



JUSTICE FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS Resources for Worship

Prepared by the Assembly Working Group on Worship
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with thanks to Rev. Dr David Pitman

AN ASYLUM SEEKER SPEAKS

I do not know
what will happen after I die.
I do not want to know.
But I would like the Potter to make a whistle
from the clay of my throat.
May this whistle fall into the hands of a naughty child
and the child to blow hard on the whistle continuously
with the suppressed and silent air of his lungs
and disrupt the sleep
of those who seem dead
to my cries.

*written some years ago by
'a prisoner at the Baxter detention Centre - no name, he has only a number'.
Circulated by the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre in Melbourne*

SCRIPTURE SENTENCES

[1]
For the Lord your God is God of gods
and Lord of lords,
the great God, mighty and awesome,
who is not partial and takes no bribe,
who executes justice for the orphan and the widow,
and who loves strangers, providing them food and clothing.
Deuteronomy 10:17-18

[2]

So he came and proclaimed peace
to you who were far off
and peace to those who were near;

**for through him both of us
have access in one Spirit to the Father.**

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,
but you are citizens with the saints
and also members of the household of God.

Ephesians 2:17-19

[3]

Then the king will say to those at his right hand,

“Come, you that are blessed by my Father,
inherit the kingdom prepared for you
from the foundation of the world;
for I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,
I was a stranger and you welcomed me,
I was naked and you gave me clothing,
I was sick and you took care of me,
I was in prison and you visited me.”

And the king will answer them,

“Truly I tell you,
just as you did it to one of the least of these
who are members of my family,
you did it to me.”

Matthew 25: 34-36, 40

CALLS TO WORSHIP

[1]

Let us come and praise the God of refuge.

**We were strangers from distant lands,
abused and searching, broken and running.**

"The Lord is my rock, my fortress,
and my deliverer,
my God, my rock in whom I take refuge,
my shield and the horn of my salvation,
my stronghold and my refuge,
my saviour."

2 Samuel 22:2b-3a

**We were aliens from far away places,
rejected and lost, injured and burdened.**

"You saved me from violence.
I call upon the Lord,
Who is worthy to be praised,
And I am saved from my enemies."

2 Samuel 22:3b-4

[2]

As broken and lost individuals,
we are gathered as the whole Body of Christ;
let us give praise to His holy name.

**We worship Almighty God,
who calls all people, close and far away,
to worship and praise God's holy name.
God gathers the hungry and the thirsty,
the stranger and the naked,
the sick and those in prison.
God gathers them all together,
As the hen gathers her children under her wing.**

This is the God who created all things good,
this is the God we now come and worship.

Matthew 25:31-46, Luke 13:34

PRAYERS OF INVOCATION

[1]

God of hospitality and refuge,
come to us here in this place of security and safety.
Remind us that you are the God Almighty;
large enough for all people,
all nations, all tongues.
Help us, with the presence of your Holy Spirit,
to be able to create space
for those who seek asylum and refuge.
In the name of Jesus, your Son.
Amen.

[2]

Please come and remind us:
**that we are many people
with many different names,
from many different places.**

Please come and remind us:
**that all people are called
to be united by your One Spirit,
gathered to be the Body of Christ.**

Please come and remind us,
as we gather in your name!
Amen.

AN ACT OF LAMENT

*from Uniting in Worship 2, Second Order of Service for the Lord's Day, pp 200-202, adapted,
The Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia (2005), Sydney: Uniting Church Press*

[LAMENT]

O Lord, how long shall we cry for help,
and you will not listen?
Or cry to you, 'Violence!'
and you will not save?
Why do you make us see wrong-doing
and look at trouble?

In faith and hope, we respond:
'How long, O God, how long?'

(The response can be sung. The musical setting can be found in UiW2, p. 200)

Where is your justice, God?
Where is your purpose?
Where is your reason?
Where is your compassion?
Do you not care for your people,
your creation, your reputation?
Your purpose is hidden from our eyes.

Your reason is absent to our ears.
Your compassion is not discerned by our hearts.
We have no hope (and remember asylum seekers who have no hope).
We are lost (and remember asylum seekers who are lost).
We are afraid (and remember asylum seekers who are afraid).

[AFFIRMATION OF HOPE IN CHRIST]

Some demand signs
and others seek insight,
but we have only Christ crucified,
stumbling block and folly
to the wisdom of our time.

Jesus Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.
Surely wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.

In faith, we appeal to God.
In hope, we will not let God go.
In love, we claim God's attention.
Let us honour the God who receives our cries,
and gathers us to herself even as we continue to call.

[ADORATION]

We praise you, O God:
In your humility you seek us.
In your mercy, you keep us.
In your humiliation, you glorify us.
In your generosity, you provide for us.
In your wisdom, you place us.
In your might, you shield us.
In your governance, you make us holy.
In your communion, you teach us.
In your love, you lift us up.
Amen.

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

"How can the baptized claim to welcome Christ
if they close the door to the foreigner who comes knocking?"

Pope John Paul II

[1]

"He has told you, O mortal, what is good:
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice?"

