Prayer
The World Human Rights Day

Opening Song -

Introduction to Prayer

We gather today with our brothers and sisters in the nations of our world to observe this first World Human Rights Day.

The members also noted that the observance of this day should contribute to further consolidation of the efforts of the international community in eradication of poverty, promotion of full employment and decent work, gender equity and access to social well-being and justice for all.

This prayer uses the principles of Catholic Social Teaching which remind us of the essentials we need to live to make social justice a reality in our world. In a spirit of solidarity and communion with all of creation and all our brothers and sisters, we recall the words of Micah and pray that our observance of this day may lead to a deeper living of and fulfilment of God's invitation to us

This is what I want from you
To do justice,
To love compassionately and
To walk humbly with your God — Micah 6:8

A PSALM TO WIDEN OUR TENTS

Choir 1 — Our world is too small.
Our lives are too small. Our vision is too restricted.
Choir 2 — May the people of various countries, various cultures,
tribes and families find room in our world and our lives.

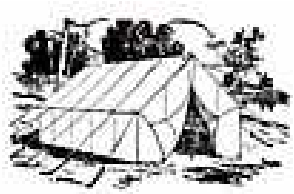
All — Help us to widen our tents, Shaddai, so that all are welcome among us.

Choir 1 — Our attitudes are too parochial, our assumptions too simplistic, our behaviour too predictable.
Choir 2 — May special people, may the differently-abled, may minorities of any kind - of race, class, or gender – find room in our world and our hearts,

All — Help us to widen our tents, Shaddai, so that all are welcome among us.

Choir 1 — Our boundaries are too limited, our preferences too conditioned,
our habits too ingrained.
Choir 2 — May the aging and the very young, may subcultural groups of every kind,
may special interests groups find room in our world and our prayer.

All Help us to widen our tents, Shaddai, so that all are welcome among us.



Choir 1 Our God is too small, Our rites too rigid,
Our ways are too exclusive.

Choir 2 May people of various religions and rites, whose name for God and claim to God are different from our own, find room in our world and our love.

All Help us to widen our tents, Shaddai, so that all are welcome among us.

God of all cultures, God of all people,
help us not to label anyone inferior or second-class.
Help us overcome our attitudes of superiority and oppression.
May we broaden our vision and widen our tents
so that plurality and diversity determine who we are:
people called and committed to a world united
injustice and peace, now and forever. Amen.

Adapted by jfb/jos3.viii.94 from M.T. Winter. WomanWisdom Crossword Publications. 1991: p. 105.

Life and Dignity of the Human Person

"Every person, created in the image and likeness of God and therefore radically oriented towards the Creator is constantly in relationship with those possessed of the same dignity. To promote the good of the individual is thus to serve the common good, which is that point where rights and duties converge and reinforce one another." Pope John Paul II, 1999 World Day for Peace Message, no.2

Rights and Responsibilities of the Human Person

"Every fundamental human right draws its indestructible moral force form the natural law, which in granting it imposes a corresponding obligation. Those, therefore, who claim their own rights, yet altogether forget to neglect to carry out their respective duties, are people who build with one hand and destroy with the other." Pope John XXIII, *Peace on Earth (Pacem in Terris*, 1963) no. 30

Silent Reflection

Intercessions expressed freely

Psalm 141*

I call to You, O Beloved One,
suffuse me with your Love.
Give ear to my prayer when I call to you.
May my supplication be heard as I surrender before You,
as I abandon myself into your heart.

Lead me to words of wisdom and truth,
seeds to be planted in my heart-soil.
Guide me to times of solitude and silence that nurture new growth,
so the Word may ripen into abundant fruit.
Cultivate in me a heart great with compassion and mercy,
that radiates out to all your creation.

May your Light so shine in me
that others are attracted to your peace and harmony.
In the company of your friends,
may I, too, walk the pilgrim road
to wholeness and holiness.

Call to Family, Community and Participation
"The life of the community, both domestically and internationally, clearly demonstrates that respect for rights, and the guarantees that follow from them, are measures of the common good that serve to evaluate the relationship between justice and injustice, development and poverty, security and conflict. The promotion of human rights remains the most effective strategy for eliminating inequalities between countries and social groups, and for increasing security." Pope Benedict XVI address to the United Nations, 18 April 2008

Option for and with the Poor and Vulnerable
"It is the strict duty of justice and truth not to allow fundamental human needs to remain unsatisfied and not to allow those burdened by such needs to perish. It is also necessary to help these needy people to acquire expertise, to enter the circle of exchange, and to develop their skills in order to make the best use of their capacities and resources."
Pope John Paul II, *On the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum* (*Centesimus Annus* 1991) no. 34

Proverbs 21: 10 – 15

Silent Reflection

Song response

Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
"It is clear that recognition of the proper position of labour and the worker in the production process demands various adaptations in the sphere of the right to ownership of the means of production."
Pope Joan Paul II, *On Human Work (Laborem Exercens* 1981) no. 14

Care for God's Creation/Stewardship
"…international action to preserve the environment and to protect various forms of life on earth must not only guarantee a rational use of technology and science, but must also rediscover the authentic image of creation." Pope Benedict XVI address to the United Nations, 18 April 2008

Silent Reflection

Intercessions expressed freely

Psalm 85* or a song

Let me hear what you have to say,
for you will speak peace to your people,
to those who are near you and who turn to you in their hearts.
Your salvation is near for those who fear you,
that glory may dwell in our land.

