

Prayer in time of war, terror, and hatred

Gracious Father, we come to you at a time when the world is again troubled by war and rumors of war and by the memory of terror and violence.

Jesus said: Blessed are the humble in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Gracious 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 that infect our hearts and our political systems.

Jesus said: Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Gracious God, your loving care extends to all the world. We remember today the people of many nations and faiths whose lives have been cut short by terror and war – victims of terror, —widows and fatherless children.

As we see what so many have endured, give us the grace to examine our relationships with each other and with those who see us as an enemy. Show us and our leaders the way to use our wealth and strength for the good of all and the healing of the nations.

Jesus said: Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Gracious God, we pray that we may be meek in the way that we live in this earth, your creation, to cherish it and keep it, sharing its resources with justice and care, so that we, our children and our children's children may indeed inherit the earth, to pass on its stewardship from generation to generation.

As we in the West spend billions on weapons and armies to protect our rights and freedoms, we seem unable or unwilling to help the millions of people who lack food, water and shelter, because we have forgotten to care for the resources of the earth and to share them in justice and peace. We are ashamed of the harm that has been done to your creation and to the peoples of the earth because of human foolishness.

Jesus said: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Gracious God, we know that peace will come only when the concerns of justice anywhere become the subject of political and social will everywhere, for where there is no justice there will be no peace. In striving for security and peace help us not to participate in the very behaviour we condemn.

Break down the walls that divide us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggles and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth, we pray.

Jesus said: Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Gracious God, as world events force us to remember the fragility of all things human, grant us the strength that is founded in your love, so that, as we listen and give care to others, we may be inspired to be a community of support for our neighbors, near and far.

Strengthen international organizations that struggle to overcome poverty, injustice, terror and strife. We long for wise policies that seek stability, justice and peace.

Jesus said: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Gracious God, you have shown us that purity of heart begins with repentance. Help us as individuals and as a nation never to be afraid to say, "Sorry." And so may we be a people who know you and see your face.

Jesus said: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Gracious God, as we face our fears, help us to be open to the wisdom and counsel of your Spirit. Guard and guide the leaders of the world that in the search for security, justice and peace we may not trample the innocent nor disregard the rule of law. Help Australia, and the nations of the world to choose the paths of peace and restraint. We pray that our nation may be renowned not only for its faithfulness as an ally, but as a maker of peace.

Jesus said: Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Gracious God, you said that “the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.” (Isa 32:17 KJV) As we speak peace, help us not to be afraid or ashamed.

We look for that day when greed, the ambitions of power, and cultural, racial and religious hatred will not be even a memory.

These things we dare to pray in the name of your Son, our Lord and only Saviour.

Amen.