



The Anti-Racism Prayer Book

Poems, Prayers and Reflections From Various Sources

Selected by the Rev. Rainey G. Dankel, Janis Pryor,
Judith Lockhart Radtke, and Damon Syphers for
The Anti-Racism Team of Trinity Church Boston
2014

On the Rublev Icon depicting the so-called Old Testament Trinity

A stunning icon is set in an unobtrusive niche in the Commons of Trinity Church. The icon was a gift to the parish from Bishop Tom Shaw, SSJE, in gratitude for the parish's generosity to the Diocese out of its funds raised in the capital campaign of the first decade of the 21st-century. The icon depicts the so-called "Old Testament Trinity," and is a copy of one of the most famous icons of all time by the Russian icon-writer Andrei Rublev (1360-1430).

The story which the icon depicts is found in Genesis 18:1-15, and recounts the visit of God, in the form of three angels-men, to Abraham and Sarah. Though the visitors are strangers, Abraham and Sarah outdo themselves in providing hospitality, and so the story has come to be seen, by both Jews and Christians, as an example of the generous welcoming of strangers that God desires. In addition, in the Christian reading of this story, the visitors have been seen as a symbolic fore-shadowing of the presence of the Trinity itself in the life of the world, a presence which can be made known at any time, often in unexpected and surprising people and occurrences. Thus the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews admonishes us: "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it." (Hebrews 13:2)

It would be hard to imagine a better icon for the deeply spiritual and deeply practical work of the Anti-Racism Team of Trinity Church. In every encounter with those who are different from ourselves – different in race, or in any other way – we have the opportunity for true hospitality, in which we have the chance to break through the barriers that have made us strangers, to become known to one another, truly to welcome one another in the name of God. And as we do so, let us never forget, the one we welcome may well be an angel of God.

The Rev. Dr. William W. Rich
Senior Associate Rector for Christian Formation
Trinity Church in the City of Boston
December 13, 2013

Introduction

The following prayers, poems, and reflections have been gathered from various sources and authored by peoples of varying ethnicities and religious viewpoints. They have been found to be helpful in lifting our imaginations and opening our hearts to acknowledge the sins of racism and oppression exercised through power of a dominant group over others in societies. Some of the writers are well known; others represent voices rarely heard, especially in Western religious circles. Some of the writings have been prepared by the collectors themselves, offering their own struggles with issues of racism and exploitative power. All of the works are offered to fellow members of the Anti-Racism Team in the spirit of sharing viewpoints and perspectives that can enhance our work to build an anti-racist church and society.

“Let me not look away, O God, from any truth I should see. Even if it is difficult, let me face the reality in which I live. I do not want to live inside a cosseted dream, imagining I am the one who is always right, or believing only what I want to hear. Help me to see the world through other eyes, to listen to voices distant and different, to educate myself to the feelings of those with whom I think I have nothing in common. Break the shell of my indifference. Draw me out of my prejudices and show me your wide variety.
Let me not look away.”

Submitted by Janis Pryor

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My face is white...
My hands are white
as is my point of view.
Good Lord forgive me.

My white heart...
It tries so hard to see
all colors, all cultures, all peoples.
But it doesn't always work right.
Good Lord forgive me.

My white brain...
Tries to think clearly,
not judge but understand differences.
Sometimes it works.
Sometimes it doesn't.
Good Lord forgive me.

Why do I have the burden of privilege?
It takes so much effort to sort it out.
I get a headache.
Good Lord forgive me.

I don't want to be on alert
all the time...
Why can't I just live
into my wishes?
Wishes that there be
the same rules,
the same opportunities,
street justice and sharing,
companionship...for all.
Good Lord forgive us!

Dream on oh white woman!
Life is not like that...

Struggle on walk the way with Jesus.
He'll stick with you.
Others struggle all the time.
You aren't special.

Good Lord forgive me.

