



PRAYER OF SOLIDARITY – FOR THE PEOPLE OF AFGHANISTAN

AUGUST 2021

A collaboration between the Loreto Justice Network and the ACBC Office for Justice, Ecology, and Peace.

To create a sacred space, please light a candle.

GATHERING

Welcome

In union with many communities around the world and throughout Australia, we gather in prayerful solidarity with our sisters and brothers in Afghanistan today. We are painfully aware that this is not the only place of suffering in the world at present and we acknowledge that the government here has held Afghani refugees in detention centres for years. We pray from within our tradition, extending solidarity outwards to all Aghani families and individuals, especially to girls and women in Afghanistan.

We value human freedom, democratic rights, and access to education and social protection. We use our imaginations to contemplate the fear of so many who have struggled for so long.

Acknowledgement of Land

We respectfully acknowledge all Traditional Custodians of the land and waters of Australia. We pay respect to their Elders, past and present, and young leaders of today and the future. We commit ourselves to the ongoing work of reconciliation with our First Nations families and communities.

Gathering

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: *Amen.*

Leader: From this place,
we are connected to you.

From this place,
we reach out to you.

From this place,
we suffer with you.

From this place,
we hope with you.

From this place,
we bless you.

Penitential Act

Leader:

You are a God of hope. Lord, have mercy.

You are a God of justice. Christ, have mercy.

You are a God of peace. Lord, have mercy.

All: *Lord, have mercy.*

All: *Christ, have mercy.*

All: *Lord, have mercy.*

SCRIPTURE *Matthew 19:23-25* (Jerusalem Bible)

Reader:

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Amen, I say to you, it will be hard for one who is rich
to enter the Kingdom of heaven.

Again I say to you,

it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle
than for one who is rich to enter the Kingdom of God.”

When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and said,

“Who then can be saved?”

Jesus looked at them and said,

“For mere humans this is impossible,
but for God all things are possible.”

LIVING TRADITION *Pope Francis, Angelus Address, August 15, 2021:*

Reader:

I join in the unanimous concern for the situation in Afghanistan. I ask all of you to pray with me to the God of peace, so that the clamour of weapons might cease, and solutions can be found at the table of dialogue....Only through dialogue can the battered population of that country — men, women, elderly and children — return to their own homes, and live in peace and security, in total mutual respect.

PEOPLE OF GOODWILL

António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, August 17:

Reader:

The world is following events in Afghanistan with a heavy heart and deep disquiet about what lies ahead....All of us have seen the images in real time. Chaos. Unrest. Uncertainty. And fear. Much lies in the balance. The progress. The hope. The dreams of a generation of young Afghan women and girls, boys, and men.

At this grave hour, I urge all parties, especially the Taliban, to exercise utmost restraint to protect lives and to ensure that humanitarian needs can be met. Conflict has forced hundreds of thousands from their homes. The capital city has seen a huge influx of internally displaced persons from provinces around the country where they felt insecure or fled during fighting. I remind all parties of their obligation to protect civilians. I call on all parties to provide humanitarians with unimpeded access to deliver timely and life-saving services and aid.

And I also urge all countries to be willing to receive Afghan refugees and refrain from any deportations. Now is the time to stand as one...We cannot and must not abandon the people of Afghanistan.

RESPONSE

Leader: In grief, let us maintain silence in solidarity with all who suffer today.
Silence (1min)

Litany

Leader: With one voice, we call on people from all traditions to pray in solidarity for the people of Afghanistan:

Mary, woman of faith: ***pray for us.***

St Oscar Romero, servant of the poor: ***pray for us.***

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, woman of courage: ***pray for us.***

St Maximillian Kolbe, servant of the prisoner: ***pray for us.***

St Josephine Bakhita, woman of endurance: ***pray for us.***

St Ignatius of Loyola, servant of truth: ***pray for us.***

St Edith Stein, woman of dedication: ***pray for us.***

St Francis of Assisi, servant of peace: ***pray for us.***

Prayers of the People

Leader: Let us call on God the Creator to hear the prayers from our hearts and homes, neighbourhoods and nation, and wider world.

Reader: For world leaders: that promises made to the Afghani people will be upheld by the international community. We pray:

All: *God of mercy, hear our prayer.*

Reader: For conversion of mind and heart: that all people of good will overcome hatred and division. We pray: **R**

For Afghani women and girls: that hard-fought-for freedoms will endure, and courage be placed in their hearts. We pray: **R**

For Afghani staff who have supported Australian personnel since 2001: that security and safety be extended to them in practical solidarity. We pray: **R**

For people in all world trouble spots, including Yemen, Haiti, and countries most impacted by Covid-19. We pray: **R**

For people of all faith traditions: that they will put aside differences and seek justice and peace together. We pray: **R**

For those who have died: that they will be held in God's loving embrace and continue to pray for all those in need. We pray: **R**

Leader: Gracious and loving God, as we pray with all those who suffer today, may you be with them, and with us in this time of great sorrow and lament. We ask this prayer through Christ, our Lord.

All: *Amen.*

Lament and Hope: *Will the Circle Be Unbroken?* by Tony Alonso
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4j2FrOvYXuU>

Will the circle be unbroken? Will the power of death prevail?
Will the voices seeking justice be rejected and grow stale?
Will revenge replace forgiveness? Will our pride replace God's peace?
Will the innocents be victims and the violence increase?

Will the words our God has spoken be revised or be ignored?
Will the love that made and formed us be rejected for the sword?
Will the God who cries, "Forgiveness is the only way to peace,"
Be blocked out by cries of anger? Will the fighting ever cease?

Here the body blest and broken, and the blood of Christ outpoured
Is the only food of freedom for the servants of the Lord.
Here the stories shared at table call us all to peaceful ways.
Show us Christ in all creation: show us love's the only way.

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CONCLUSION

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life

All: *Amen.*