

# The Followers of Christ In a Changing World

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## CALL TO PRAYER

LEADER: Creator and Source of all being, we give you thanks for the gift of one another. We ask that you be with us as we discern ways to support our partners in the ministry of proclaiming Christ's mission. Open our eyes that we may see with your vision. Open our ears so that in our dialogue we may hear what you want us to hear. Bless all we do. May it be a holy work done in your name. We ask this in the name of Jesus and in the power of the Spirit. Amen.

## READER 1: *Genesis 17:1-8*

When Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to him and said: "I am God the Almighty. Walk in my presence and be blameless. Between you and me I will establish my covenant, and I will multiply you exceedingly."

When Abram prostrated himself, God continued to speak to him: "My covenant with you is this: you are to become the father of a host of nations. No longer shall you be called Abram; your name shall be Abraham, for I am making you the father of a host of nations. I will render you exceedingly fertile; I will make nations of you; kings shall stem from you. I will maintain my covenant with you and your descendants after you throughout the ages as an everlasting pact, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. I will give to you and to your descendants after you the land in which you are now staying, the whole land of Canaan, as a permanent possession; and I will be their God."

## RESPONSIVE READING (*Alternate sides*)

From *Gaudium et Spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)*

The joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well.

Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their hearts.

For theirs is a community of people united in Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit in their pilgrimage towards

the Father's kingdom, bearers of a message of salvation for all of humanity.

That is why they cherish a feeling of deep solidarity with the human race and its history.

## READER II

From Fr. J. Bryan Hehir, M.Div., Th.D., "On Catholic Institutions, Society and the Individual."

The secular state, when it's at its best, will neither favor any religious tradition nor impose any discrimination on a religious tradition because it's religious. So the secular state is to function in American society to set us free to prove the quality of our witness. Set us free. No special help. No special discrimination.

A religiously pluralistic society means that no matter how deeply we feel that abortion is wrong, euthanasia is wrong, minimum wage is a necessity, basic health care is a right; no matter how deeply we feel about that, we live in a society where not everybody starts at that point. So the ability to persuade is part and parcel of our ability to succeed. That's what a religiously pluralistic society means. It means in our one society, there are groups of people who have deep disagreements about the ultimate questions of life. And the question about whether you can create a core of shared values when we disagree on ultimate questions is the pervasive question of a pluralistic society.

## *Pause for reflection*

LEADER: Loving God, we thank and praise you for the power of your presence deep in our hearts and the vitality of your presence in our midst. We believe that creative, committed leaders will guide our ministry in the future, ensuring its continuity and fidelity to the mission.

ALL: Send your Spirit upon us, O Lord, to direct us in our quest for ways to partner with others in this sacred trust. We believe you are the hope that sustains and strengthens us in these challenging and changing times. Glory and praise to you. Amen.