

LAMENT FOR THE WOUNDS AND DEATH OF THOSE MADE IN YOUR IMAGE

When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

“A voice is heard in Ramah,
weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children
and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more.”

-Matthew 2:16-18

LORD, IN YOUR MERCY, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

LAMENT FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LOST LOVED ONES

How long, Lord, must I call for help,
but you do not listen?
Or cry out to you, "Violence!"
but you do not save?
Why do you make me look at injustice?
Why do you tolerate wrongdoing?
Destruction and violence are before me;
there is strife, and conflict abounds.

-Habakkuk 1:2-4

LORD, IN YOUR MERCY, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

MERCY FOR CHILDREN AND THE MOST VULNERABLE

Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them.

Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”

-Matthew 19:13, 14

LORD, IN YOUR MERCY, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

FOR PEACE BETWEEN NATIONS

He will judge between the nations
and will settle disputes for many peoples.
They will beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will not take up sword against nation,
nor will they train for war anymore.

Come, descendants of Jacob,
let us walk in the light of the Lord.

-Isaiah 2:4,5

LORD, IN YOUR MERCY, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

FOR LEADERS AND RULERS TO DO JUSTICE

How long will (the rulers) judge unjustly
and show partiality to the wicked?

Give justice to the weak and the fatherless;
maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.

Rescue the weak and the needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”

Arise, O God, judge the earth;
for you shall inherit all the nations!

-Psalm 82: 2-4, 8

LORD, IN YOUR MERCY, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

FOR HOPE AS THE CHURCH WAITS

My days have passed, my plans are shattered. Yet the desires of my heart turn night into day; in the face of the darkness light is near. If the only home I hope for is the grave, if I spread out my bed in the realm of darkness, where then is my hope—who can see any hope for me?

-Job 17:11-15

At least there is hope for a tree:
If it is cut down, it will sprout again,
and its new shoots will not fail.
Its roots may grow old in the ground
and its stump die in the soil,
yet at the scent of water it will bud
and put forth shoots like a plant.

-Job 14:7-9

LORD, IN YOUR MERCY, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

LAMENT AND GROANING UNTIL ALL CREATION IS SET FREE

The created world itself can hardly wait for what's coming next. Everything in creation is being more or less held back. God reins it in until both creation and all the creatures are ready and can be released at the same moment into the glorious times ahead. Meanwhile, the joyful anticipation deepens...

All around us we observe a pregnant creation. The difficult times of pain throughout the world are simply birth pangs. But it's not only around us; it's within us. The Spirit of God is arousing us within. We're also feeling the birth pangs. These sterile and barren bodies of ours are yearning for full deliverance. That is why waiting does not diminish us, any more than waiting diminishes a pregnant mother. We are enlarged in the waiting. We, of course, don't see what is enlarging us. But the longer we wait, the larger we become, and the more joyful our expectancy.

-Romans 8:19-25, The Message

LORD, IN YOUR MERCY, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

FOR THE PEACE OF EMMANUEL TO REIGN

My soul glorifies the Lord

and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has been mindful

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

for the Mighty One has done great things for me—
holy is his name.

His mercy extends to those who fear him,

from generation to generation.

He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.
He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful
to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as he promised our ancestors.”

-Luke 1:46-55