

Pastoral Prayer
March 28, 2021

Gracious God,

Last week we prayed for the souls of eight slain in one outburst of racist and sexist violence. Today we pray for ten more slain in another episode of rage and pain and fear. Tenderly hold the souls of Tralona Bartkowiak, Suzanne Fountain, Teri Leiker, Kevin Mahoney, Lynn Murray, Rikki Olds, Neven Stanisic, Denny Stong, Eric Talley, and Jody Waters, who died at a grocery store in Boulder, Colorado. We pray also for the eight injured and the two dead after multiple shootings in Virginia Beach, Virginia. We ask once more how it is that such things happen to so many so often in the United States of America. We ask with the prayer that you will inspire us to answer that question without evasion and without fear.

We pray for the world still struggling with the COVID-19 pandemic. We pray for the nations in turmoil, especially Myanmar where blood is being shed. We pray for those injured by a Palm Sunday bombing at a church in Makassar, Indonesia. We pray for the shelterless, the food insecure, the grieving, the ill, the exhausted, the poor.

We pray also for ourselves. Guide us through this Holy Week, O God, with the serenity of Jesus riding step by step into Jerusalem. May we find once more – or for the first time, as it may be – the wonder of your love, of Christ's love, in that monumental act of giving. May we be humbled by your grace and uplifted by it. May we be held in awe, and held in your compassion.

Accompany us on this Holy Week journey, O God, for our journeys are still in progress. We make our way through the actual streets and through the metaphoric streets of our lives, making choices, changing courses, speeding up and slowing down, pausing to rest and rising to work. Accompany us through this Holy Week so that on Easter we may rejoice with full and open hearts – and on each day, Easter or no, be enlivened by the assurance of your grace, presence, and care.

We ask these things in Jesus' name, who taught us to pray, saying...

Amen.