

# Prayer for Social Justice

**"In this crucial year for global development, as Member States work to craft a post-2015 agenda and a new set of sustainable development goals, let us do our utmost to eradicate all forms of human exploitation. Let us strive to build a world of social justice where all people can live and work in freedom, dignity and equality."**

**Message of the Secretary-General on World Social Justice Day**

**February 20, 2015**

Do everything possible to eradicate all forms of exploitation and build a world with social justice is the same mission of Jesus, found in Luke. 4:17-19.

*(We place around the room various news articles and images from the press. With instrumental music in the background, let the news and images touch our hearts)*



What caught my attention from everything I saw?

What do the images and news that I saw tell me?

What is God calling me to through these images?



**With this Psalm, we plea for social justice in our environment and in our mission.**

Psalm 17 – A prayer of David.

Hear, LORD, my plea for justice; pay heed to my cry; Listen to my prayer from lips without guile. From you let my vindication come; your eyes see what is right. You have tested my heart, searched it in the night. You have tried me by fire, but find no malice in me. My mouth has not transgressed as others often do.

As your lips have instructed me, I have kept from the way of the lawless. My steps have kept to your paths; my feet have not faltered. I call upon you; answer me, O God. Turn your ear to me; hear my speech. Show your wonderful mercy, you who deliver with your right arm those who seek refuge from their foes.

Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings from the wicked who despoil me. I am just—let me see your face; when I awake, let me be filled with your presence.



**Let us listen attentively to the Word of God in the Gospel of Luke 4:17-19**

He was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.”

**Reflection:**

What is the good news we announce to the poor?

Who are the captives in need of liberty?

In this year of mercy, what prophetic call does this Gospel make to me?

What is my commitment to proclaim the year of grace?

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Ad-lib prayers



## Final Prayer

**Our Father/Mother...** who always stands with the weak, the powerless, the poor, the abandoned, the sick, the aged, the very young, the unborn, and those who, by victim of circumstance, bear the heat of the day.

**Who art in heaven...** where everything will be reversed, where the first will be last and the last will be first, but where all will be well and every manner of being will be well.

**Hallowed be thy name...** may we always acknowledge your holiness, respecting that your ways are not our ways, your standards are not our standards. May the reverence we give your name pull us out of the selfishness that prevents us from seeing the pain of our neighbor.

**Your kingdom come...** help us to create a world where, beyond our own needs and hurts, we will do justice, love tenderly, and walk humbly with you and each other.

**Your will be done...** open our freedom to let you in so that the complete mutuality that characterizes your life might flow through our veins and thus the life that we help generate may radiate your equal love for all and your special love for the poor.

**On earth as in heaven...** may the work of our hands, the temples and structures we build in this world, reflect the temple and the structure of your glory so that the joy, graciousness, tenderness, and justice of heaven will show forth within all of our structures on earth.

**Give...** life and love to us and help us to see always everything as gift. Help us to know that nothing comes to us by right and that we must give because we have been given to. Help us realize that we must give to the poor, not because they need it, but because our own health depends upon our giving to them.

**Us...** the truly plural us. Give not just to our own but to everyone, including those who are very different than the narrow us. Give your gifts to all of us equally.

**This day...** not tomorrow. Do not let us push things out into some indefinite future so that we can continue to live justified lives in the face of injustice because we can make good excuses for our inactivity.

**Our daily bread...** so that each person in the world may have enough food, enough clean water, enough clean air, adequate health care, and sufficient access to education so as to have the sustenance for a healthy life. Teach us to give from our sustenance and not just from our surplus.

**And forgive us our trespasses...** forgive us our blindness toward our neighbor, our self-preoccupation, our racism, our sexism, and our incurable propensity to worry only about ourselves and our own. Forgive us our capacity to watch the evening news and do nothing about it.

**As we forgive those who trespass against us...** help us to forgive those who victimize us. Help us to mellow out in spirit, to not grow bitter with age, to forgive the imperfect parents and systems that wounded, cursed, and ignored us.

**And do not put us to the test...** do not judge us only by whether we have fed the hungry, given clothing to the naked, visited the sick, or tried to mend the systems that victimized the poor. Spare us this test for none of us can stand before your gospel scrutiny. Give us, instead, more days to mend our ways, our selfishness, and our systems.

**But deliver us from evil...** that is, from the blindness that lets us continue to participate in anonymous systems within which we need not see who gets less as we get more. Amen.