



C o r o n a S c a t t e r

**Prayers and Reflections
in a time of COVID-19**

CORONA SCATTER: PRAYERS AND REFLECTIONS IN A TIME OF COVID-19

Foreword

South Africa, even after 26 years of independence, still remains one of the most unequal societies in the world. The immediate need to respond to the health crisis cannot obscure the urgent need to create a more just and equitable society once the pandemic passes.

Thousands of very poor families in the huge shack settlements around the platinum mines in my diocese live in one room. Social distancing in such conditions is virtually impossible. How can they stay at home and wash their hands frequently when there is no readily available water?

I hope that as time goes on, we can start to discern what the experience of this pandemic calls for from the Church in terms of its vision mission and ministry. We are living in a primarily sacramental model. The closing of Churches and the suspension of public masses is challenging us to become a different kind of Church. We cannot go back to what was normal in the past. We must be a Church which is much more inclusive of the destitute and of those who are suffering in so many ways: the victims of violence against women and children, all those who are stigmatised or suffer discrimination.

I hope and pray that this crisis will bring out the treasures of who we are called to be as disciples of Jesus, and to be the field hospital that Pope Francis dreams of. This means building on what we have achieved in the past - but then to be creative in imagining something new for the future.

Kevin Dowling, Bishop of Rustenburg.

Introduction

These are not easy times, and we know that teachers would really love to get back to teaching our children in the physical classroom environment. The Coronavirus has caused major disruption to education around the globe and continues to cause disruption. The priority for us, and others around the world, has been, and is to ensure that the impact on children's learning is minimised as far as possible and that people are kept safe.

The World Bank reports that COVID-19 is taking its toll on the world, causing deaths, illnesses and economic despair. But how is the deadly virus impacting global poverty? The bank estimates that it is pushing about 40-60 million people into extreme poverty, with their best estimate being 49 million.

These are uncertain times. Difficult times. This is a time for prayer.

Let us pray

Use these prayers in different ways.

- Some people like to stand or kneel to help them focus their minds.
- Some people like to pray aloud or to chant, it helps to slow them down and to think about the words.
- Feel free to change the words of a prayer to help it make sense for you – to make it more personal.
- Let the lines that speak to you 'stick in your mind'. Go back and repeat the phrases.
- Let God speak to you in silence.
- Some people like to jot down their thoughts and ideas in their journals or on sticky notes to paste around their homes.
- Others draw sketches or simple drawings of what they are hearing.

Prayer in a time of Covid-19

God of life,
you have promised to be with us every day,
also in difficult days, like in times like these.
Give us
clarity in our minds,
strength in our work and discernment,
rest as we sleep,
peace in our minds.
Be with those
who need help
more than we do ourselves
help us to see what we can offer
from your love.
Amen.

(Ioan Sauca, Secretary General WCC)

Coronavirus Protection Prayer

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign
of salvation and hope.
We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick.
At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain,
with steadfast faith.
You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need.
We are certain that you will provide, so that,
as you did at Cana of Galilee,
joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial.
Help us, Mother of Divine Love,
to conform ourselves to the Father's will
and to do what Jesus tells us:
He who took our sufferings upon Himself,
and bore our sorrows to bring us,
through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection.
Amen.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God.
Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test
– and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.
Amen.

(Pope Francis)

Prayer for a new day of learning (away from school)

Thank you, Lord, for creating each of us with the curiosity to learn about our world.
Give each of us, girls and boys, the chance to explore our world through our studies.
Jesus, Great Teacher, be with us as we learn from home.
Lord, we pray that our homes and schools will be safe.
Help us to become more caring people and leaders in our world.
We pray that you will give our teachers wisdom and understanding.
That their words will be kind, and that their classes will help us become wise, discerning good people.
Help us to flourish in this time.
Touch our hearts and open our minds to learn new things today.
We pray for children who are not in school.
For those whose school is interrupted by conflict, emergencies, natural disasters and disease.
Protect them and give them courage to face their challenges.
Have mercy Lord and provide opportunities for learning so that they too may find hope and have a better future.
Amen.

Prayer of Invocation

Dear Lord
Thank you for your promise to us that where two or three are gathered you are with us.
Lord we welcome you amongst us celebrating the precious gift of life that you give each of us.

We ask that you open our ears so that we may hear your voice.
Open our minds so that we may receive your wisdom.
Open our spirits so that we may know your guidance in these
troubled and uncertain times.

