

Prayer for Nonviolence

By SR. PATRICIA TALONE, RSM, PhD
VICE PRESIDENT, MISSION SERVICES, CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION, ST. LOUIS

LEADER: Each day we are inundated by images and experiences of violence: international war and oppression, aggression and fighting in our cities and furious words hurled by complete strangers. Within our health care facilities, we see the wretched results of sexual and domestic violence wreaked upon innocent and vulnerable persons. Amid these disturbing images, let us today together reflect upon the peace and nonviolence to which those who trust in God's presence are called. Let us recall that our strength and our ministry come from God.

READER 1: *A reading from the Gospel of Luke 12:4-8.*
I tell you my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body but after that can do no more. I shall show you whom to fear. Be afraid of the one who after killing has the power to cast into Gehenna; yes, I tell you, be afraid of that one. Are not five sparrows sold for two small coins? Yet not one of them has escaped the notice of God. Even the hairs of your head have all been counted. Do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows.

LEADER: God is our refuge and strength
An ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
And the mountains fall into the sea.

ALL: God is our refuge and our strength.

LEADER: There is a river whose streams make glad
the city of God,
The holy place where the Most High dwells.
God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.

ALL: God is our refuge and our strength.

LEADER: The Lord Almighty is with us;
The God of Jacob is our fortress.

ALL: God is our refuge and our strength.

LEADER: He says "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."

ALL: God is our refuge and our strength.

READER 2: *From the words of Mahatma Gandhi:*
"Nonviolence is the greatest force at the disposal of humanity. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of humanity. Nonviolence is not passivity in any shape or form. It is the most active force in the world...The more you develop it in your own being, the more infectious it becomes till it overwhelms your surroundings and by and by might oversweep the world. We have to make truth and nonviolence not matters for mere individual practice, but for practice by groups and communities and nations. That, at any rate is my dream. When the practice of nonviolence becomes universal, God will reign on earth as God reigns in heaven."
(From *Mohandas Gandhi: Essential Writings.*)

LEADER: Let us lift up in prayer those places and people who suffer from violence and destruction. After each petition, please respond:
God of love and gentleness, hear our prayer.

(Pause for petitions from listeners and responses.)

LEADER: Let us bring our prayers to our loving God in the words that Jesus taught us:

ALL: Our Father who art in Heaven,
Hallowed be thy name;
Thy kingdom come
Thy will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us;
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
Amen.