

Pastoral Prayer

May 8, 2022

O God our mother,

It is a blessing that you have made your creatures to grow in families, from the bustling colonies of ants to the humming hives of bees to the nests of birds and the flocks of sheep and goats. It is a blessing that you have formed human beings into families as well, children and parents, grandparents and aunts and uncles, fathers and mothers.

On this day we pray for mothers, O God. Each one of us as a child tested the strength and patience and wisdom of those who cared for us. Often our mothers surpassed our expectations and their own. But sometimes they did not have the resources to do so. O God, give healing to the mothers and the children who have exhausted one another. O God, grant resilience to those still awaiting the test.

We pray for women who are not mothers and want to be. We pray for women who are mothers and don't know what they're doing. We pray for those who serve as mothering examples to others. We pray for those should not be examples of mothering, and yet they are. The truth is, O God, that parenthood, that motherhood, that child rearing is strange and complex and unique to each child, each mother. In a world that springs toward easy and frequently fruitless answers, we pray for a wisdom beyond our own, a wisdom rooted in the way you care for us all.

According to some doing the counting, O God, the United States reached another milestone of sorrow this week: one million dead from COVID-19. They are among 16 million lost around the world to this pandemic. We pause to honor the dead and to ask your comfort for those who mourn their passing. We ask that you receive them into your arms, wiping away every tear, and bringing them into everlasting life.

For mothers and children, for fathers and grandparents, for the sick and the injured and the war-threatened and the weary, for all your children who need your care, we ask your grace and power, in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray together...