And open our hearts so that we may receive your unconditional
love.

We ask all this, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.

St Marcellin Champagnat: pray for us

Mary our Good Mother: pray for us.



O Great Love, thank you for living and loving in us and through us.
May all that we do flow from our deep connection with you and all
beings.

Help us become a community that vulnerably shares each other's
burdens and the weight of glory.

Listen to our hearts' longings for the healing of our world.

[Please add your own intentions.]

Knowing you are hearing us better than we are speaking,
we offer these prayers in all the holy names of God, amen.

(Richard Rohr)

God, we ask that all who are affected by this virus be held in your loving care.

In this time of uncertainty, help us to know what is ours to do.

We know you did not cause this suffering but that you are with us in it and through it.

Help us to recognize your presence in acts of kindness,
in moments of silence,
and in the beauty of the created world.

Grant peace and protection to all of humanity
for their well-being and for the benefit of the earth.

(Taizé prayer)

The Memorare for today

Exhausted and lost in a snowstorm St Marcellin Champagnat and Brother Stanislaus prayed the Memorare for help.

O Mother of Jesus, hear my prayer.

You have answered the prayers of others
who have turned to you for help and protection.

I am inspired and confident that as I come to you as a holy
woman,

you will answer my prayer.

I am not perfect, but I despair.

O mother of Jesus.

Have mercy

Hear and answer me. Amen

(Attributed to St. Bernard of Clairvaux from the 12th century)

Loving God

Loving God

As uncertainty looms

And the ways we have known life to be recede

May we find assurance
In the promise of your Presence
Available and awaiting us at every moment.

When we feel afraid, help us to reach our roots into your Peace.
When we feel confused, may we connect to the clarity of your
Wisdom, deep within us.
When we feel the press of survival
May we open to the generosity of your Abundant flow
And reach to those most in need – the lonely, the sick, the hungry,
the hopeless.

May each new day
Be a fresh opportunity
To deepen our trust
That You are always with us, always holding us with love, always
guiding us;
That hope springs fresh within us;
That faith anchors us;
That Love connects us whether we are together or apart.

Amen

(Pam Paton-Mills)

Hindu Prayer for Corona Day of Prayer in the United States of America

*Om Dyau Shanti Rantariksha Gwam, ShantiPrithvi Shanti Rapah,
Shanti Roshadhayah Shanti Vanas Patayah, Shanti Vishwed Devah
Shanti Brahma, Sarvag Wam, Shanti Shanti Reva Shanti Sa Ma
Shanti Redhi, Om Shanti Shanti Shanti.*

Onto the heavens, be peace.
Onto the sky and Earth, be peace.
Peace be onto the water.
Onto the herbs and trees, be peace.

Onto all the crops, be peace.
Onto Brahma and onto all, be peace.
And may we realize that peace.
Peace. Peace. Peace.

The Canticle of Creation

O Most High, all-powerful, good Lord God,
to you belong praise, glory,
honour and all blessing.
Be praised, my Lord, for all your creation
and especially for our Brother Sun,
who brings us the day and the light;
he is strong and shines magnificently.
O Lord, we think of you when we look at him.

Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Moon,
and for the stars
which you have set shining and lovely
in the heavens.
Be praised, my Lord,
for our Brothers Wind and Air
and every kind of weather
by which you, Lord,
uphold life in all your creatures.

Be praised, my Lord, for Sister Water,
who is very useful to us,
and humble and precious and pure.
Be praised, my Lord, for Brother Fire,
through whom you give us light in the darkness:
he is bright and lively and strong.
Be praised, my Lord,
for Sister Earth, our Mother,
who nourishes us and sustains us,
bringing forth
fruits and vegetables of many kinds
and flowers of many colours.

Be praised, my Lord,
for those who forgive for love of you;
and for those
who bear sickness and weakness
in peace and patience
- you will grant them a crown.

Be praised, my Lord, for our Sister Death,
whom we must all face.
I praise and bless you, Lord,
and I give thanks to you,
and I will serve you in all humility.
(St. Francis of Assisi)

Reprieve for the Earth

Praise you Lord
For all creation speaks of your Glory.
Thank you for entrusting us with your Earth.
We are grateful that during this time
 The skies have become clearer
 The air has become cleaner
 The waters more pure
 And the airwaves quieter.
Help us always to be mindful of your creation
 to lessen our footprint
 to build rather than to destroy
 to protect rather than exploit and
 to be mindful in everything we do.
Amen.



