

Overcoming National Violence Worship Materials



Read Matthew 13 vv.31-32

A meditation:

Think of the smallest seed you can imagine...

This is a seed of hope.

Think of a situation in our nation's life about which you feel powerless...

Take the tiny seed of hope and plant it in the field of that situation...

Imagine it beginning to grow and put down roots...

Feed and water it with your loving attention...

See it take shape as a sturdy shrub... and then a tree...

Imagine all who shelter beneath it and within it...

Now imagine the birds who take shelter in the spreading branches of this tree...

Appreciate the variety of the birds- the different sizes, different colours of plumage, different calls – and give thanks for them...

They are like the different races and ethnic groupings in our nation. Give thanks for their diversity and for the harmony which already exists...

Now think again of the great tree which grows from the mustard seed of hope...

This tree represents your hopes and dreams for healing and reconciliation in our land - give thanks for it. Promise to bring it often to mind, and to keep it in the forefront of your mind when you think of situations of violence in our land.

Gracious and loving God,

In the midst of hunger and war

we celebrate the promise of plenty and peace

In the midst of oppression and tyranny,

we celebrate the promise of service and freedom.

In the midst of doubt and despair

we celebrate the promise of faith and hope

In the midst of fear and betrayal

we celebrate the promise of joy and loyalty

In the midst of hatred and death

we celebrate the promise of love and life

In the midst of sin and decay

we celebrate the promise of salvation and renewal

In the midst of pain and suffering

we celebrate the promise of the living Christ.

Hear our cry as we pray

For peace in our country

For the victims of violence everywhere

For those struggling for peace and justice

For churches in conflict with one another

For a community where love prevails

For a world without pain and suffering (WCC Study Guide – Why Violence? Why not Peace?)

Living Christ,
Deep within our hearts
the fire of justice
burns;
So we ask this day for
inner courage
To walk in solidarity
With all who are
Betrayed, exploited,
Driven from home,
Violated, imprisoned,
Detained without trial,
Held hostage, robbed,
Enslaved, silenced,
Tortured, abused.
(Peter Millar)

SEEDS OF PEACE

Gracious God, we bring before you our failings and omissions.

For those times when our fears, suspicions, avoidance of issues for fear of upsetting others or our lack of energy and action have damaged our nation

Forgive us and deepen our courage and wisdom.

For not loving our enemies and not treating those who disagree with us with respect

Forgive us and deepen our courage and wisdom

For our failings in generosity, compassion and imagination to devise better policies to assist the poor, refugees, and all those in need

Forgive us and deepen our courage and wisdom.

(adapted from RDP Refugee and Migrant Sunday prayers)

Bring down the powerful and lift up the lowly

Lift up, O God,

leaders who can give us back our self-respect.

Give them voices to speak and be heard

and give them words of truth.

Bring down the powerful and lift up the lowly

Lift up, O God, communities of women and men

who know what is needed and will act to achieve it.

Give them pride to know who they are and proclaim it.

Bring down the powerful and lift up the lowly.

Lift up, O God, a spirit of determination among us

no longer to yield to the will of those who are ignorant.

Give us the means to live our own truth.

Bring down the powerful and lift up the lowly

that your promise may be fulfilled. **Amen**



God of All Peoples, you call us to be at peace with our families, friends and neighbours.

May we be a people of peace

God of All Peoples, you call us to let mutual love continue

May we be a people of Love

God of All Peoples, you call us to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some have entertained angels without knowing it

May we be a people of Acceptance and Welcome

God of All Peoples, help us to bring the light of the Gospel to those traumatised and living in darkness, to understand and enter their pain as though we ourselves were them.

May we be a people of Light

God of All Peoples, help us to bring hope to those living in despair and to remember those who are in detention as though we are in detention with them

May we be a people of Hope.

God of All Peoples, help us to bring the Gospel's peace to a divided world. Jesus the same yesterday, today and forever

May we be people of Peace. Amen.

(adapted from RDP Refugee and Migrant Sunday prayers)

Suggested Songs:

(from *Whispers of Peace*)

Kevin Bates *Razor Wire* Allan Hoare *Spirit of Peace*

Decade to Overcome Violence