

No one is free, until everyone is free. *Vivet Pandik*

Prayer Service for January 11, 2009 2nd National Human Trafficking Awareness Day

Song: Amazing Grace *

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound...that saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now I'm found...was blind, but now, I see.

'Twas Grace that taught my heart to fear...and Grace, my fears relieved.
How precious did that Grace appear...the hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares...we have already come.
'Twas Grace that brought us safe thus far...and Grace will lead us home

Leader: God of life, truth and freedom, to you we speak:

All: O God, you give peace and you desire justice for all people, hear our prayers for the enslaved members of our global human family, our sisters and brothers, our children and young men and women, held in slavery, brutalized and traumatized by the horror of human trafficking. Hear our anguished cry for them, see our hidden tears for them, as we pray together to you, at this moment, in their name.

Psalm prayers (adapted)

Save us from our enemies, O God, hear us when we call to you
rescue us from evil, from those who threaten our lives.
Look! They are waiting to ensnare us.
Cruelly, they are gathering their strength against us.

Shelter us from the plots of the wicked, from the plans of the evil.
"We have planned a perfect crime," they say "no one will see us."
All day long our enemies insult us,
They make fun of us and use our names in cursing.

It is not because of any sin or wrong we have done,
Not because of any fault of ours.
Rise, O God and come to our aid! Deliver us from this darkness.
In our despair, abandoned and far from home, we call to you!

For you, O God, are our steadfast help, our saving hope.
Let us find safety in your shadow, refuge in your tent.
Bless again with kindness and honor,
that we may once again be happy and praise your Holy Name.



All: Glory and praise to you, the God of life,
Praise and thanksgiving today and always

Reading

Abuses against women are relentless, systematic, and widely tolerated, if not explicitly condoned. Violence and discrimination against women are global social epidemics... Our duty as activists is to expose and denounce as human rights violations those practices and policies that silence and subordinate women. We reject specific legal, cultural, or religious practices by which women are systematically discriminated against, excluded from political participation and public life, segregated in their daily lives, raped in armed conflict, beaten in their homes, denied equal divorce or inheritance rights, killed for having sex, forced to marry, assaulted for not conforming to gender norms, and trafficked into forced labor. Arguments that sustain and excuse these human rights abuses - those of cultural norms, "appropriate" rights for women, or western imperialism - barely disguise their true meaning: that women's lives matter less than men's. Cultural relativism, which argues that there are no universal human rights and that rights are culture-specific and culturally determined, is still a formidable and corrosive challenge to women's rights to equality and dignity in all facets of their lives. www.hrw.org/

Quiet Reflection / Sharing

Litany of Remembrance for those who are enslaved:

For child soldiers, child laborers and children exploited in pornography, we pray:

Response: *Deliver them from darkness into your wonderful Light.*

For young girls, exploited on city streets and hidden in brothels, R.

For enslaved women, desperate, alone, and abandoned, R.

For men in bondage, betrayed, forgotten and despairing, R

For all Human Family members currently enslaved around the world, we pray: R.

Litany of Thanksgiving for the Spirit's Action in our World:

Leader: For UN and world leaders, state and local government officials,

Response: Give them with wisdom, confirm them in courage, bless them with perseverance.

For members of NGOs, anti-trafficking organizations, women's and children's rights groups, R.

For members of religious communities and women's organizations working for justice and equality, R.

For children and youth engaged in their own struggle for security, independence and freedom, R.

Other intercessions as desired. . .

Closing Prayer - Leader:

O God, You know the anguished pain we feel for those who are trapped in slavery. May this sorrow move us to action for justice, contemplative prayer and daily conversion of heart.

Together we pray:

All: Give us Wisdom, that we may know how best to serve.
Give us trust that our lives and works for others may bear lasting fruit.
Give us courage, because life is short and each day a gift, given to share.

We ask for faith, because we see sorrow and death around us.
We ask for hope, because you are the God of Life. We ask for gratitude, because you call us each by name and daily promise us to make all things new. Amen, Alleluia



Song: Amazing Grace

The Lord has promised good to me...His word my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be...as long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years...bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise...then when we've first begun.

"Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound...that saved a wretch like me...
I once was lost but now am found...was blind, but now, I see.

John Henry Newton (July 24, 1725 – December 21, 1807) was an Englishman, Anglican clergyman and former slave-ship captain. He was the author of many hymns, including Amazing Grace. Among his greatest contributions to history was encouraging William Wilberforce, a Member of Parliament, to stay in Parliament and "serve God where he was", rather than enter the ministry. Wilberforce heeded the former slave ship captain's advice and spent the next twenty years successfully working for the abolition of the slave trade in the British Empire.

J. Cather snjm 2009