Father Sky,
It is I who raises my voice to you,
Have pity on me.
Mother Earth,
It is I who raises my voice to you,
Have pity on me.
To all my relations who live to the West, North, East, and South,
It is I who raises my voice to you,
Have pity on me.
Grandfather,
It is I who raises my voice to you,
Have pity on me.
Thank you for the blessings and the difficulties I have known,
Because everything is the source of strength and wisdom.
You who knows the journey that waits for me,
Help me to find the strength to keep going,
No matter the difficulty, no matter how weary I may be.
Help me to face each day,
Help me to face each test, each storm,
One step at a time.
Grandfather,
I ask this in the name of
All my relations.

Submitted by Janis Pryor

Jesus, Master, Rabbi and Friend,
as I look upon your crucified face,
I am reminded of your total Love for humanity.
You took on all the ills, social injustices, and social inequities of your time.
I daresay these same problems
have become so much of our life in the 21st century.
To you there are no color differences,
everybody is made the same according to God's plan.
There are no rich or poor in the sight of God nor
are there the social injustices
that man has made in the name of religion.
As I ponder and meditate your crucified face,
I am reminded of the ills of
imperialism, colonialism, and domination.
So I pray for strength in my lifetime
to loosen some burdens of society. Because I know
that if I do your work it will help heal
your scarred, tormented, crucified face.

Please give me the strength, intelligence, and LOVE
to be able to take over
where you left off many years ago.
For I know if I carry this yoke,
I am doing the work of the Father and above all things
living the golden rule of "love your neighbors as you love yourself. For you are the Way,
the Truth, and the Light."

Give me strength
to help others to do Your work to make the world a better place.
Amen

For Peace

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominion and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

For Social Justice

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.

For Those Who Influence Public Opinion

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.

For the Care of Children

Almighty God, heavenly Father, you have blessed us with the joy and care of children: Give us calm strength and patient wisdom as we bring them up, that we may teach them to love whatever is just and true and good, following the example of our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

For Young Persons

God our Father, you see your children growing up in an unsteady and confusing world: Show them that your ways give more life than the ways of the world, and that following you is better than chasing after selfish goals. Help them to take failure, not as a measure of their worth, but as a chance for a new start. Give them strength to hold their faith in you, and to keep alive their joy in your creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For Guidance

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

A Prayer Attributed to St. Francis

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

For forty days, for forty nights
Jesus put one foot in front of the other
and the man he carried,
if it was a man,
became heavier and heavier.
He was carrying all the trees of the world
which are one tree.
He was carrying forty moons
which are one moon.
He was carrying all the boots
of all the men in the world
which are one boot.
He was carrying our blood.
One blood.

To pray, Jesus knew,
is to be a man carrying a man.

Submitted by Janis Pryor

When Jesus walked into the wilderness
he carried a man on his back,
at least it had the form of a man,
a fisherman perhaps with a wet nose,
a baker perhaps with flour in his eyes.
The man was dead it seems
and yet he was unkillable.
Jesus carried many men
yet there was only one man -
if indeed it was a man.
There in the wilderness all the leaves
reached out their hands
but Jesus went on by.
The bees beckoned him to their honey
but Jesus went on by.
The board cut out its heart and offered it
but Jesus went on by
with his heavy burden.
The devil approached and slapped him on the jaw
and Jesus walked on.
The devil made the earth move like an elevator
and Jesus walked on.
The devil built a city of whores,
each in little angel beds,
and Jesus walked on with his burden.

O Lord, God of my salvation,
It's morning and the sun is shining brightly.
It makes the world seem good and beautiful.
But Lord, the coffee doesn't even taste good.
My paper's full of hate and meanness.
I think I need some time to think and pray and
Lift this burden off my soul.

Folks were expressing their concerns about welfare,
And minority contractors and affirmative action,
When up steps Mr. Letter to the Editor asking:
"What do you people want? We've given you voting
Rights and opportunities for education so you can
Better yourselves. I'm sick of you people trying to
Make me feel guilty about your failure."

