

Prayers for Racial Reconciliation

For those completing the 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge in Lent,
or for any who want to pray more intentionally for justice and equity.

Only have a moment for prayer? Pray this (*Prayer for the Human Family, Book of Common Prayer, page 815*) daily – in the morning, or when you go to bed, or when you watch the news, or another time – at the same time each day:

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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Add these prayers to your **usual personal prayer time** to help you pray for the whole world. They can also be used for **family prayers**, at dinner or bedtime, with one person leading and the others making the responses printed in bold.

The **Confession** at the end of these prayers can be used with these prayers or separately.

Let us pray for the Church and for the world.

God of love, we pray for your church: For Michael, our Presiding Bishop; William, our bishop; for all lay and ordained ministers; and for all who seek you in the community of the faithful. Equip us with compassion and love, to carry out your work of reconciliation in the world.

add your own prayers for the church

God of love,

Hear our prayers for the church.

God of freedom, we pray for our nation, and all the nations of the world: For peace and unity across barriers of language, color, and creed; for elected and appointed leaders, that they would serve the common good. Inspire all people with courage to speak out against hatred, to actively resist evil. Unite the human family in bonds of love.

add your own prayers for the world

God of freedom,

Hear our prayers for the world.

God of justice, we pray for the earth, your creation entrusted to our care: For the animals and birds, the mountains and oceans, and all parts of your creation that have no voice of their own. Stir up in us a thirst for justice that protects the earth and all its resources, that we may leave to our children's children the legacy of beauty and abundance that you have given us.

add your own prayers for the earth

God of justice,
Hear our prayers for the earth.

God of peace, we pray for this community: For our local leaders; for our schools and markets; for our neighborhoods and workplaces. Kindle in every heart a desire for equality, respect, and opportunity for all. Give us courage to strive for justice and peace among all people, beginning here at home.

add your own prayers for the community

God of peace,
Hear our prayers for this community.

God of mercy, we pray for all in any kind of need or trouble: For those whose lives are closely linked with ours, and those connected to us as part of the human family. For refugees and prisoners; for the sick and suffering, the lonely and despairing; for those facing violence; for all held down by prejudice or injustice. Awaken in us compassion and humility of spirit, as we seek and serve Christ in all persons.

add your own prayers for those in need

God of mercy,
Hear our prayers for all who are in need.

God of grace, we pray for those who have died: For the faithful in every generation who have worked for justice; for prophets who called us to racial reconciliation; for martyrs who died because of hatred; and for all the communion of saints. Make us faithful to your call to proclaim your Good News, by word and example, and bring us at last into the glorious company of the saints in light.

add your own prayers for those who have died

God of grace,
Hear our prayers for those who have died.

Concluding Collect

Hear our prayers, Holy God. Breathe your Spirit over us and all the earth, that barriers would crumble and divisions cease. Make us more fully your co-healers of the broken world. Unite us with all people in bonds of love, that the whole earth and all its peoples may be at peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

(or this version)

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.** (BCP p. 823)

Confession

Let us confess our sins against God and one another.

Almighty God, Source of all that is, Giver of every good gift:

You create all people in your image and call us to love one another as you love us.

**We confess that we have failed to honor you
in the great diversity of the human family.**

**We have desired to live in freedom,
while building walls between ourselves and others.**

**We have longed to be known and accepted for who we are,
while making judgements of others based on the color of skin,
or the shape of features,
or the varieties of human experience.**

**We have tried to love our neighbors individually
while yet benefitting from systems that hold those same neighbors in oppression.**

Forgive us, Holy God.

Give us eyes to see you as you are revealed in all people.

Strengthen us for the work of reconciliation rooted in love.

**Restore us in your image, to be beloved community, united in our diversity,
even as you are one with Christ and the Spirit,**

Holy and undivided Trinity, now and for ever. Amen.

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ,
strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

Amen.

This Litany of Repentance can be used **to create a time for reflection.**

You can do this alone, or with other people.

Give yourself at least 10 or 15 uninterrupted minutes, light a candle or choose some other way to create sacred space, and pray this litany aloud – or, if silently, take it slowly.

Then sit in silence, letting God speak in your heart and mind, reflecting on what you have just prayed.

Finish with the Lord's Prayer.

Litany of Repentance

Dear people of God, our history is marred by oppression, by the enslavement of those who differ from us, and by the forces of racism that attack human dignity. The sin of racism is woven into our lives and our cultures, in small and great ways, in things done and things left undone.

As followers of Christ, we reject racism and the oppression of other human beings. In building Christ's beloved community, we must strive to love all people, respect all people, and work for the good of all people. We must stand alongside God's children of every race, language, and culture, and work together as agents of justice, peace, and reconciliation.

In the assurance of our forgiveness, let us kneel before God and humbly confess our sins: our participation in racism, our privilege based on racism, and our perpetuation of racism.

Silence is then kept for a time, all kneeling.

God the Father, you freed your people from slavery in Egypt, yet the legacy of slavery deforms our lives today.

Have mercy on us.

God the Son, you prayed that all would be united in your love and service, yet the divisions among us rend your body.

Have mercy on us.

God the Holy Spirit, you inspire us to live peaceably with all, yet the stain of genocide and internment mars our striving for justice.

Have mercy on us.

We have harmed one another and the earth through negligence, greed, and self-interest.

Have mercy on us.

We have failed to condemn discrimination that leads to unrest.

Have mercy on us.

We have decried violence, while overlooking inequity and frustration from which it rises.

Have mercy on us.

We have practiced injustice for economic gain and have oppressed others to make a false peace.

Have mercy on us.

We have sought comfort in advantage for ourselves at the cost of injustice for others.

Have mercy on us.

We have welcomed solace over conflict and ignored the cries of those harmed by our comfort.

Have mercy on us.

We have grasped for this world's goods, and been arrogant toward those who have little.

Have mercy on us.

We have not shared the good things we have been given, and blamed the poor for their poverty.

Have mercy on us.

We have been fearful and distrustful of those who are different from us.

Have mercy on us.

We have divided ourselves from others, and refused to listen to or believe their experience.

Have mercy on us.

We have been indifferent to the pain and suffering of our sisters and brothers.

Have mercy on us.

We have held in contempt those who need our help, and not loved them with our whole hearts.

Have mercy on us.

We have been self-satisfied in our privilege, and denied our oppression of others.

Have mercy on us.

We have preferred order over justice, and isolation over the struggle for peace.

Have mercy on us.

We have quietly held good intentions, and kept silent the message of reconciliation.

Have mercy on us.

We have failed to act with courage for the sake of love.

Have mercy on us.

Lord have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

May Almighty God have mercy on us, grant us courage and conviction, and strengthen us to love others who are unlike us. May God, the Holy and Undivided Trinity, make us compassionate in our actions and courageous in our works, that we may see Christ's Beloved Community in our own day. **Amen.**

These prayers are drawn from the prayers for Racial Reconciliation and Justice developed by the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music of The Episcopal Church, as published in 2018.

<https://standingcommissiononliturgyandmusic.org/2018/01/03/prayers-for-racial-reconciliation-and-justice/>