**We confess that we have not obeyed you,
we have put our own desires
above the needs of those seeking refuge.
We confess we have ignored
the rights of asylum seekers,
even in the law of our own land,
because of our fear and ignorance.**

"He has told you, O mortal, what is good:
and what does the Lord require of you
but to love kindness?"

**We confess we have not loved you,
we have put our own desires
before reaching out our hands to help others.
We confess we have pushed away
those needing legitimate refuge,
clinging to our own comforts
and discriminating against those different to us.**

"He has told you, O mortal, what is good:
and what does the Lord require of you
but to walk humbly with your God?."

**We confess that we have misused your name,
treating you like a registered trade mark,
to be used to increase our power and influence.
We confess we have ignored the truth,
focusing on politics and power
over the suffering and hardship of those seeking refuge,
because we are comfortable in our own importance.**

Micah 6:8

[2]

Lord God Almighty,
we are sorry we have ignored you:
we have chosen to not see your face
in those seeking refuge.

Lord Jesus Christ,
we are sorry we have ignored you;
we have preferred to live in fear
than to open our doors to strangers.

Lord Holy Spirit,
we are sorry we have ignored you;
we have placed our own comfort
above those who have nothing.

Blessed Trinity,
as your disciples we cry out
for the sins of our nation against the lost;
As your grace-filled children we give voice
to the wrongs we have committed against others.

Please forgive us, renew us in your love,
and make us worthy of being your ambassadors of love.
Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

[1]

Wise and compassionate God,
help us to be willing to respond to the needs of refugees and asylum-seekers
and not simply seek to shift the burden of care onto others.
Call our leaders to justice, generosity and compassion.
Help them create and implement strategies that are fair and just
and treat refugees and asylum-seekers with dignity and care.
O God, our comforter,
we ask you to comfort the broken-hearted and protect the vulnerable.
We pray for those who live in fear of detention and removal,
for those who are in detention at this time
and for those who face removal to an uncertain future.
We ask you to assure them of your great love,
surround them with your presence and fill them with your peace.

God bless our eyes so that we will recognise injustices.
God bless our ears so that we will hear the cry of the stranger.
God bless our mouths so that we will speak words of welcome to newcomers.
God bless our shoulders so we will be able to bear the weight of struggling for justice.
God bless our hands so that we can work together with all people to establish peace.

<http://ulen.wordpress.com/2009/02/27/a-lent-prayer-for-asylum-seekers-and-refugees/>
edited, author unknown

[2]

Merciful God,
You continue to call us to work for peace.
Our world is broken and wounded by injustice, violence and indifference.
Alone, we would be overwhelmed by the challenges that face us.
But together, supported by your Spirit,
we can do more than anyone of us could dream or imagine.

Deborah Cassidi (ed), Favourite Prayers (1990) London: Continuum

[3]

Gracious God,
thank you for our nation, Australia.
Thank you for the way it has developed over the years.
Thank you for the diverse cultures that make up Australia that we can experience and enjoy.
Thank you God.

Forgive us as a nation when we fall short of what you want for us.
Forgive us when we subject others to injustice, racism and oppression.
Forgive us when we don't extend our hospitality
And when we make others feel unwelcome.
Forgive us God.

We pray for our Government and all decision makers,
Guide them and guide us all.
We pray for unity for our nation and for your continuing presence among us.
Lead your people, enable us to accept each others' differences.
Reshape us and as we celebrate the new life you bring.
Hear our prayer Lord. Amen

Karen Guiao, Mission Prayer Handbook 2002, Uniting Church in Australia Assembly, p. 11, adapted

[4]

God of Abraham. Sarah and Hagar,
God of travellers, migrants and refugees.
Thank you for the beauty and uniqueness of this southern land which we share.
Grant your protection and grace to all who shelter here.
Forgive the racism and destruction that have been part of our history,
and our disregard for the pain and oppression within the Australian community today.
Help us shed our provincial expectations. Take away our cultural tunnel vision.
Open our hearts to be caring neighbours to each other.
Direct our lives to just and peaceful action.
God of a thousand faces, help us also to acknowledge you are worshipped in many
languages, in different songs and rhythms of life from our own.
May we respect these religious insights in each other and
assist each faithful expression of you.
We rejoice in you, God, in whose image we are brothers and sisters.
and by whose example in Jesus Christ we know the breadth and depth
of your universal love. Amen

Mission Prayer Handbook 1991, Uniting Church in Australia Assembly, p. 7

[5]

God of Justice, give us ears to hear with you the cries of
your children held captive by prejudice and racism;
God of Justice, give us eyes to see with you
beyond our own prejudices to dignity and identity;
God of Love, give us hearts to love with you beyond the
structures and systems we have created to keep your
children in bondage;
God of Love, give us courage to seek reconciliation and to
be mediators for peace and freedom for all. Amen

Ranjini Rebera, Mission Prayer Handbook 1992, Uniting Church in Australia Assembly p. 26, adapted

[6]

We beg you, Lord,
to help and defend us.
Deliver the oppressed,
pity the insignificant, raise the fallen;
show yourself to the needy, heal the sick,
bring back those of your people
who have gone astray;
feed the hungry, lift up the weak,
and take off the prisoners' chains.

