

Liturgy for Pacific Day of Prayer - 2 May 2010

LITURGY FOR THE PACIFIC DAY OF PRAYER

INTRODUCTION:

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, may the Grace of our Lord be upon you, and may His Holy Spirit strengthen our families in fulfilling the will of God on earth as it is in Heaven, as our Lord has taught in His prayer: *"May your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."*

Our theme for this year, as we come together in our Pacific day of Prayer is to focus on natural disasters and risks. Oh yes, very recently we, the Pacific peoples have been experiencing many natural disasters: like the Tsunami that hit **Samoa and Tonga**, hurricanes without spelling their names, which swept up, **Tubuai in Maohi Nui, Aitutaki in the Cook Islands, the Solomon Islands, Wallis and Futuna, the northern and eastern sides of the Fiji Islands and surrounding island groups**. We all felt the pain, the loss, the despair and we grieved alongside our fellow brothers and sisters as they mourned the loss of their loved ones and mourned the loss of all their belongings, houses, plantations, wealth, assets, livestock, pets and things that they have built up over years of hard work.

Today, we come together in prayer and in sympathizing with our brothers and sisters wounded and injured from the natural disasters, to call upon God the Lord and Creator of the whole world, to pour upon them His Grace and Mercy, to heal the scars and pain endured by those families. As Creator of all things, we beg Him to recreate our Pacific Islands, as some of them will be affected by sea level rise due to the impacts of climate change.

And upon all, let us also take this day of prayer to acknowledge that all the natural disasters and climate change effects were and are the results of our human activities towards the whole creation of God. Somewhere, we failed in playing our role as stewards of creation, we failed to fulfill God's will on earth. What we need is to go through a process of repentance and reconciliation with God and with the whole creation, land, sea, sky and all their fullness.

For this let us all join the voice of **Psalm 103**, to reaffirm of faith in our loving God, through creation, incarnated in Jesus Christ, living and acting among us through His Holy Spirit, saying:

Praise the Lord, my soul! All my being, praise his holy name!

Praise the Lord, my soul, and do not forget how kind he is.

He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases.

He keeps me from the grave and blesses me with love and strong mercy.

He fills my life with good things so that I stay young and strong like an eagle.

The Lord judges in favor of the oppressed and gives them their rights.

He revealed his plans to Moses and the people of Israel his mighty deeds.

The Lord is merciful and loving, slow to become angry and full of constant love.

*He does not keep on rebuking, he is not angry forever.
He does not punish us as we deserve or repay us according to our sins and wrongs.
As high as the sky is above the earth, so great is his love for those who have reverence for him.
As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our sins from us.
As a father is kind to his children, so the Lord is kind to those who honor him.
He knows what we are made of, he remembers that we are dust.
As for us, our life is like grass, we grow and flourish like a wild flower;
Then the wind blows on it, and it is gone, no one sees it again.
But for those who honor the Lord, his love lasts forever, and his goodness endures for all generations.
Of those who are true to his covenant and who faithfully obey his commands.
The Lord placed his throne in heaven, he is king over all
Praise the Lord you strong and mighty angels who obey his commands, who listen to what he says.
Praise the Lord, all you heavenly powers, you servants of his, who do his will!
Praise the Lord, all his creatures in all the places he rules. Praise the Lord, my soul. Amen.*

HYMN

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Leader:

God, you are our refuge and strength, ever ready to help, strengthen, guide and enlighten us in times of joy and sadness. Though the earth is shaken and the mountains fall into the ocean depth, though the seas roar and rage and the hills are shaken by violence, O God, we know that you are near. We will not be afraid when drought, floods, landslides, tsunami, earthquakes, hurricanes and other disasters are destroying our Pacific Islands. Come Holy Spirit, breathe upon us and upon all living things. Fill all with your power and love. Lift up our hearts and bless us. Amen.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: As we gather together in prayer, let us be present with open minds, listening ears, and eager hearts to receive God's word.

Response: Let us praise God, reflect on God's word, share our stories, and renew our commitment to be community of love and peace in every part of the Pacific and the world.

Leader: Open my lips.

Response: And my mouth shall praise your name.

HYMN

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Leader: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and there is no truth in us. So with a broken and contrite heart we humbly confess our sins and seek God's forgiveness. Our God, who is faithful and just, will forgive us and cleanse us of all evil.

Response: Lord have mercy

Voice 1: We have failed to do your will. We have broken your law. We have rebelled against your love. We have failed to love our neighbor as ourselves. We have not listened to the cries of the needy.

Response: Lord have mercy.

Voice 2: We confess that hatred, conflicts, violence, abuse, corruption, and greed are breaking down our communities. Many people are suffering. We ask for your mercy and forgiveness for any way we have taken part in the causes of these evils by what we have done or by what we failed to do. We are mindful of the times when we were silent and did not speak out when there was oppression and suffering.

(Individual silent prayer of confession)

Leader: Christ died for us when we were yet sinners. This is a sign of God's love for us that in the name of Jesus we may be forgiven.