I want to shout, "Who died and left you king?
Who are you to dole out rights and opportunities?"
My mother told me they only act that way because
They only feel good about themselves when they're
Looking down on somebody.
My Big Mama said, "You respect people because of
Who you are, not because of who they are."

I find there are those who are so sure I'm inferior
goods, they don't read my resume or listen to my ideas.
They say no before they even hear my questions.
Seems anyone can come from anywhere in the world
And get welcomed, but my people, working all these
Years, paying taxes, building this country,
are denied opportunities, told they're not ready.

Lord knows, I've tried to live out my creed
I've tried to be a lover, a learner, your servant.
I've tried to be worthy of trust. I've tried
To make the world a better place in which to live and grow.

I know the gifts I've brought are small in the face
Of so much need but I've offered them with sincerity
And hope...hope for today, tomorrow, and the future.

I'm so thankful to you for all the wonderful
Gifts I've received; for all the people who have
Loved me and supported me through the years.
I'm a bit ashamed that I was pleased when they
Said I was different; that I had a great future.
Now I ask, "What future do I have when so many
Are being left behind, have lost hope? They are me.

My Lord God, I don't want to seem ungrateful, but
I don't want to ask for more than respect for me
And for people like me, people still trying to
Shake off the shackles of slavery. I only ask to be
Seen as one of your children. I want to be seen
As worthy of hope. Life without hope is not much life.
Forgive me if I ask for too much, but I am your child,

It's a hard thing to face, Lord, but ever since I was a
Child the world has given me the feeling that
Everything would be fine if I and mine would just go away.
I watched folks let their little dogs lick them
In the mouth but they avoided looking me in the eye.
With all the washing and ironing I was still unclean.
I couldn't be right. I was born black.

Forgive me, Lord, but I've always hated being a victim.
I've tried hard to learn the rules of the game.
You've got to be prepared; I pursued education,
You've got to be patient; I waited and tried not to
Be too pushy. I tried to maintain my dignity.
You've got to be competent, a hard worker: I've tried.
Just when you think it's working...

The lady behind the checkout counter glanced at me:
"Food stamps?" How could she know how hard I'd worked
To learn to pay my own way, to escape the Social
Workers and the rules and regulations that fed you,
But worked hard to take away any shred of dignity.
All the checkout lady could see was black, and
Her understandings told her to discount them.
My children are all professional people, and they've

"...there is a prayer tradition that emerges from the black church. My grandmother doesn't have any money, doesn't know anything about a balance sheet...but she knows the worth of prayer... I went back and got one of those old prayers they used to pray down in Long Branch Baptist Church...These are our roots, and they run underground today."

I thank Thee, Lord, for sparing me this morning, for the blood
running warm in my veins, for the activity of my limbs and the
use of my tongue. I thank thee, Lord, for the raiment and for food,
and, above all, I thank Thee for the gift of Thy darling Son, Jesus,
who came all the way from heaven down to this low ground of sorrow,
who died upon the cross that "whosoever believeth in Him should
not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16 KJV) Our Lord, our
Heavenly Master, we ask Thee to teach us and guide us in the way
we know not. Give us more faith and a better understanding and a closer
walk to Thy bleeding side...

We plead bold one more thing more, oh Lord, if it is Thy glorious will, I
pray Thee, O Lord our Heavenly Master. We ask thee to search our hearts,
tie the reins of our mind, and if Thou see anything laying and lugging
around our hearts that not your right hand planteth and neither is pleasing
to Thy sight, we ask Thee to remove it by the brightness of your coming;
cast it into the sea of forgiveness, where it will ever rise up against us
in this world, neither condemn us at the bar of judgement, if it's Thy will.
O God, our Heavenly Father, we ask Thee to make us a better servant in
the future than we have been in the past. We thank Thee, our Heavenly
Father; won't you have mercy. Please remember the sick and the afflicted,
poor and those in hospitals, bodies racked with pain, scorched with
parch and fever. Have mercy on them if it's Thy glorious will.

