



**Morning Prayer of Lament, based on Psalm 130 and
the Pastoral Letter on the War in Iraq**

Out of the depths I cry to you, O GOD.

Today is the fifth anniversary of the Invasion of Iraq.

God, hear my voice!

Thousands of precious American lives have been lost;
thousands more have been altered forever by injuries;
Tens of thousands more innocent Iraqi lives are daily being lost
to war and sectarian violence.
We grieve, we weep.

Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!

We struggle in our hearts and in our churches
to know the truth of what is happening to the Iraqi people and to America:
Open our hearts to the voices of the world.

If you, O GOD, should mark iniquities, who could stand?

In our name human rights have been violated;
Iraqi infrastructure and lives destroyed.
Precious resources have been diverted
from education, health care, and the needs of the poor.
Efforts to restrain the real sources of global terrorism
have been ignored or subverted.
Trust and respect for the United States
has been traded for self-serving political gain.

But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered.

We confess that too often the church has been little more
than a silent witness to evil deeds:
We have prayed without protest, and without action for peace.
As citizens of this land we have been made complicit
in the bloodshed and the cries.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

I wait for God, my soul waits, and in God's word I hope;

Yet in the midst of our lament we may give thanks -
for pastors and laity who have raised courageous voices;
for military personnel who serve with honor and integrity,
for chaplains who care for soldiers and their families;

for veterans whose experience has led them to say, "no more;"
for humanitarian groups, who care for the victims of violence;
for the fragile Christian community in Iraq
that continues to bear witness to the Gospel
under intense pressure and fear,
for public officials who have challenged this war
risking reputation and career.

The Gospel witness has not been completely silenced, and we are grateful.

**My soul waits for God more than those who watch for the morning,
More than those who watch for the morning, I wait.**

Today we call for an end
to war, to reliance on violence;
Today we call for humility and courage
to accept the futility of our current path.
Today we cry out for creativity
to seek new paths of peacemaking.
Today we call for repentance in our nation
and for recognition in our churches that security is found
in submitting to Christ, not by dominating others.

O People, hope in GOD!

May we join protest to prayer, support ministries of compassion,
and cast off the fear
that has made us accept the way of violence.
May we return again to the way of Jesus.
Thus may bloodshed end and cries be transformed
to the harmonies of justice and the melodies of peace.

For with GOD there is steadfast love, and great power to redeem.

For this we yearn, for this we pray,
and toward this end we rededicate ourselves
as children of a loving God
who gives "light to those who sit in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace."

O GOD, redeem your People from all iniquities.



Meditation to Guide Mid-Day Action

During these first days of Holy Week,
the church is called upon to ponder the mission of the Servant in Isaiah:

The one who is anointed with the Spirit of God
to bring justice to the nations,
to tend the weak and the helpless
to open the eyes of those without sight
and to free those who are oppressed.

“See, the former things have come to pass,
and new things I now declare;
before they spring forth, I tell you of them.”

(Isaiah 42: 1-9, Monday of Holy Week)

Jesus claimed this mission as his own
at the start of his public ministry:
“Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

(Luke 4: 21)

Jesus’ proclamation of good news to the poor compels him
to speak truth to power throughout his ministry
and leads to the cross,
where he labors to bring the “new things” of God to birth.

As we prepare to take an action for peace
on this Wednesday of Holy Week, the 5th anniversary of the Invasion of Iraq,
let us remember that we inherit this mission from our beloved Jesus,
and that the tradition of struggle for justice continues through us.

In the words of our ancestor in faith and struggle, Martin Luther King, Jr.:

“The cross we bear precedes the crown we wear.
To be a Christian one must take up [the] cross,
with all its difficulties and agonizing
and tension-packed content and carry it
until that very cross leaves its marks upon us
and redeems us to that more excellent way
which comes only through suffering.”

Let us pray: *O God, teach us what it is to be faithful;
Let us have courage to take up the cross for our time
And risk the hard work for justice and peace.*



Evening Prayer of Hope

*On this 19th day of March, 2008, the fifth anniversary of the Invasion of Iraq,
we pray with Christians of the Western Churches observing Holy Week:*

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
for by your cross and resurrection you have offered us Hope
with its power to reveal signs of your reign
already within and among us:
Reveal the way to Peace in Iraq.

We adore you O Christ and we bless you,
for by your cross and resurrection you have triumphed in Love
with its power to cast out fear
and overcome hatred:
Open the way to Peace in Iraq.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
for by your cross and resurrection you have given us Freedom
to be doers of your Word
to be workers for your Justice
to be healers of your beloved world:
Lead us in the way of Peace in Iraq.

**Glory be to the One, who,
working in us,
can do infinitely more
than we can ask or imagine.**

**To God be glory
in the church and in Christ Jesus
to all generations,
for ever and ever. Amen**