

going global with youth

THE PICTURE OF COMPASSION: RESPONDING TO GLOBAL HIV/AIDS

OPENING PRAYER

Leader:

Close your eyes for a moment and try to picture 42 million people. Where can one begin to visualize so many faces, so many stories, and so much personality? But that is the picture of global HIV/AIDS today. Forty-two million people are living with the disease worldwide. More than half live in Africa, where hunger walks the same path as HIV. And many live in this community as well, where AIDS continues to find victims. Today we pray and we remember and we resolve to respond with a picture of compassion, imagining a world free of the advance of HIV/AIDS. Let us focus our hearts and minds with this prayer from Zambia:

“Oh God, you are the creator of all. Today we your creatures prostrate ourselves before you in supplication. We have no strength. You who have created us have all power. We bring you our seed and all our implements, that you may bless them and bless us also, so that we may make good use of them by the power, which comes from you, our Creator.”

All: Amen.



Photo by George Akor/CRS



Photo by Sara A. Fajardo/CRS

PSALM 31

Leader:

Divide those gathered into two groups, A and B, and alternate the reading of the psalm.

A

Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and my body with grief. I am forgotten by them as though I were dead; I have become like broken pottery. But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, "You are my God." Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love. Let me not be put to shame, O LORD, for I have cried out to you; In my alarm I said, "I am cut off from your sight!" Yet you heard my cry for mercy when I called to you for help.

B

Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbors; I am a dread to my friends -- those who see me on the street flee from me. For I hear the slander of many; there is terror on every side; they conspire against me and plot to take my life. My times are in your hands; deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me. Praise be to the LORD, who showed wonderful love to me when I was in a besieged city. Love the LORD, all saints! Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.

PROCESS

Reading: Luke: 12:22-34

"And he said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat, nor about your body, what you shall put on. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And which of you by being anxious can add a cubit to his span of life? If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass which is alive in the field today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O men of little faith! And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be of anxious mind. For all the nations of the world seek these things; and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things shall be yours as well.

Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms; provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Reflection on the Scripture: *(optional) Consider inviting a speaker to talk about AIDS both globally and locally. Or consider a time of quiet reflection with music, or a sharing of stories from people who have AIDS or are caregivers.*

Intercessions

We bring our prayers before a God who knows our prayers before we pray them, who in listening to our intercessions helps us to acknowledge the desires of our own hearts.

God of compassion, many step away from people with AIDS out of ignorance, or fear or denial. Help us to step toward our brothers and sisters who have AIDS, those who are an ocean away and those on the sidewalks down which we walk. Help us stand in solidarity with their suffering, in recognition of their worth. We pray...

❖ **Bless us with compassionate hearts**

God of the poor, AIDS does not discriminate by race or religion or economic class. But people do. Help us to respond to the cry of the poor for AIDS medications and health care, for food, for education, for communities of support. We pray...

❖ **Bless us with compassionate hearts**

God of the orphan, there are villages in Africa where all of the adults have died of AIDS; only their children remain. Help us to create a global village that will raise these children in love and hope into a secure future. We pray...

❖ **Bless us with compassionate hearts**

God of justice, our nation has the power to fund a large percentage of the efforts that will slow the spread of global AIDS. Strengthen our call for a U.S. response that is wise and immediate and generous. We pray...

❖ **Bless us with compassionate hearts**

God of our inmost hurts and heartbreaks, AIDS reaches us where we live. Be with us as we call to mind the people we have loved, known or encountered who are living with or who have died from AIDS... *(give people a moment to reflect quietly or invite them to name people they are praying for).* We pray...

❖ **Bless us with compassionate hearts**

We have brought our prayers for healing and compassion before God. Let us go forth as compassionate healers into a world that awaits the full Reign of God. We pray this in Jesus' name...

❖ **Amen.**