



Prayer for a More Connected Community

The prayer leader invites the group to enter a moment of quiet, allowing the busyness of the day to be suspended for just a moment to allow God's presence to be more closely felt.

After this quiet time, designated readers begin the following reflections:

READER 1: In our communities, we witness the irony of childhood obesity existing next to the reality of those who do not know where their next meal will come from.

READER 2: In our communities, we witness the irony of enhanced security alongside deeper feelings of insecurity.

READER 3: In our communities, we witness the irony of the most advanced health system in the world out of the reach of a growing number of uninsured Americans.

READER 4: In our communities, we witness the irony of electronic connectedness that easily puts us in touch with people around the world next to a growing sense of emotional disconnectedness among people.

LEADER: Let us listen to this reading from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (I Cor 12:14-27):

Now the body is not a single part, but many. If a foot should say, "Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body," it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. Or if an ear should say, "Because I am not an eye I do not belong to the body," it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God placed the parts, each of them, in the body as he intended. If they were all one part, where would the body be? But as it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you," nor again the head to the feet, "I do not need you." Indeed, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are all the more necessary, and those parts of the body that we consider less honorable we surround



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with greater honor, and our less presentable parts are treated with greater propriety, whereas our more presentable parts do not need this. But God has so constructed the body as to give greater honor to a part that is without it, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same concern for one another. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy. Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- In our community, who are those who are "left out," without input to decisions that effect them? How may we reach out to bring them back to the "body" of the community?
- At our workplace, are there any persons or groups to whom we have said "I don't need you," directly or indirectly? Why? How do we bridge the gap that exists and establish connection with them?
- Among our family and friends, who is "cut off" from us right now? Why? What can we do to draw close to them again?

PETITIONS

(response: Lord, hear us)

That we may see our connection to the human family as broader than national boundaries, enlivened by God's spirit in all of creation, we pray . . .

That we will resist those who would lead others to war by demonizing other parts of the human family, we pray . . .

That we may honor the "lesser members" of our community by actively working to establish stronger relationships, we pray . . .

Others may offer their own petitions at this time

All pray together

Creator God, we know that in the midst of conflict and division, it is you who turns our minds to thoughts of peace. On this day, let us overcome our fear of reaching out to those who are distant and different. Strengthen our faith in the insights of your Apostle Paul, who spent his life enlarging the circle of our community of faith. Help us to follow his example so that our work will heal divisions of every kind.

We pray in the name of your son Jesus, whose body we are. Amen.

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