Prayer for people who are infected with COVID-19 or facing quarantine

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. —
Philippians 4:6 (NIV)

Jesus, during Your ministry on Earth You showed Your power and caring by healing people of all ages and stations of life from physical, mental, and spiritual ailments.

Be present now to people who need Your loving touch because of COVID-19. May they feel Your power of healing through the care of doctors and nurses.

Take away the fear, anxiety, and feelings of isolation from people receiving treatment or under quarantine. Give them a sense of purpose in pursuing health and protecting others from exposure to the disease.

Protect their families and friends and bring peace to all who love them.

(World Vision)

Prayer for medical professionals, caregivers, and researchers fighting the new coronavirus

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me— Psalm 23:4 (NIV).

God, as more people get sick, healthcare workers and first responders are working longer hours with fewer supplies and with more risk of contracting the new coronavirus themselves. Renew their energy and sustain them on long shifts. Bring Your protection upon them as they work with patients. Multiply their supplies so they have the protective items needed to stay safe on the job. Inspire and invigorate the research doctors developing better tests to diagnose the virus, create vaccines to prevent it, and identify protocols to eliminate the disease's spread.

(World Vision)

Prayer for business owners and families facing financial stress

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid— John 14:27 (NIV).

Jesus, we thank You for Your faithfulness in how you have guided and equipped people in their jobs and have provided in the past. It can be scary and overwhelming not knowing how bills and obligations will be met or to not be able to provide for families. As people feel financial strain during the uncertainty, bring them comfort and peace, reminding them that You are there for them. Provide for them in their times of need.

(World Vision)

Prayer for the end of the virus

Almighty and merciful Father, who show your love to all your creation.

We come before you asking for a quick control of the Coronavirus currently ravaging our world.

Hear graciously the prayers we make for those affected by the virus in various parts of the world.

Grant healing to the sick, eternal life to the dead and consolation to the bereaved families.

We pray that an effective medicine to combat the sickness be speedily found.

We pray for the relevant governments and health authorities that they take appropriate steps for the good of the people.

Look upon us in your mercy and forgive us our failings. Amen.

(SECAM Symposium of the Episcopal Conferences in Africa and Madagascar / CAFOD)

Infinite power and love

Lord God, we entrust to you the families and communities affected by Coronavirus, wherever they may be.

We pray especially for health care workers, that you may guide and protect them.

We pray that your Spirit might inspire those researching new medicines and treatments.

And in the midst of this, keep us strong in faith, hope and love.

Grant us the courage and perseverance to be good neighbours.

May the words of your Son Jesus Christ in the Our Father, be our prayer as we entrust ourselves and all of us who are affected

to your infinite power and love.

Amen.

(Adapted from an Ebola prayer by Caritas Guinea/ CAFOD)

Three short Jewish prayers for healing

El Na Refa Na La (Numbers 12:13)

This short Hebrew verse, 5 words made of 11 letters only, can be translated as "O God, please heal her!". It is said by Moses, asking for the healing of his sister Miriam. It is a very short and potent recitation. Maybe this is why it touched many songwriters who composed and performed it. You can look it up yourself in YouTube.

Refaenu Adonai (From the daily Amida recitation)

The 'Amid' is a set of blessing which is recited 3 times a day. The 8th blessing of this sequence is a request for healing, which goes like this:

Heal us, O Lord,
and we will be healed;
help us and we will be saved;
for You are our praise.
Grant complete cure and healing to all our wounds;
for You, Almighty King, are a faithful and merciful healer.
Blessed are You, Eternal One, who heals all flesh, working
wondrously.

Mi Sheberach - "May the one who blessed"

This is a reading which takes place during the communal service, usually after the reading from the Torah, but not only (In my Synagogue we sing an English version of it in Shabbat evening service). Pay attention that here we are announcing the name of those we pray for.

May the One who blessed our ancestors —

Our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
Our mothers, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah —

bless and heal the one who is ill:

_____ son/daughter of _____ .

May the Holy Blessed One
overflow with compassion upon him/her,
to restore him/her,
to heal him/her,
to strengthen him/her,
to enliven him/her.

The One will send him/her, speedily,
a complete healing —
healing of the soul and healing of the body —
along with all the ill,
among the people of Israel and all humankind,
soon,
speedily,
without delay,
and let us all say: Amen!