This is our tradition, these are our roots. Not songs with complicated lines but songs that the salt
of the earth can sing. The church has been our rock in a weary place. The church has been our
foundation in ages past."

From *Conversations with God; Two Centuries of Prayers by African Americans*
Submitted by Janis Pryor

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You are afraid that if you commit to me, I will demand impossible things of you. So you take one step toward Me and one step back. Is it any wonder you are confused and torn by conflict? I do not demand a radical commitment. All I ask is that you open your mind to Me. That is commitment enough.

As you open your mind, I will open your heart. Mine is a loving energy. It is My joy to aid you in all things. Allow Me to work through you, always. Far from finding life with Me difficult, you will discover a greater ease. I am a boundless energy, an endless source of supply. Whatever you have need of, I can supply. I come to you as thoughts and ideas. I come to you as bread.

For your every need, I am the true answer. As you seek support, I seek to be supportive. In times of turmoil, I come to you as peace. In times of confusion and indecision, I come to you as clarity. Whatever form you need Me in, in that form I will appear. All of life is part of Me. I am part of all of life. Committing to Me, you commit to a more livable life.

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You feel small and ineffectual. Looking at the world, you feel overwhelmed. How can one person make a difference? You wonder. You feel despair. First of all, let us start with your self-image. You only feel small and ineffectual. You are a part of Me.

I am the one great energy sustaining all of life. I am large and magnificent. Therefore, you are large and magnificent. You need only draw close to Me. You need only listen to my gentle assessment of your nature. Sticking close by My side, listening to My guidance, you are able to do great things. Mother Teresa was one small woman.

Gandhi was one small man. You may not lead on the same scale as they, but they show what is possible.

Begin in your daily life. Be a force for good in all your encounters. Yours may be the smile on the checkout line. You may hold the door for the older lady to enter. With your family and friends, your attitude affects everything. Try bringing to your encounters a positive attitude. Let Me speak through you. I am a loving energy. Let Me use you as a channel for Me to bring more love into the world. One person focused on the good and the positive can create a large impact. Be a small coin tossed into a still pond. Let ever-widening circles of goodness emanate from you.

Submitted by Janis Pryor

Had it better in some ways; but the stigma of black
Dies hard. These days, it's impolite, to say out loud,
"We'd prefer not to have your kind here. You're just not....
It's hard to know when you're not taken seriously.
There are so many ways to say, "Not good enough."
And I would add - Lord - can you wake up those folks who haven't a clue
what they are doing to me. They might not mean to be like they are.

It's taking me over, Lord. My heart is filling up
And on such a beautiful day. "When will it end?"
I want to pray, but I don't know what to pray for.
Shall I pray for patience? I'm running low on
Patience. Shall I pray for courage? For hope?
For some notion that will dull the pain? I know
I have no power but yours. Lead me, Lord.

I have no place of comfort but at your feet.
Take me to your bosom and warm my heart that is growing cold.
Renew my life, fill me with your love. Only you can
Help me find peace. Only you can help me love those
Who would spitefully use me, hate me, isolate me, take
Away my personhood. Remind me you created them, too,
Sisters and brothers. Hold me, fix me Lord.
I pray you, don't let us fall apart. Bless us, Lord,
Those who live on the fringes. Strengthen us.,
Show us the way. Bind our wounds. Heal our hurts.
Forgive us when we forget to "to love one another."
Only in the power of your love and redemptive acts
Can we find the right thoughts to think, the right
Words to say, the right actions to take.

Lord, hear our prayer. We offer our petitions to you,
O God of Love and Mercy, of Healing and Renewal.

Thank you for another beautiful day.

