

Prayer Service of Hope: The Millennium Development Goals

Background

In the Easter and Pentecost liturgical seasons, it is important to emphasize that, despite the poverty, hunger and suffering in the world, our faith is built on hope and faith that the Holy Spirit will give us the inspiration and courage to proclaim and support movements of hope in the world.

Pope John Paul II has recognized the United Nations Millennium Development Goals as authentic signs of hope in this globalized world, so they are the focus of this prayer service. Please share this service as widely as possible.

Preparation

Photocopy pages 2-5 of this resource for all participants.

You will need one copy of the globe on page 6, or use another globe for the ritual on page 4. The globe should be placed on an altar or table, or on easel in the center or in front of the room in which the prayer service will take place. Set some candles nearby, to light at the beginning of the prayer service.

You will also need to cut up the sections on page 5 and designate 8 participants to bring these to the globe during the ritual of “covering the world with hope,” page 4.

For the Scripture readings on page 3, you will need a Bible. Designate 3 readers for each of the brief readings.

You may want to have a sharing time after the readings, with participants reflecting on the question: What is the challenge, and the promise, of being called to be God’s messengers for justice and peace?



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Love is the Person of the Resurrection, scooping up the dust and chanting: Live in Hope.

Opening Prayer

Leader:

Our hope for this century is a world envisioned by the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. Imagine that, by the year 2015, a little more than a decade,

(Each reader should pause between the fact and the goal (printed in bold). They should then read the goal slowly.)

Reader 1: In a world where 1 billion people try to exist on less than \$2 a day--

Poverty and hunger around the world will be cut in half.

Reader 2: In a world where 113 million children are excluded from education--

Primary school education for all girls and boys around the world will be a reality

Reader 3: In a world where women are denied basic human rights, where millions are abused in the sex trade, and where other millions labor long hours in desperate conditions to feed their families--

Women everywhere will be respected, safe, and enjoy all human rights.

Reader 4: In a world where 11 million children die before their fifth birthday from preventable causes--

Child mortality will be reduced by two-thirds.

Reader 5: In a world where 34 million are living with HIV and 3.8 million children have already died from AIDS--

The cases of HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB will begin to decline.

Reader 6: In a world where the risk of dying in childbirth is 1 in 48 for mothers in developing countries--

The proportion of women dying in childbirth will be reduced by three quarters.

Reader 7: In a world where more than 1 billion people lack access to safe drinking water and more than 2 billion lack sanitation facilities--

The number of people with access to safe water will double and 100 million will have improved sanitation.

Reader 8: In a world where poor countries pay over 4 times as much money in debt payments than they receive in international aid, and where unfair trade rules are making the poorest people poorer--

All countries will work together for people-centered development, debt forgiveness and fair trade.

Leader: Holy Spirit, give us images of hope to expand our vision of the Kingdom of God.

Leader: Close your eyes and take a moment to imagine what a world would look like where all people had access to clean water, adequate food, health care, basic schooling, safety and decent work.

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Readings:

1) Exodus 3:1-8, 13-15 and commentary:

In Exodus 3, Moses is challenged to be a leader for justice, to aid those who are enslaved. God brings a promise of liberation, especially to those who are marginalized and hopeless. But Moses is asked to work in partnership with God to bring this into fruition. Like Moses, we are needed to become the messenger of God's call for justice.

2) Luke 13: 18-21

3) Pope John Paul II, Address, March 23, 2004:

"In a world where the shadows of poverty, injustice and secularism are cast over every continent, the need for authentic disciples of Jesus Christ remains as urgent as ever. It is precisely witness to Christ's Gospel that dispels the darkness and illuminates the way of peace, fostering hope in the hearts of even the most marginalized and dejected of people."

Penitential rite

You call us to be messengers of hope.
For the times when we fail to be hopeful,
Lord, have mercy.

You invite us to be partners with you in working for justice.
For the times we have rejected your invitation,
Christ, have mercy.

You ask us to be builders of your kingdom.
For the times when, by turning away, we allow destruction of human dignity,
rather than transforming unjust systems and structures,
Lord, have mercy.

Song: O Lord, Come by Here
(To the tune of Kumbaya)

May the Spirit come, come by here
May the Spirit come, come by here
May the Spirit come, come by here
Oh Lord, come by here.

Move us on your road, guide our way,
Move us on your road, guide our way,
Move us on your road, guide our way,
Oh Lord, guide our way.

Hope is growing Lord, hope for all
Hope is growing Lord, hope for all
Hope is growing Lord, hope for all,
O Lord, hope for all.

Peace and Justice, Lord, we will build,
Peace and Justice, Lord, we will build,
Peace and Justice, Lord, we will build,
Oh Lord, we will build.



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Call to Serve

The prophet Micah declared: “Act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with your God.” The nations of the world are called to act justly by meeting concrete goals to provide fullness of life for billions in our global community. We are called, as citizens of the most powerful nation in the world and as global citizens, to make our voices heard as we urge our nation’s leaders to make the Millennium Development Goals a reality. Lord, help us to act justly, love our global family tenderly, and to walk humbly with you as we strive to build a better world.

Ritual: Covering the World with Hope

(After the leader calls us to “cover the world with hope,” the entire group will read the hopes in the UN Millinium Goals as 8 participants bring up sections of the Circle of Hope and place them over a circular image of the globe in the order printed on the section and on the response below.)

Leader: We will cover the world with hope.

- All:** One: By 2015, Poverty and hunger around the world will be cut in half.
- Two: By 2015, Primary school education for all girls and boys around the world will be a reality.
- Three: By 2015, Women everywhere will be respected, safe, and enjoy all human rights.
- Four: By 2015, Child mortality will be reduced by two-thirds.
- Five: By 2015, The cases of HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB will begin to decline.
- Six: By 2015, The proportion of women dying in childbirth will be reduced by three quarters.
- Seven: By 2015, The the number of people with access to safe water will double and 100 million will have improved sanitation.
- Eight: By 2015, All countries will work together for people-centered development, debt forgiveness and fair trade.

Leader: Let us proclaim to all the hope of Christ as articulated in these goals for the global family.

All: We will proclaim hope to the world in the name of Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit in us.

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Our Father
Who is in us here on earth,
Holy is your name
In the hungry who share their bread and their hopes.

Your kingdom come,
A generous land where confidence and truth reign.
Let us do your will
and become a cool breeze
For those who sweat in their long labors.

You give us your daily bread
When we return land to small farmers,
or when we help all workers get a fair wage.

Forgive us for keeping silent the in face of injustice
And for burying our dreams of justice for all.

Don't let us fall into temptation
of taking up arms to solve conflict,
but deliver us from the evil which disunites us.

And we believe in humanity and in life,
And we honor your kingdom
Which is being built with every act of faith, of hope, of compassion, and of social justice.

Amen.

(Adapted from a Central American prayer, translated by TROCAIRE, Ireland)

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