May every nation come to know
that you alone are God,
that Jesus Christ is your Child,
that we are your people
and the sheep of your pasture. Amen.

Clement of Rome 1st Century

[7]

We believe, O Trinity of Love,
that you are drawing us into your dance of life.
**You fill us with the Holy Spirit
and call us to share in Christ's ministry –
living and praying for the world day and night
until all people live as your holy family,
united in respect and love.**

For the care of the earth:
that the mutual dependence of all species upon one another
might be honoured and protected...

Free prayer may be offered aloud or silently.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For reconciliation and justice:
that refugees and asylum seekers, displaced families and homeless people
might be welcomed into places of safety, shelter and long-term security...

Free prayer may be offered aloud or silently.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who are in physical pain or mental anguish,
and for those whose death draws near:
that the loving embrace of your Spirit might comfort and console...

Free prayer may be offered aloud or silently.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For ourselves, our families and friends...

Free prayer may be offered aloud or silently.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Bless us, loving God, mother and father of us all.
Grant us physical health, spiritual strength and clarity of heart and mind,
that we might offer our whole selves for your purposes in the world.
Be present in our waking and our sleeping, in our working and our resting.
Amen.

from UCA Daily Prayer for Wednesday

<http://assembly.uca.org.au/theology/worship-resources-and-publications/item/861-prayers-liturgies>

[8]

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is discord, union;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy;
for your mercy and truth's sake.

O divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

A 19th century prayer in the spirit of St Francis of Assisi

AFFIRMATIONS

[1]

We are not alone. We live in God's world.
We believe in God,
who has freely given the Holy Spirit
to bind us together as a community of grace.

We believe that the spirit can lead us
in the discovery of truth,
in the pursuit of justice, and
in the practice of caring for one another.

In our homes, in the church and in the community
the Spirit offers us inspiration and courage.
We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

from Prayers on Parade (2006), compiled by Allan Shephard, Stepney, South Australia: Axiom Publishing. Permission is given for the use of this text in worship.

[2] The Beatitudes

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the gentle,
for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for what is right,
for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful,
for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of right,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you,
and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

HYMNS AND SONGS

Look for these, and others, in the music resources you have available.

“How Long?”

Words and music by Robin Mann

This song can be found in Worship Resources, Life Overflowing, the worship book of the 13th Triennial Assembly meeting of the Uniting Church in Australia, published by the Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia, 2012, available from MediaCom Education Inc.

“Like a candle”

Words by Craig Mitchell, music by Tim Beale & Roger Imms

Words and music appear below

from *Together in Song*

The Australian Hymn Book Company (2005), Pymble: Harper Collins Religious

657 God of freedom, God of justice
416 Great God, your Spirit, like the wind
288 Not the powerful, not the privileged
629 When I needed neighbour
665 Jesus Christ is waiting
640 Kneels at the feet of his friends
690 Beauty for brokenness

from *Songs for Pilgrims*

*An excellent collection by Pilgrim Uniting Church, Adelaide
available from: office@pilgrim.org.au.*

Child at the door
Hear our cry before we call
What is our earth?
Spirit of peace

Note: In addition to the resources above, you may be interested to access the website for Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and look at the resources offered for Racial Justice Sunday 2012 www.ctbi.org.uk.

Like a Candle

Words by Craig Mitchell

Music by Tim Beale, Roger Imms

♩. = 54

C⁹ C⁹

1. Like a can - dle burn - ing
 (2. Like a) ri - ver run - ning
 (3. Like an) an - gel walk - ing
 (4. See the) hope that burns in

Fmaj⁷/C

wild - ly, Rag - ing soft a - gainst the night, Spark that
 free - ly, Ra - pids swirl be - side our feet, Swift - ly
 light - ly On this frag - ile earth of clay, Touch - ing
 dark - ness, Show com - pass - ion, strong and kind, Bind the

C⁹ Fmaj⁷/C G⁶

leaps to clear the sha - dows Send - ing warm dis - turb - ing
 flow - ing from the high land Comes to rest, still wa - ters
 folk with raw com - pass - ion, Laugh - ing, play - ing on the
 hurt and brok - en - heart - ed, Be God's hands and voice and

C G/C F/C C

light. meet. way, eyes. We are called to live the passion, Hope stands
 All our jour - nays ris - ing, fall - ing, Mak - ing
 Free - ly liv - ing ev - 'ry mo - ment In the
 Sing a new song ev - 'ry sun - rise, Climb to

G/C F C Em

strong turns mys - plac - a - gainst we least - ter - y out all ex - pect, of grace, of reach, For it's on - ly in the When the Spir - it churns with - Giv - ing, dy - ing, liv - ing, Walk in free - dom of God's

Fmaj7 G6 To Coda 1.-3. C

burn - ing in us, ris - ing, Spir - it, That the Know God's pow - er through the test. See the beau - ty of God's face. As we die so we shall

2. Like a
3. Like an
4. See the

D.S. al Coda Coda C

live. 1. We are flame.