From *Women's Uncommon Prayers*
Edited by Elizabeth Rankin Geitz, Ann Smith, and Marjorie Burke
Submitted by Judith Lockhart Radtke

TAI-ME PRAYER FOR GOOD FORTUNE

O Dom-oye-alm-k' hee, Creator of the earth,
Bless my prayer and heal our land,
Increase our food, the buffalo power,
Multiply my people, prolong their lives on earth,
Protect us from troubles and sickness,
That happiness and joy may be ours in life,
That life we live is so uncertain,
Consider my supplications with kindness,
For I talk to you as yet living for my people.

Submitted by Damon Syphers

THE MAORI LORD'S PRAYER

Eternal Spirit, earth-maker, pain-bearer, life giver,
source of all that is and that shall be,
father and mother of us all,
loving holy one in whom is heaven:

may it happen in the way it is good to you;
may it happen on earth in the same way
as it happens in spirit world.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil free us.

For you live in the glory of power that is love, now and forever,
now and forever.
Amen

From A New Zealand Prayer Book
Submitted by Damon Syphers

GREAT SPIRIT PRAYER *by Damon Syphers*

Oh, Great Spirit, whose voice I hear in the wind,
Whose breath gives life to all the world.
Hear me; I need your strength and wisdom.
Let me walk in beauty, and make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset.
Make my hands respect the things you have made and my ears sharp to hear your voice
Make me wise so that I may understand the things you have taught my people.
Help me to remain calm and strong in the face of all that comes towards me.
Let me learn the lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock.
Help me seek pure thoughts and act with the intention of helping others.
Help me find compassion without empathy overwhelming me.
I seek strength, not to be greater than my brother, but to fight my greatest enemy Myself.
Make me always ready to come to you with clean hands and straight eyes.
So when life fades, as the fading sunset, my spirit may come to you without shame.

A PRAYER ON PRIVILEGE *by Rainey G. Dankel*

Merciful God, I claim Your promise
to be with us when two or three are gathered.
You know that each of us has a unique heart and history
and so I can only speak from what I have seen and known
and become as one who enjoys the privilege
of being born white in the United States.

As I try to understand the ways
in which I benefit from that history,
or deprive others of life and happiness
and all the things I take for granted,
I pray that You will open my heart, my mind, my imagination,
and my eyes to see this country as it is
and not as I want it to be or think that it is.

Even as I utter words with the best of intentions
about “the poor,” “those who are dispossessed,”
“those who are disrespected,”
“those who are subtly or overtly treated as less than,”
those who fall in that thoughtless, painful category of “you people,”
I feel that I am distancing myself from these “others,”
and contributing further to the fissures
that divide all of us from each other and You.

Help me, O God,
to acknowledge honestly
the ways in which white privilege in America is perpetuated,
the ways in which racism thrives systemically,
and the ways in which our “Common Prayer” furthers these divides.

Dear God, I trust your Spirit to guide us
in our common life and enlighten us
to the injustices of white privilege in this country.
Make our common prayers occasions for your Spirit to break into
our hearts and lives, that we may finally see our world with a glimpse of
your love and light.
I pray that we may all be healed of our hurts and divisions,
so that we may become agents of the reconciliation and peace
that you desire for this world.
This is my prayer.
Amen.

WORDS OF POWER

"It is our desire that we and you should be as of one heart, one mind, and one body, thus becoming one people, entertaining a mutual love and regard for each other, to be preserved firm and entire, not only between you and us, but between your children, and our children, to all succeeding generations."

Kanickhungo, Tribe Unknown 1736

"I want to pay a tremendous respect to the women - our womenfolk. Man may slay one another but cannot ever overcome the woman. For in the quietude of her lap lies the child. You may slay him once and again. But he issues as often from that same gentle lap, a gift to the Great Good in which man is only an accomplice. That's all we are. We're only an accomplice. The woman needs us only for one night. Here we stand in eagle feathers and war bonnets and all that. And our women, so gentle, so sweet, so kind. Yet the race of man goes on because of our women."

Phil Lane, Sr., Yankton Sioux, 1992

"Men have visions, women have children."

Adeline Wanatee, Mesquakie, 1980

"The smarter a man is the more he needs God to protect him from thinking he knows everything."