Mercy and truth have embraced;
Justice and peace will kiss.
Truth shall spring out of the earth,
and justice will look down from heaven.
You will give what is good, our land will yield its increase.
Justice shall go before you and make a path for your steps.

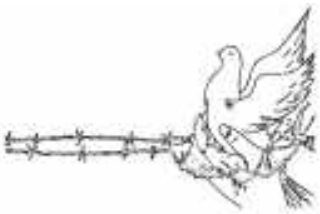
Global Solidarity
"Positive signs in the contemporary world are the growing awareness of the solidarity of the poor among themselves, their effort to support one another, and their public demonstrations on the social scene which, without recourse to violence, present their own needs and right in the face of the inefficiency or corruption of the public authorities." Pope John Paul II, *On Social Concern (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*) no. 39

Mt 6:19 – 21

Silent Reflection

Intercessions expressed freely

Promotion of Peace
"It is too easy to throw back on others responsibility for injustices, if at the same time one does not realize how each one shares in it personally, and how personal conversion is needed first. …For beneath an outward appearance of indifference in the heart of every man (and woman) is a will to live in brotherhood (and sisterhood) and a thirst for justice and peace, which is to be expanded." Pope Paul VI, *On the Occasion of the Eightieth Anniversary of the Encyclical Rerum Novarum* (*Octogesima Adveniens* 1971) no. 48



Isaiah 2:3 - 5

Silent Reflection

Psalm 122* or a song

Pray for the peace of the world!
May all nations prosper as one.
May peace reign among all peoples,
and integrity dwell within every heart.
Then will friends and neighbours and former enemies as well,
cry out "peace be within you."
For the good of the universe and in gratitude to the Beloved
let us serve the Holy One of all nations with glad hearts.

***** All Psalms in English from *Psalms for Praying* by Nan C. Merrill. NY: The Continuum Publishing House, 2000.

Closing Prayer - *Lord's Prayer for Justice*

Our Father . . .*who always stands with the weak, the powerless, the poor, the abandoned, the sick, the aged, the very young, the unborn, and those who, by victim of circumstance, bear the heat of the day.*

Who art in heaven . . . *where everything will be reversed, where the first will be last and the last will be first, but where all will be well and every manner of being will be well.*

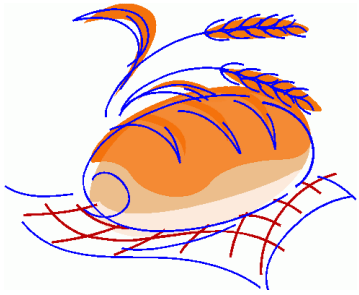
Hallowed be thy name . . . *may we always acknowledge your holiness, respecting that your ways are not our ways, your standards are not our standards. May the reverence we give your name pull us out of the selfishness that prevents us from seeing the pain of our neighbor.*

Your kingdom come . . . *help us to create a world where, beyond our own needs and hurts, we will do justice, love tenderly, and walk humbly with you and each other.*

Your will be done . . . *open our freedom to let you in so that the complete mutuality that characterizes your life might flow through our veins and thus the life that we help generate may radiate your equal love for all and your special love for the poor.*

On earth as in heaven . . . *may the work of our hands, the temples and structures we build in this world, reflect the temple and the structure of your glory so that the joy, graciousness, tenderness, and justice of heaven will show forth within all of our structures on earth.*

Give . . . *life and love to us and help us to see always everything as gift. Help us to know that nothing comes to us by right and that we must give because we have been given to. Help us realize that we must give to the poor, not because they need it, but because our own health depends upon our giving to them.*
Us . . . *the truly plural us. Give not just to our own but to everyone, including those who are very different than the narrow us. Give your gifts to all of us equally.*
This day . . . *not tomorrow. Do not let us push things ort into some indefinite future so that we can continue to live justified lives in the face of injustice because we can make good excuses for our inactivity.*



Our daily bread . . . *so that each person in the world may have enough food, enough clean water, enough clean air, adequate health care, and sufficient access to education so as to have the sustenance for a healthy life. Teach us to give from our sustenance and not just from our surplus.*

And forgive us our trespasses . . . *forgive us our blindness toward our neighbor, our self-preoccupation, our racism, our sexism, and our incurable propensity to worry only about ourselves and our own. Forgive us our capacity to watch the evening news and do nothing about it.*

As we forgive those who trespass against us . . . *help us to forgive those who victimize us. Help us to mellow out in spirit, to not grow bitter with age, to forgive the imperfect parents and systems that wounded, cursed, and ignored us.*

And do not put us to the test . . . *do not judge us only by whether we have fed the hungry, given clothing to the naked, visited the sick, or tried to mend the systems that victimized the poor. Spare us this test for none of us can stand before your gospel scrutiny. Give us, instead, more days to mend»our ways, our selfishness, and our systems.*

But deliver us from evil . . . *that is, from the blindness that lets us continue to participate in anonymous systems within which we need not see who gets less as we get more.* *Amen.*

The Holy Longing Ronald Rolheiser OMI

Closing Song