

Prayers

FOR ELECTION SEASON

Lord, make us seekers of shalom.

Rid our hearts of our love of the status quo, our comfort in complacency, our preference for absence of conflict. Cultivate in us, God, a love for true *shalom*: wholeness, flourishing, a world made right.

Make us seekers of shalom in ourselves and in our communities.

Give us eyes to see the loves and loyalties, fears and desires, identities and insecurities that shape our lives. Reveal to us, God, the places that our hearts seek comfort, stability, or security. Show us the stories that we have learned to love.

Train our hearts, Holy Spirit, to seek the kingdom of God above any of the little kingdoms that threaten to steal our affections. Give us such an overpowering love for you, God, that all of our other loves fall in place behind it.

Soften our hearts for our community. Help us build relationships with our neighbors so that we might know their needs and love them better. Show us the places we can create flourishing—in the ways we vote and the lives we lead.

We confess, God, that we have failed to love our neighbor.

We have ignored the vulnerable, maligned the marginalized, and exploited the weak.

We have prioritized our own needs above the well-being of others.

We have treated image bearers as means to an end, as tools for our advantage, and as pawns in a political game.

We have not loved you with our whole hearts, God, and we have loved the things of your creation in the wrong way.

In the face of fear, be our Protector and Provider.

Give us a strong sense of ultimate security in you, God. Teach our hearts to desire your kingdom above any earthly security.

Help us look to you for provision, God. Teach our hands to open wide, holding the good gifts of your creation loosely.

In the face of scarcity and competition, God, teach us to seek the good of others above our own.

We know that all we have is really yours, God, and we ask that you show us how to serve our neighbor with the gifts you've given us.

Break down our pride and self-sufficiency, God, and teach us to rely upon your body and our communities to meet each other's needs.

Lord, make us seekers of shalom.

Help us act and talk and live in this season out of love for the kingdom of God.

Give us eyes to see the brokenness of our world, hearts that yearn for its restoration, and hands and feet willing to work for the glimpses of its coming redemption that You have commissioned us with creating.

Lord, make us seekers of shalom.

Amen.

FOR ELECTION DAY

Lord, be with me in this day,

a day with great significance and possibility

a day with ordinary struggles and delights

a day that is one precious opportunity to serve my neighbor among many others.

Lord, give me wisdom and guidance as I vote.

Help me make decisions that glorify you –

in the impact they have on my community in your creation

and in the posture of my heart as I make them.

Help me allow this day and the practice of voting to shape me, Lord.

May it be a practice that unclenches my fists from around my possessions,

wrenches my attention away from myself,

and chips away at the hard places of my heart.

Give me eyes to see my neighbors in my ballot, Lord.

I cannot unlearn my self-preservation, greed, and idolatry on my own.

Holy Spirit, reveal to me my twisted intentions and my disordered desires.

Give me the strength and humility to prioritize others before myself—in all things, but also in this one act of worship today.

Redeem and restore my community, Lord.

Our focus is so often trained on the national, the flashy, the expensive, and the scandalous.

God, help train my attention on the needs of the people around me.

Guide our local elections today, God. Give our community the leaders and policies that will allow us to flourish.

You are the only true King, Lord.

Forgive us for thinking small thoughts about you. Forgive us for limiting your rule and reign to the domain of our hearts rather than recognizing your rightful rule over our households, communities, elected officials, systems of government, nations, and all of your creation.

Help my heart desire your kingdom above all modifications to the kingdoms of this world.

Give me a vibrant vision of your redeemed creation, God, so that I might, even in my frail and fallen attempts, seek glimpses of it now.

Amen.

Other Prayers for the Election Season

FOR OUR HUMAN FAMILY

“O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”¹

FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

“Almighty God, who created us in your own image: Grant us grace fearlessly to contend against evil and to make no peace with oppression; and, that we may reverently use our freedom, help us to employ it in the maintenance of justice in our communities and among the nations, to the glory of your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.”²

A NON-TRADITIONAL BLESSING

“May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half truths, and superficial relationships, so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people, so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and turn their pain to joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done.

Amen.”³

Endnotes

- ¹ *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church : Together with the Psalter or Psalms of David According to the Use of the Episcopal Church* (New York :Seabury Press, 1979), 815.
- ² *The Book of Common Prayer*, 260.
- ³ This was written and delivered by Benedictine Sister Ruth Fox of Sacred Heart Monastery in Richardton, ND, at a Dickinson State University graduation. It is often given the title “Franciscan Blessing” though it has no connection to St. Francis or any Franciscans.