George Webb, Pima, 1959

"In our language there is no word to say inferior or superiority or equality because we are equal, it's a known fact. But life has become very complicated since the newcomers came here and how does your spirit react to it? ... It's painful. You have to be strong to walk through the storm. I know I'm a bridge between two worlds. All I ask is for people to wash their feet before they try to walk on me."

Alanis Obomsawin, Abenaki, 1982

Alanis is a film maker whose work has been distributed through the CBC and shown a few years ago at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts

"Many religions have been brought to this land. And the way my religion is, they teach me, and they taught me, and told me to respect all religions. And I still do that. And I will until I close my eyes for the last time. When someone else believes what his Creator is, then we can stand and pray together."

Horace Axtell, Nez Perce, 1992

FROM TERESA OF AVILA

Christ
has no body now on earth but yours.
no hands but yours,
no feet but yours.
Yours are the eyes through which Christ's
compassion is to look out to the world.
Yours are the feet with which Christ is to
go about doing good.
Yours are the hands with which Christ is to
bless all people now.

Submitted by Janis Pryor
The author, Teresa of Avila (1515-1582), was a Spanish Carmelite and Mystic

May this country once again become a light
unto the nations of hope and goodness and
peace and freedom.

May violence and darkness be cast out of our
midst.

May hatred no longer find fertile ground in
which to grow here.

May all of us feel God's grace upon us.

Reignite, dear God, the spirit of truth in our
hearts.

May our nation be given a new light, the sacred
fire that once shone so bright from shore to
shore.

May we be repaired.

May we be forgiven.

May we be renewed.

Dear God, please bless America.

Amen.

From *Illuminata*

Submitted by Janis Pryor

LET US PRAY FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND PEACE

Almighty God, source of true justice and peace,
in you there is no distinction of persons,
for in you we are equally loved.

Reconcile us that we may live and work with each other and with you
to establish your Kingdom on earth where there is no poverty, war, or any
oppression, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

From the *Manual of the Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross*

Submitted by Judith Lockhart Radtke

PRAYERS FROM HOLY WOMEN, HOLY MEN

For Frederick Douglass

Almighty God, whose truth makes us free: We bless your Name for the witness of Frederick Douglass, whose impassioned and reasonable speech moved the hearts of a president and a people to a deeper obedience to Christ. Strengthen us also to be outspoken on behalf of those in captivity and tribulation, continuing in the word of Jesus Christ our Liberator; who with you and the Holy Spirit dwells in glory everlasting. Amen.

For Martin Luther King, Jr.

Almighty God, by the hand of Moses your servant you led your people out of slavery, and made them free at last: Grant that your Church, following the example of your prophet Martin Luther King, may resist oppression in the name of your love, and may secure for all your children the blessed liberty of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

For Thurgood Marshall

Eternal and ever-gracious God, you blessed your servant Thurgood with exceptional grace and courage to discern and speak the truth: Grant that, following his example, we may know you and recognize that we are all your children, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, who teaches us to love one another; and who lives and reigns with you and the Holy spirit, one god, for ever and ever. Amen.

For Florence Li Tim-Oi

Gracious God, we thank you for calling Florence Li Tim-Oi, much-beloved daughter, to be the first woman to exercise the office of priest in our Communion: By the grace of your Spirit inspire us to follow her example, serving your people with patience and happiness all our days, and witnessing in every circumstance to our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the same Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

PRAYER FOR AMERICA *by Marianne Williamson*

Dear God,
We join in prayer to celebrate this nation and
surrender its destiny to You.
We give thanks in our hearts for the founding
of this country.
We give thanks for and bless the souls of those
who came before us to found this nation, to
nurture and to save it.
We ask that God's spirit now fill our hearts
with righteousness.
May we play our parts in the healing and the
furtherance of our country.
May we be cleansed of all destructive thoughts.
May judgment of others, bigotry, racism, and
intolerance be washed clean from our hearts.
May our minds be filled with the thoughts of
God,
His unconditional love and His acceptance of
all people.
May this nation be forgiven its transgressions,
against the African-American, Native
American, and any and all others.
May our lives be turned into instruments of
resurrection, that the sins of our fathers
might be reversed through us.
May the beauty and the greatness of this land
burst forth once more in the hearts of its
people.
May the dreams of our forefathers be realized
in us, that we might live in honesty and
integrity and excellence with our neighbors.

