

# Catholic Relief Services

## Prayer Service for World Citizens<sup>†</sup>

### Option A

[This is a brief prayer service that can be used at the beginning or conclusion of a retreat or workshop on Political Responsibility. It does not include music or a shared ritual experience, but it does provide to participants an active engagement opportunity. Estimated time for this prayer service is 15 minutes.

Roles and logistical needs are:

- 1) Prayer leader
- 2) Reader for Scripture Reading and Intecessory Prayers.
- 3) Table with cloth
- 4) Candle with matches/lighter
- 5) Prayer aid for leader and reader
- 6) Bible for Scripture Reading
- 7) Catholic Relief Services action/engagement cards (at least one for each participant).

Environment: The table with an appropriate cloth is placed at the center of the group. The Bible, open to the Scripture reading, and candle are placed on the table. The CRS action/engagement cards are placed on each quadrant of the table in a scattered (but neat) pattern.]

**Introduction:** The symbol we use for our prayer is the table. The table represents for us many grace-filled images – the altar table at Mass, tables of banquets and celebrations, our family dining table. But tables also challenge us – around the world many families do not have a table or enough food to eat. People of power gather around tables to make life altering decisions, but many people are not represented at these tables and their voices are excluded. For our prayer this day let us bring to this table the gifts we have received from God, the needs we carry in our heart, openness to hear God’s Word and the courage to live as disciples.

#### Invitation to Prayer:

Leader: As we gather around this table and light this candle, we raise our voices and prayers to God, who is the source of wisdom, justice and peace.  
[pause; invite people to stand; light the candle and begin the service by praying:]

Lord God, we praise and glorify you

All: Hear Our prayers and supplications.

Leader: Open our hearts and minds to your Wisdom and Grace

All: That we may join our hearts with the peoples of all the lands in giving you praise.

#### Opening Prayer:

Leader: Lord God, you created all people in your image and likeness and call us to be one in the Body of Christ, your Son. We pray for the leaders of our nation and all world leaders that they may embrace your wisdom and justice and rule with benevolence and mercy. May we as a nation share the riches of our heritage and natural resources with peoples in need

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throughout the world and may we live in solidarity with all people as faithful citizens of our world. Bless and strengthen those who work to bring relief to the oppressed and hungry throughout the world. We ask these prayers through your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

All: Amen

[sit]

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 25: 31 – 46 [Last Judgment]

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Luke 10: 25-37 [Greatest Commandment & Parable of Good Samaritan]

### Shared Reflection or Period of Silence

[stand]

#### Intecessory Prayer:

Leader: Loving God, we place before you our needs and concerns, trusting in your compassion and mercy, and always grateful of your love and grace in our lives.

Reader: Our response is: Lord, Hear our Prayer.

1. For the Church, that we may be a witness to Christ's love by practicing charity and promoting justice and peace throughout the world, we pray to the Lord . . .
2. For all citizens of the United States, may our participation in the electoral process lead to a world of greater justice and peace, we pray to the Lord . . .
3. For those who serve in elected office, may they lead with courage and wisdom, reflecting the Church's teaching that the moral test of our society is how the poor, the weak, and the vulnerable are faring, we pray to the Lord . . .
4. For the earth, that our nation's leaders will be inspired by God's Spirit to protect all of creation, we pray to the Lord . . .
5. For leaders around the world, may they find ways to bring an end to war and violence, and promote peace and development of all nations, we pray to the Lord. . .
6. For those who serve the poor and afflicted, especially staff and volunteers of Catholic Relief Services, may their work and service be a beacon of hope and a source of comfort to your people, we pray to the Lord . . .
7. My friends, please give voice to your needs and concerns . . . [pause; when all have voiced their needs/concerns say] we pray to the Lord . . .

Leader: Lord, we gather these prayers and the needs and concerns we have spoken along with those deep in our heart, and we join our voices with students and peoples around the world as we pray in the words our Savior Jesus taught us. .

All: Our Father . . .

**Action / Engagement Ritual:**

Leader: [The leader then reads]

The First Letter of James calls out to us: If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,” but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead. (Jas 2: 15-16)

- ❖ I ask you now to reflect, what do you need to take from the table in order to live so that your faith is alive, not dead. [pause]
- ❖ [The leader then invites each participant to take from the table a card from Catholic Relief Services that includes a specific way one can live as a disciple]. I now invite each of you to step forward and take a card from our prayer table. On your card is a word of challenge and a quote that guides you to act on its message as a way for you to keep your faith in Christ alive. On the card is a point of contact at Catholic Relief Services that can serve as a conduit for your action. May your good work and the work of all of us in the Body of Christ, advance God’s justice and mercy and uphold the dignity of all God’s people.

**Concluding Prayer and Blessing:**

Leader: Loving God, you are our source of wisdom and courage and your Holy Spirit gives us power to live as disciples of your Son. May our commitment to serve You through the “least of our brothers and sisters” bring justice and dignity to them and peace to our world. We ask this in Christ’s holy name.

All: Amen

Leader: May the Lord bless us (+), protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen

Leader: As we conclude this prayer service, let us share with each other a sign of Christ’s peace.