HYMN

LITHANY OF PRAISE

Leader: In our Pacific context people praise God even or especially during difficult times in our lives. This is because generally we consider life to be God's greatest gift to us. As long as one has breath, there is hope. So we sing in the hope that things will be better. We praise the Almighty for the gift of life. As our Lord Jesus-Christ said in John 10, 10: "I have come in order that you might have life – life in all its fullness."

Voice 1: We praise the Creator of heaven and earth and everything that is in them. We praise the all knowing God who is mighty and strong, merciful and compassionate.

Voice 2: We praise God on the earth, in heavens and even in the ocean depths. We praise God for the beauty of our islands in the Pacific.

Voice 3: We praise God for the earth's resources: for the sea, for the land, for the water, for energy, and for the harmony in cultural diversity.

All: Praise God for his mighty deeds, praise him according to his surpassing greatness.

Leader: Prostrate before you, O God, we ask that you grant mercy on us the Pacific People and all the entire humanity. Empower us to shed our tears, to lighten our burdens and to uplifts our spirits and minds, as we know that we are not removed from the difficult realities of

our society and yet under the threat of natural disasters and risks. In times of joy, sorrow, and sadness and at all times, we always praise you. Amen.

HYMN

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Leader: Almighty God you spoke and your word became a living word. You are a God who spoke to our ancestors, to us now and to our descendants and we witness your power. May our heart be burned with the fire of your word to clean our heart in order to hear and take into heart your word in its purity and sanctity. Amen

BIBLE READINGS

Genesis 1, 1-2,1-4: *Everything started with God.*

Exodus 14, 1-25: *Despite threats and difficulties we have to move forward.*

Psalms 84, 1-12: *Praising God always.*

Matthew 6, 24-34:*Seek for the Kingdom of God and his justice.*

Mark 4, 35-41: *The power to talk to nature.*

John 20, 1-31: *The resurrection, the foundation of our faith and hope.*

Romans 12, 1-14: *The true fellowship is based on love.*

(These are only proposed Biblical readings relating to the theme of our Pacific Day of Prayer. Churches are free to choose other Bible readings which they think it really match to their own context and issues, in regard to natural disasters and risks)

HYMN

OFFERINGS

(At this space we leave the freedom to the churches to have their OFFERTORY SENTENCE and their DEDICATION PRAYER, according to their traditions)

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Leader: Most High God, we call out to you. We make known the problems that trouble and disturb us in the Pacific. You have assured us that you will wait no longer, you will cry out like a woman in labor. By your word the Kingdom of God is brought to life here and now. We sing a new song of praise for your power among us, and so we pray:

For Youth: Many young people do not see that they have a future. Empower us to be relentless in our efforts to join with youth and to provide opportunities for youth employment and

vocational training for sustainable livelihoods. We pray with confidence because these are the things God will do.

All: God will not forsake us.

For Women: almighty God, we thank you for being with us in our times of crises and trouble as women. By your mercies you have created humankind in your image, male and female, May our relationships be based on equality and mutual support. We pray with confidence because these are the things God will do.

All: God will not forsake us.

For Prisoners: Almighty God, we pray for all those who are bound as prisoners in overcrowded prisons. Grant them the grace to find strength and hope from reflecting on your word and to trust in your mercy and your forgiving love. We pray with confidence because these are the things that God will do.

All: God will not forsake us.

For families: We pray for peace in our families and for the provision of our families' needs. Where there difficulties, strengthen our commitments to one another and give us grace to persevere. We pray with confidence because these are the things God will do.

All: God will not forsake us.

For those in Authority: God we ask your wisdom for those in places of leadership in government and church institutions. Enlarge their vision to see keenly the needs of the people.

Enable them, by your grace, to lead with integrity, justice, and peace. We pray with confidence because these are the things God will do.

All: God will not forsake us.

For the Pacific and the World: We pray for those whose hearts ache because a loved one has died in natural disasters, in war or in areas of conflicts. O merciful Lord, in the midst of their losses, suffering, and sorrow, may your grace and light shine through their grief and pain. We pray in confidence because these are the things that God will do.

All: God will not forsake us.

All: O God, we praise you for life itself. We praise you for your steadfast love that reaches out to us and never ceases. Your mercies never end, "they are new every morning." We sing praises for your close presence which we have felt in the peace that reigns in our Island nations, for the fertility of our land, for the abundant food supplies, and for the rain and sun in their season. We pray for guidance through the responsibilities, opportunities, and all the blessings that you so richly bestow on us and ours. Grant that we may always

be grateful and help us to bear our pain and deprivations in the same spirit that you bore yours.

Our hearts are filled with gratitude for answered prayers of the past, for those you are answering in the present, and for those that we will offer in the future with assurance that you will answer them according to your wisdom. Amen.

HYMN

(Before the blessing, churches are free to add the Lord's prayer, and to use their own benediction and sending sentences according to their traditions).

BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

Leader: Together with the multitude of people around the world, let us all lift up our arms in praise and thanksgiving for the fellowship we have had.

We thank God for daily bread and the gift of peace.

God bless us with the wonders of your love and grace.

God be with us as we go forth from this place praising you.

Let everything that has breath praise God now and forever.