



Prayer Vigil for Disarmament

Call To Repentance

Reader: Poor countries now spend \$185 billion yearly on arms and soldiers - more than double the development aid they receive from all sources. Because the United States has become the largest exporter of weapons to the world we pray, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ have mercy.

Reader: We could provide clean water, prevent soil erosion and eliminate illiteracy worldwide while reversing ozone depletion and stopping global warming with only 25 percent of the world's total annual military expenditures. For our misappropriation of the wealth you have given us we pray, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ have mercy.

Reader: Archbishop May tells us, "When a weapons manufacturer says we must build weapons because we need jobs, it is troubling indeed. . . unemployment is not an excuse to make war or things of war." For the times when we have made jobs hostage to the proliferation of weapons we pray, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ have mercy.

Scripture Reading

Jeremiah 5:23-28, 13:15-16

(Silent reflection)

Lighting of the Candles

Leader: In the midst of the darkness of such violence, we look for the light. As a sign of our faith, our hope, in this light – the Light who has already come into the world, the Light that the darkness can never overcome.

Song

"Prayer for Peace" *(By David Haas, c. 1987, GIA.)*

Reading

Words of Martin Luther King Jr.

Reader 1: These are revolutionary times. All over the globe people are revolting against old systems of exploitation and oppression, and out of the wombs of a frail world, new systems of justice and equality are being born. The shirtless and barefoot people of the land are rising up as never before. "The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light." We in the West must support these revolutions. . . Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism and militarism.

All: Make us a light to the world.

Reader 2: I refuse to accept the view that humankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism that the bright daybreak of peace and kinship can never become a reality. . . I believe that even amid today's mortar bursts and whining bullets, there is still hope for a brighter tomorrow. I believe that wounded justice lying prostrate on the blood-flowing streets of our nations can be lifted from the dust of shame to reign supreme among the children of humankind.

All: Make us a light to the world.

Reader 3: Christians of the United States, I must say to you what was written to the Roman Christians years ago, "Be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." You have a dual citizenry. Your highest loyalty is to God, and not to the mores or the folkways, the state or the nation or any human-made institution. If any earthly institution or custom conflicts with God's will, it is your Christian duty to oppose it.

All: Make us a light to the world.

Reader 4: Expediency asks the question, "Is it politic?" and vanity comes along and asks the question "Is it popular?" And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe nor politic nor popular, but one must do it because conscience tells them it is right. And this is where I believe we must go, as ministers of the Gospel.

All: Make us a light to the world.

Reader 5: So often the contemporary church is ineffectual and weak, with an uncertain voice. So often it is an arch defender of the status quo. . . If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century.

All: Make us a light to the world.

Reader 6: A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death. . . Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have guided missiles and misguided people.

All: Make us a light to the world.

Reader 7: Dear God, we thank you for the gift of Martin Luther King, Jr. His public witness to peace with justice is an example of what it means to be Christian disciples. Grant us the same light that led Martin to the mountaintop to see the promised land.

All: Amen.

Prayers of the Faithful Leader:

Our God stands ready to give us what we need to be a light to the nations and so we respond. . .

All: God be our light.

Leader: That our government, business and community leaders might work together to provide our defense workers in the United States with meaningful work that protects the environment and serves the human needs of the poor at home and around the world, we pray. . .

All: God be our light.

Leader: That we might have the courage to raise our voices and actively work to end the evils of racism, poverty and militarism, we pray. . .

All: God be our light.

Please add your own intentions. . . (God be our light).

Our Mother and Father, who art in heaven. . .

Closing Song

"World Peace Prayer" (By Marty Haugen, c. 1985, GIA.)

(Adapted from a prayer vigil planned by Tricia Sullivan for an Air Force arms bazaar held in Washington DC.)