AMENDS TO THE AFRICAN-AMERICANS by *Marianne Williamson*

To the African-American of the United States
For what has been done to hurt you and offend you,
For the evils of racism throughout our history,
Please forgive me and please forgive this country.
I acknowledge to you the evils that have
 occurred here
In your life and in the lives of your ancestors.
On behalf of my nation, I deeply apologize.
If I could rewrite history I would, but I cannot.
God can. Dear God, please do.
I acknowledge now the genius of your people,
And the brilliance of your spirit,
And the pain you have endured.
May the demon of racism be cast off,
Out of this country and away from this world,
May there be in this nation a correction and
 resurrection,
That nevermore shall any hearts be enslaved.
May the future be made new,
May the pain of the past be gone forever.
May the past hatred, dear God, now become a
 present love.
May forgiveness truly wash us clean.
May black and white America have a miraculous
 healing.
May we begin again as brothers, for that is what
 we are.
God bless your children unto all generations.
May the spirit of this amends bring peace to
 your soul. Truly, you have waited long.
I bless your children.
Please bless mine.
I thank you.
And I thank God.
Amen.

From *Illuminata*
Submitted by Janis Pryor

For Absalom Jones

Set us free, heavenly Father, from every bond of prejudice and fear; that, honoring the steadfast courage of your servant Absalom Jones, we may show forth in our lives the reconciling love and true freedom of the children of God, which you have given us in your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

For Genocide Remembrance

Almighty God, our Refuge and our Rock, your loving care knows no bounds and embraces all the peoples of the earth; Defend and protect those who fall victim to the forces of evil, and as we remember this day those who endured depredation and death because of who they were, not because of what they had done or failed to do, give us the courage to stand against hatred and oppression, and to seek the dignity and well-being of all for the sake of our Savior Jesus Christ, in whom you have reconciled the world to yourself; and who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

A Collection of Daily Commemorations of the Episcopal Church
Submitted by Rainey Dankel

I CONFESS by Howard Thurman

The concern which I lay bare before God today is.

My concern for the life of the world in these troubled times.
I confess my own inner confusion as I look out upon the world..

There is food for all - many are hungry.
There are clothes enough for all - many are in rags.
There is room enough for all - many are crowded.
There are none who want war - preparations for conflict abound.

I confess my own share in the ills of the times.
I have shirked my own responsibilities as a citizen.
I have not been wise in casting my ballot.
I have left to others a real interest in making
a public opinion worthy of democracy.
I have been concerned about my own little job,
my own little security, my own shelter, my own bread.

I have not really cared about jobs for others,
security for others, shelter for others, bread for others.
I have not worked for peace; I want peace,
but I have voted and worked for war.
I have silenced my own voice that it may not
be heard on the side of any cause, however right,
if it meant running risks or damaging my own little reputation.

Let Thy light burn in me that I may, from this moment on,
take effective steps within my own powers,
to live up to the light and courageously to pay for
the kind of world I so deeply desire.

