

A Prayer for Trauma Survivors

Praying for Peace and Justice on June 23, 2024

Let us pray for all traumatized people today, for moments of release from the filters of fear, for experiences of beauty and love that remind us that God is present, with us, for us, and in us.

“Oh God, you are the author of beauty and the source of love itself; all that separates us from receiving them challenges our awareness of you. We see and feel the pervasive darkness of our anxiety and fear. We struggle with the consequences of chronic trauma in our lives.

We bring to you now our longing for release. Give us this day, and this moment, freedom from fear and anxiety. Without denying the very real suffering and dangers that exist in certain times and places, we open our senses to that which is beautiful and loving and available, in this moment and in this place. Here and now, we honor the love that each of us carries in our hearts as a reflection of you. May we expand this loving place, and extend it towards you and towards each other.

We pray this for ourselves, for our families and loved ones. We pray it also for the followers of Trump and Biden and all other politicians, for Palestinians and Israelis, for Russians and Ukrainians, for Christians, Jews, Muslim, Hindus, Buddhists, for all sentient beings in the amazing, magical, mysterious universe you have created and placed us in. Help us to grow in our awareness that you are here with us, for us, and in us.”

Background

Daily experiences of love and beauty around us help us to know and feel the love of God.

Nothing blocks us more persistently from receiving these experiences than trauma. Trauma is like a panic button permanently set to ON. It seizes our fight/flight/freeze survival instincts, a life-giving mechanism in emergencies, and makes it our primary mechanism for interacting with all moments. Trauma makes fear our primary emotion for interacting with life, blocking us from seeing or experiencing beauty or love. Everything we encounter is filtered through a lens of fear, and danger is the only thing we can see. Neither love nor beauty can get a toehold when trauma rules, and God is only an abstraction. Trauma is a threat not only to survivors of war and trauma, but to onlookers, thereby including everyone in this room.