May our prayers be fulfilled, may it come to pass soon that those
who sow in tear will reap in joy, so all of us will be able to celebrate
together in health, joy and prosperity. Amen.

(Rabbi Sa'ar Shaked)

Prayer for peace and tranquillity

My Lord Jesus Christ,
may your peace be with me.
In you, O Jesus, true peace,
may I have peace forever.
Through you may I find peace
which is beyond understanding
There, where in gladness, I may see you
Amen.

(Adapted from St Gertrude of Helfta)



The Prophet Muhammad's Prayer of Light

O God,
give me light in my heart
and light in my tongue
and light in my hearing
and light in my sight
and light in my feeling
and light in all body
and light before me
and light behind me.
Give me, I pray Thee,
Light on my right hand
And light on my left hand
And light above me
And light beneath me,
O Lord,
Increase light within me
And give me light
And illuminate me.

(Adapted from AbuTalib Falihal-Makki)

Peacemaker

Lord, help me bring about peace.
Let me sow love where there is hatred.
Let me bring forgiveness where there is hurt.
Let me promote faith when there is doubt.
Let me bring light where there is darkness.
Let me share joy where there is sadness.
All powerful God, let me console,
rather than be consoled.
Let me understand rather than be understood.
Let me love rather than to seek love.
When I give, I receive
When I pardon, I am pardoned.
And it is when I die that I am born to eternal life.

(Based on the prayer of St Francis of Assisi)

The pain of grief

No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear. I am not afraid, but the sensation is like being afraid. The same fluttering in the stomach, the same restlessness, the yawning. I keep on swallowing – C. S. Lewis.

God, the almighty raised Jesus from the dead and will give life to our mortal bodies.
We pray in faith to bring us life in Christ.
We pray that you comfort us in this time of grief.
We pray that we may find rest in your power.
We pray for strength to comfort each other.
Amen.

Prayer for God to be near

Hear me Lord in this time of trouble
Be real to me now
Help me sense that you are near
Hear my prayer.

Hear me Lord in this time of confusion
Be real to me now
Help me find peace of mind
Hear my prayer.

Hear me Lord in this time of pain
Be real to me now
Help me find healing
Hear my prayer.
Amen.

Song of Mary

My whole being declares the Lord's goodness
My spirit celebrates in God
who has chosen me to be blessed.
The Lord has done great things for me
He has shown kindness to those who love Him.
He has shown his strength
and scattered the proud.
He has lifted the lowly
and filled the hungry
and sent the rich away with nothing.
He has helped his servant
Israel and remembered
his promise of mercy
to his ancestors.
Amen.

A prayer for a sick person

We praise the Lord of creation and life
We remember that Jesus walked among us
And healed the sick.
Today we pray for n.
Be close to n. today and comfort n.
through your presence.
Lord we ask that you heal n. and that
you restore n. energy.
May n. experience the fullness of life.
Amen.

Listen, O Lord (Psalm 86)

Sometimes we just need some help...

Listen, Lord, and answer us in this time of need.
Preserve our lives for we are devoted to you;
help us to trust you.
Make us happy we are pleading with you.
For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,
a living God.
Hear our prayer.
I need you in the day of trouble
for you will answer us.

In silence, ask God to hear you today.
Amen.

A prayer for the Kingdom

Blessed be you, Mary
The Lord is with you.
You are a woman among woman.
Blessed is your Son, Jesus.

You are a good woman,
You are chosen.

Mary, we ask you to pray for us.
Pray that in times of uncertainty
we will know God.
Pray for us now
and into the future.
Pray that we will make God's Kingdom
real in our world.

Amen.

Prayer of Awareness and Transformation

Holy Wisdom, Mother God,
you hold my time in your hands.
Your providence guides the stars and my cells.
Your compassion opens my heart to healing in the midst of pain.
Help me rest in you,
trusting the future in your care
and giving comfort to those who mourn, hurt,
and face personal challenge.
In Christ's name. Amen.

(Richard Rohr and the CAC)

Blessing for the Reopening of School

May your words be a blessing to people and bring good news.
May you hear the cry of those in need.
May your eyes see the good in all you meet.
May your hands bring warmth and healing.
May you taste the goodness of life.
May the Lord bless your term and make it fruitful.
Amen.

