

Pastoral Prayer  
September 12, 2021

Merciful God,

Before we step out of ourselves, we ask you to fill us with your spirit. We find it difficult sometimes to step out of our doors in this pandemic, let alone step out of ourselves. We struggle to discern caution from fear, sensible care for ourselves and others from anxiety, what we want from what we need. Strengthen our bodies in their needs, O God. Bring stillness to our whirling minds, and hold our souls in love.

We mark twenty years since crashing planes and falling buildings brought death, destruction, and dread to Americans, followed by twenty years of war against terror that brought death, destruction, and dread to Afghans, French, Indonesians, Spaniards, Iraqis, Egyptians, and the people of more nations than this prayer can hold. You can hold them in your memory, your keeping, and your heart, O God. As we leave the conflict in Afghanistan we are aware that the conflict itself continues, that more people will kill and more people will die. We pray that your grace and power will do what human beings so far have not: bring peace. Bring peace. Bring peace.

As this pandemic continues, O God, we ask your grace for those who are sick, those who are concerned for them, and those who care for them. Medical professionals from physicians to nurses to ward clerks to cleaning staff to administrators are overstressed and weary, O God. Give them strength. Family members and friends worry about their loved ones – will they need to be hospitalized? Will there be room for them? Will they recover? Will they die? And the patients – sick with COVID, injured by accidents, suffering from cancer, needing surgery – give them your aid, O God, to strengthen body, mind, and spirit, and bring your healing to match our hope.

This is a weary world in need of your grace, O God. Bring your strength and peace in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray, saying...

Amen.