

Pastoral Prayer  
January 10, 2021

Gracious God,

You made your home with your people.

For centuries they worshiped you in a tent. For centuries they worshiped you in a temple, and when that temple was destroyed, they found you again in exile far from the lands they called home. They raised another temple, but they also worshiped you in villages scattered about the hills and plains, for they knew you could not be limited by a roof and walls, nor by borders, nor by shores and coastlines.

Then, O God, you made your home with your people as one of them, one of your creation, one of us, sharing even in a ritual of commitment and dedication, washing yourself in the waters from which you drew the land.

Gracious God, make your home with your people.

We have squandered your grace, we know. We have presumed upon your forgiveness to be excuse for ourselves and for others – though we have chosen those others. As a nation, we have given stern justice to some and waved airily at others. As the body of Christ, we have neglected the defense of the vulnerable in favor of a bland unity with those who would oppress. As individuals... you know our souls. You know our sins.

Gracious God, make your home with your people.

Forgive us, O God, as we repent. Forgive us, O God, as we choose your way. Forgive us, O God, as we embrace you within us.

Gracious God, make your home with your people.

Bring your healing power to those who are sick. Bring your courage to those who are frightened. Bring your justice to those who are meditating acts of evil. Bring your righteousness to a shaken nation. Bring your wisdom to its citizens and leaders. Bring your Holy Spirit to your Church, and shake away our failures so that we might serve you faithfully in the days to come.

In Jesus' name, who taught us to pray, saying...

Amen.