heal every illness,

comfort every sorrow,

gather every tear;

show mercy to those of us who must choose whose life to save and who to let die;

grant peace and rest to those of us who are afraid, those of us who are exhausted;

provide for those of us who are without food, who are without work, who are without access to medical care, who are without housing;

befriend those of us who are alone, who are far from home, who have lost hope.

People: We need you, Lord Jesus. We need you now.

Leader: The whole world needs you.

All: Come quickly, Lord Jesus. Come quickly. Amen.

© 2020 Faith Formation Ministries, CRCNA

www.crcna.org/faithformation. Written by Chris Schoon.