Give us clear minds

I want you to understand the subtle workings of the mind. How you orient your mind, the kind of attitude you take, greatly influence both you yourself and your environment. The Buddhist principle of a single life moment encompassing 3000 realms completely elucidates the true aspect of life's inner workings boost up through the power of strong inner resolve we can transform ourselves, those around us and the land in which we live.

Help us to be on our guard against baseless misinformation that causes anxiety and creates a sense of threat.

Help us to respond calmly and take steps to thoroughly confirm whether the source is responsible and reliable.

Remind us to light the way for others, so that our own path will also become clear.

Strengthen us to spread hope and assurance among our friends and others close to us.

Empower us to work to create resplendent lives for ourselves and others.

Let us light a fire for others and brighten our own way.

Your character is determined by how you challenge yourself, and how you wrestle with your problems, in a way that is unique to you. This is how character is polished and becomes diamond-like.

(Daisaku Ikada - President of the lay Nichiren Daishonin organisation)

Corona Scatter

For Marist (and all) International volunteers, suddenly dispersed

Shattering and scattering

My global loves

That make the

Marists of South Africa...

Appear to unravel across the world
Before my very eyes...

And then

Magically....in the twinkle
Of our tiny global pieces
We whisp strands of connection;
In silence, in prayers,
In virtual connection,
And our hearts weave again
Yet distanced in body,
Our hearts regroup in love,
And weave.

(Pam Paton-Mills)

Pandemic

What if you thought of it
as the Jews consider the Sabbath—
the most sacred of times?
Cease from travel.
Cease from buying and selling.
Give up, just for now,
on trying to make the world
different than it is.
Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom you commit your life.
Centre down.

And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.
Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.
(You could hardly deny it now.)
Know that our lives

are in one another's hands.
(Surely, that has come clear.)
Do not reach out your hands.
Reach out your heart.
Reach out your words.
Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.

Promise this world your love—
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.

(Lynn Ungar 3/11/20)

End reflection: 'Prayer Is Not Enough.' The Dalai Lama on Why We Need to Fight Coronavirus with Compassion

Sometimes friends ask me to help with some problem in the world, using some “magical powers.” I always tell them that the Dalai Lama has no magical powers. If I did, I would not feel pain in my legs or a sore throat. We are all the same as human beings, and we experience the same fears, the same hopes, the same uncertainties.

From the Buddhist perspective, every sentient being is acquainted with suffering and the truths of sickness, old age and death. But as human beings, we have the capacity to use our minds to conquer anger and panic and greed. In recent years I have been stressing “emotional disarmament”: to try to see things realistically and clearly, without the confusion of fear or rage. If a problem has a solution, we must work to find it; if it does not, we need not waste time thinking about it.

We Buddhists believe that the entire world is interdependent. That is why I often speak about universal responsibility. The outbreak of this terrible coronavirus has shown that what happens to one person can soon affect every other being. But it also reminds us that a compassionate or constructive act—whether working in hospitals or just observing social distancing—has the potential to help many.

Ever since news emerged about the coronavirus in Wuhan, I have been praying for my brothers and sisters in China and everywhere else. Now we can see that nobody is immune to this virus. We are all worried about loved ones and the future, of both the global economy and our own individual homes. But prayer is not enough.

This crisis shows that we must all take responsibility where we can. We must combine the courage doctors and nurses are showing with empirical science to begin to turn this situation around and protect our future from more such threats.

In this time of great fear, it is important that we think of the long-term challenges—and possibilities—of the entire globe. Photographs of our world from space clearly show that there are no real boundaries on our blue planet. Therefore, all of us must take care of it and work to prevent climate change and other destructive forces. This pandemic serves as a warning that only by coming together with a coordinated, global response will we meet the unprecedented magnitude of the challenges we face.

We must also remember that nobody is free of suffering, and extend our hands to others who lack homes, resources or family to protect them.

This crisis shows us that we are not separate from one another—even when we are living apart. Therefore, we all have a responsibility to exercise compassion and help.

As a Buddhist, I believe in the principle of impermanence. Eventually, this virus will pass, as I have seen wars and other terrible threats pass in my lifetime, and we will have the opportunity to rebuild our global community as we have done many times before. I sincerely hope that everyone can stay safe and stay calm. At this time of uncertainty, it is important that we do not lose hope and confidence in the constructive efforts so many are making.

The Dalai Lama is the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhists and a Nobel laureate

Source: Time Magazine, 14 April 2020. This article is part of a special series on how the coronavirus is changing lives, with insights and advice from the TIME 100 community.

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