

Trinity Church in the City of Boston
Vigil for Our National Life: Prayers & Readings
November 1-5, 2020



ACCOUNTING OUR POWER

Lord God Almighty, you have made all the peoples of the earth for your glory, to serve you in freedom and in peace: Give to the people of our country a zeal for justice and the strength of forbearance, that we may use our liberty in accordance with your gracious will; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Election Day, November 1884
by Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

If I should need to name, O Western World, your powerfulest scene and show,
'Twould not be you, Niagara—nor you, ye limitless prairies—
nor your huge rifts of canyons, Colorado,
Nor you, Yosemite—nor Yellowstone, with all its spasmic geyser-loops ascending to the skies,
appearing and disappearing,
Nor Oregon's white cones—nor Huron's belt of mighty lakes—nor Mississippi's stream:
—This seething hemisphere's humanity, as now, I'd name—*the still small voice* vibrating—
America's choosing day,
(The heart of it not in the chosen—the act itself the main, the quadriennial choosing,)
The stretch of North and South arous'd—sea-board and inland—Texas to Maine—the Prairie
States—Vermont, Virginia, California,
The final ballot-shower from East to West—the paradox and conflict,
The countless snow-flakes falling—(a swordless conflict,
Yet more than all Rome's wars of old, or modern Napoleon's:) the peaceful choice of all,
Or good or ill humanity—welcoming the darker odds, the dross:
—Foams and ferments the wine? it serves to purify—while the heart pants, life glows:
These stormy gusts and winds waft precious ships,
Swell'd Washington's, Jefferson's, Lincoln's sails.

Almighty God, to whom we must account for all our powers and privileges: Guide the people of the United States in the election of officials and representatives; that, by faithful administration and wise laws, the rights of all may be protected and our nation be enabled to fulfill your purposes; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

NURTURING OUR HUMILITY

Almighty God, you proclaim your truth in every age by many voices: Direct, in our time, we pray, those who speak where many listen and write what many read; that they may do their part in making the heart of this people wise, its mind sound, and its will righteous; to the honor of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reading *Ecclesiasticus 10:1-15*

A wise magistrate educates his people, and the rule of an intelligent person is well ordered. As the people's judge is, so are his officials; as the ruler of the city is, so are all its inhabitants. An undisciplined king ruins his people, but a city becomes fit to live in through the understanding of its rulers. The government of the earth is in the hand of the Lord, and over it he will raise up the right leader for the time. Human success is in the hand of the Lord, and it is he who confers honor upon the lawgiver.

Do not get angry with your neighbor for every injury, and do not resort to acts of insolence. Arrogance is hateful to the Lord and to mortals, and injustice is outrageous to both. Sovereignty passes from nation to nation on account of injustice and insolence and wealth. How can dust and ashes be proud? Even in life the human body decays. A long illness baffles the physician; the king of today will die tomorrow. ... The beginning of human pride is to forsake the Lord; the heart has withdrawn from its Maker.

For the beginning of pride is sin, and the one who clings to it pours out abominations. Therefore, the Lord brings upon them unheard-of calamities, and destroys them completely. The Lord overthrows the thrones of rulers, and enthrones the lowly in their place. The Lord plucks up the roots of the nations, and plants the humble in their place.

O God, you have bound us together in a common life. Help us, in the midst of our struggles for justice and truth, to confront one another without hatred or bitterness, and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

QUIETING OUR ANXIETIES

O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light riseth up in darkness for the godly: Grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what thou wouldest have us to do, that the Spirit of wisdom may save us from all false choices, and that in thy light we may see light, and in thy straight path may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

I Worried

by Mary Oliver (1935-2019)

I worried a lot. Will the garden grow, will the rivers
flow in the right direction, will the earth turn
as it was taught, and if not how shall
I correct it?
Was I right, was I wrong, will I be forgiven,
can I do better?
Will I ever be able to sing, even the sparrows
can do it and I am, well,
hopeless.
Is my eyesight fading or am I just imagining it,
am I going to get rheumatism,
lockjaw, dementia?
Finally I saw that worrying had come to nothing.
And I gave it up. And took my old body
and went out into the morning,
and sang.

O Lord, mercifully receive the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant that they may know and understand what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to accomplish them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

SEEKING GOD'S WILL

Almighty God, you declare your glory and show forth your handiwork in the heavens and in the earth: Deliver us in our various occupations from the service of self alone, that we may do the work you give us to do in truth and beauty and for the common good; for the sake of him who came among us as one who serves, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Reading *John 18:33-38*

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?"

Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?"

Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here."

Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?"

Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

Pilate asked him, "What is truth?"

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart and especially the hearts of the people of this land, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

GUARDING OUR JOY

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night (day), and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake.

Amen.

Reading *Philippians 4:4-9*

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, *Rejoice*.

Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

O God of peace, who hast taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be our strength: By the might of thy Spirit lift us, we pray thee, to thy presence, where we may be still and know that thou art God; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.