From *For The Inward Journey; The Writings of Howard Thurman*
Submitted by Janis Pryor

AMENDS TO THE NATIVE AMERICAN by Marianne Williamson

To the nations of the Native American Indians,
as a citizen of the United States I say, please
forgive me and please forgive us.
On behalf of my ancestors and the group conscience
of all America, I deeply apologize for
the wrongs, so cruel, that have been inflicted
upon your people.
So many lives lost, yet still they haunt the psyche
of all people of goodwill.
We ask that the spirit of God give us absolution.
We as a nation have wronged.
Now we as a nation make amends.
How sorry we are for the suffering of your
people.
If we could rewrite history, we would.
We cannot, but God can.
May history begin again.
May the spirit of your people now be reborn.
For we embrace and honor the spirit of the
Native American tribes.
We bless and commit to the good of your children
and your children's children.
May be begin anew.
May your star rise high in the sky of this nation
and all others.
May the wrongs of the past now be made right
that your nation might be blessed, that our
nation might be blessed.
So be it.
Please God, make these things right in love, in healing,
in mercy, in grace.
Amen.

From *Illuminata*
Submitted by Janis Pryor

PRAYER OF A BANTU (AFRICAN) PASTOR

O God, we offer our thanks to thee
for sending thy only Son to die for us all.
In a world divided by colour bars,
how sweet a thing it is to know
that in thee we all belong to one family.
There are times when we unprivileged people
weep tears that are not loud but deep,
when we think of the suffering we experience.
We come to thee, our only hope and refuge.
Help us, O God, to refuse to be embittered
against those who handle us with harshness.
We are grateful to thee
for the gift of laughter at all times.
Save us from hatred of those who oppress us.
May we follow the spirit of thy Son Jesus Christ.
Amen.

From The Oxford Book of Prayer
Edited by George Appleton
Submitted by Rainey Dankel

I NEED COURAGE *by Howard Thurman*

The concern I lay bare before God today is my need for courage
I need courage to be honest - Honest in my use of words Honest in accepting
responsibility Honest in dealing with myself Honest in dealing with my fellows
Honest in my relations with God

I need courage to face the problems of my own life -
the problems of personal values:
They are confused They are often unreal
They are too exacting for comfort

The problems of my job:
Perhaps I am working at cross-purposes with my own desires, ambitions, equipment.
Perhaps I am arrogant instead of taking pride in doing work well.
Perhaps I am doing what I am doing just to prove a point -
spending a lifetime to prove a point that is not worth providing after all.
Perhaps I have never found anything that could challenge me, and my life seems wasted.

Here in the quietness I lay bare honest, for the guidance to deal
effectually with the problems of my own life.

O God, thou wilt not despise!

From For The Inward Journey; The Writings of Howard Thurman
Submitted by Janis Pryor

THOU DOST NOT BECOME WEARY *by Howard Thurman*

It is our faith and our confidence, our Father, that Thou dost not become weary, because always before Thee we present the same sorry spectacle. It is our trust that Thou dost not get tired of us but that always Thou dost remain constant, even as we do not; that Thou dost remain true even when we take refuge in falsehood and error; that Thou dost remain kind and gracious when our hearts are hard and callous; that Thy scrutiny and Thy judgment hold despite all of our whimpering, self-pity, and shame.

We would ask forgiveness for our sins, but of so much that is sinful in us we have no awareness. We would seek to offer to Thee the salutation of our spirits and our minds were we able to tear ourselves away from preoccupation with our own concerns, our own anxieties, our own lives. We would give to Thee the "nerve center" of our consent if for one swirling moment we could trust Thee to do with us what our lives can stand.

O God, our Father, take the chaos and confusion and disorder of our minds and spirits and hold them so completely in Thy grasp that the impure thing will become pure, the crooked thing will become straight, and the crass and hard thing will be gentled by Thy spirit. Oh, that we may have the strength to see and the vision to comprehend what in is needful for Thy peace.

From For The Inward Journey; The Writings of Howard Thurman
Submitted by Janis Pryor

HELP ME LISTEN *by Ted Loder*

O Holy One,
I hear and say so many words,
yet yours is the word I need.
Speak now
and help me listen;
and, if what I hear is silence,
let it quiet me,
let it disturb me,
let it touch my need,
let it break my pride,
let it shrink my certainties,
let it enlarge my wonder.

From Guerillas of Grace
Submitted by Janis Pryor