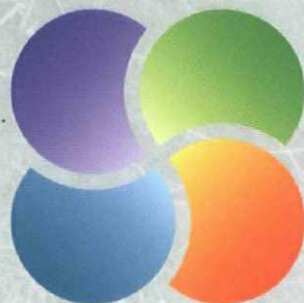


Prayer

S E R V I C E



DISCOVERING DIVERSITY

CALL TO PRAYER

LEADER We are a holy people, men and women called by our God to ministry in this moment of history—and the Spirit of God is upon us.

ALL We pray this day for the grace to tear down walls that divide us and build bridges of understanding and unity. We praise you, God, for the gift of cultural diversity in our world. Help us learn to listen more deeply and connect with the "other," who may have a different perspective and background. We ask this in the name of Jesus, your son and our brother. Amen.

READING

We live in a world that . . . actively encourages diverse forms of self-expression, filling the planet with variety beyond imagination. And then it coheres this diversity into systems, creating new unities from abundant variety. The system-seeking desire of life calls us to work with its diversity. It asks that we enrich the meaning and capacities of our organizations through our differentness. It asks that we bravely evoke with one another the deep emotions of purpose and meaning. It asks that we have faith that through differentness we can discover unifying identities . . . Diversity is life's means for discovering new ways of being together. Life pursues a path of differentness to a destination of wholeness . . . to find new ways of living together.

Margaret Wheatley and Myron Kellner-Rogers, A Simpler Way, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco, 1996, pp. 43, 64, 90.

RESPONSE

Isaiah 45:15-20 (*alternate sides*)

Truly within your midst God is hidden, the God of Israel, the God of all creation, the God of every race and people and nation.

This is no God who makes distinctions, who allows the shame of the human heart to judge the worthiness of flesh and blood by the color of the skin or the thoughts one thinks in secret.

Israel, you are saved by Yahweh. Never again shall you be shamed before the world. Thus says Yahweh: "I am your god, yours alone.

I have not spoken my word in hiding, I have spoken my word before all creation to bind you as one people living in my promise of justice, my dreaming of your peace."

ALL Good and gracious God, help us to seek and find the depth and richness emerging from the confluence of cultures in our global societies. So much of human wisdom and expertise about health and healing, consciousness, and alternative visions of the future are embodied in the world's different cultures. May we foster greater diversity among us and in our organizations. May we learn to partner with others to create a just, harmonious, and sustainable future for Catholic health ministry. Amen.

SUGGESTED MUSIC

"All Are Welcome," by Marty Haugen, in *All Are Welcome*, GIA Publications, Chicago.

"All One People," by Dan Schutte, in *Drawn by a Dream*, OCP Publications, Portland, OR.

This prayer service focuses on the gift of diversity and the confluence of cultures needed to effect cultural healing, collaborative actions for the common good, and a just world order that nourishes all life. Feel free to adapt the service to suit your own needs.

—Sr. Barbara McMullen, CDP, senior associate, Sponsor Services,
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JOURNAL OF THE CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

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