**WORLD DAY OF HUMAN RIGHTS – DAY OF PRAYER – DECEMBER 10, 2019**

What are Human Rights?

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings from birth until death, regardless of nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status. Governments ought to act in certain ways or to refrain from certain acts, in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups. The principle of universality of human rights means that the entitlements and freedoms apply to every individual without any form of discrimination. Human rights are inalienable. This means that they should not be taken away, except in certain situations where there restriction of the rights is necessary. All human rights are interdependent and indivisible where civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights are all interrelated and the improvement of one right facilitates advancement of the others, likewise, the deprivation of one right adversely affects the others.

Human rights conventions such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights suggest that all persons are equal and they should not be discriminated under any circumstance. Some of the human rights according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights include right to equality, freedom from discrimination, right to life, liberty, personal security; freedom from slavery; right to fair public hearing; freedom of belief and religion; right to education among others. On the other hand, rights come with obligations, both from the states and from the people. The state ought to respect, protect and not to interfere in the enjoyment of people’s rights. The people have obligations to respect the rights of others and not to violate them.

*Right to Life* - Genesis 9:5 - “For your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man in regard to his fellow man, I will demand an accounting.” “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.”
Prayer to stop wars - Lord Jesus, we adore your cross that frees us from sin, the origin of every division and evil. We proclaim your resurrection, which ransoms man from the slavery of failure and death. We await your coming in glory, which will bring to fulfillment your kingdom of justice, joy and peace. Lord Jesus, by your glorious passion, conquer the hardness of our hearts, imprisoned by hatred and selfishness; by the power of your resurrection, save the victims of injustice and maltreatment from their suffering; by the fidelity of your coming, confound the culture of death and make the triumph of life shine forth. Lord Jesus, unite to your cross the sufferings of the many innocent victims: the children, the elderly, and the persecuted Christians. Envelop in paschal light those who are deeply wounded, abused persons deprived of freedom and dignity. Let those who live in uncertainty experience the enduring constancy of your kingdom: the exiles, refugees, and those who have lost the joy of living. Lord Jesus, cast forth the shadow of your cross over peoples at war. May they learn the way of reconciliation, dialogue and forgiveness. Reunite your dispersed children under your gentle kingship and sustain Christians and other religions all over the world and grant them the unity of faith and love. Amen.

Prayer for the Unborn - Heavenly Father, in your love for us, protect against the wickedness of the devil, those helpless little ones to whom you have given the gift of life. Touch with pity the hearts of those women pregnant in our world today who are not thinking of motherhood. Help them to see that the child they carry is made in your image, as well as theirs, made for eternal life. Dispel their fear of selfishness and give them true womanly hearts to love their babies and give them birth and all the needed care that a mother can give. We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, Our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever. Amen.

Prayer for the elderly - Loving Lord, we bring before you the elderly and infirm, not only those that we know, but all who are facing this stage of their life. Draw those that have never placed their trust in you into a saving relationship with Jesus, and give those that are of the household of faith your peace that passes understanding in their heart as they fulfill your purpose for their lives, in whatever condition or situation they find themselves. Give grace to those that find it difficult to come to terms with other people caring for them, knowing that your grace is
sufficient and as they grow older, we pray that in your love and mercy, you will draw each one into closer fellowship with yourself, in Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Right to Water for life- giving - John 4:10-15 - Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.’ ‘Sir,’ the woman said, ‘you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?’ Jesus answered, ‘Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.’

Reflection: Think of the way you use water and how it affects others?

Prayer for Clean Water - O Lord, Almighty God, who has given us an ample supply of water, led off by pipes from different sources, grant that, by your assistance and blessing and our cooperation, every diabolical attack and confusion may be kept off and that the water supplies may always be pure and uncontaminated. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer for the protection of sea - O God, Master of this passing world, hear the humble voices of your children. The Sea of Galilee obeyed your order and returned to its former calmness. You are still the Master of land and sea. We live in the shadow of a danger over which we have no control. During hurricane seasons, we turn to you, O loving Father.
Spare us from past tragedies whose memories are still so vivid and whose wounds seem to refuse to heal with passing of time. O Virgin, Star of the Sea, Our Beloved Mother, we ask you to plead with your Son on our behalf, so that we are spared from the calamities and animated with a true spirit of gratitude, we will walk in the footsteps of your Divine Son to reach the heavenly Jerusalem where a storm less eternity awaits us. Amen.

**Prayer for water conservation** - Dearest God, You have given us the life-sustaining gift of water, and placed upon us the responsibility of protecting it. Please, Lord, awaken the conscience of our lawmakers so that they fulfill their duty of care for the blessed waters of our land. Strengthen them to withstand the temptations and pressures of those who seek to dissuade them from pursuing the public good. Empower them to understand what science teaches about the threats facing the waters of life and to act accordingly. In all these things, make the priority for us all the preservation of clean water, for the sake of life. Amen.

**Prayer in times of drought** - Sustaining God, You created the earth to nourish us and give us life. We ask that you look kindly upon your people in drought areas. Lands are in the grip of drought and animals are in need of pastures. Let your blessing come upon the lands and those who seek to help the affected ones. Bring gentle rain to make the crops grow. May we use well your gifts that the poor may be fed and the hungry filled with good things. Then shall we give glory to you, creator God, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Prayer for the victims of floods** - Compassionate God, source of all comfort, we pray for the people whose lives have been devastated by rain and floods. Bring them comfort, we pray. Protect the vulnerable and strengthen the weak. Keep at bay the spread of diseases. Have mercy on all those working to rescue the stranded and to feed the hungry. May your response to their suffering be generous and bring you praise. We ask in Jesus name. Amen.

**Environmental Responsibilities - Care for Creation** - Laudato Si’, On Care of Our Common Home, firmly grounds a spiritual discussion on creation as a precious gift from God to be reverenced by all men and women. Both human beings and nature are equally important and they are interdependent. Although human beings were given the mandate to have dominion over the earth in Genesis 2:15, “till it and keep it”, Pope Francis emphasizes that “tilling refers
to cultivating, ploughing or working, while keeping means caring, protecting, overseeing and preserving” (Laudato Si’ no.67). Therefore, people have a moral duty towards one another, nature and the environment.

“Never have we so hurt and mistreated our common home ... The establishment of a legal framework which can set clear boundaries and ensure the protection of ecosystems has become indispensable.” Pope Francis, Laudato Si, 2015.

Reflection on caring for one another - Luke 9:49-50 - Then John said in reply, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow in our company.” Jesus said to him, “Do not prevent him, for whoever is not against you is for you.”

Lord, we thank you for the many good things taking place within your Church and society. Help us to rejoice in all that you do through others. Help us to let go of any struggles we have with envy. Help us to understand the poor and try by all means to meet their needs and to share with them what we have. Also help us to gift ourselves to others, and may the actions of our belief become your gift of Christ to the needy and vulnerable. Amen.

Prayer for the Leaders in the World - God of wisdom and justice, through you, authority is rightly administered, laws are enacted and judgment is decreed. Look down in mercy upon our county. Assist, with your spirit, our leaders. May they always seek the ways of righteousness, justice and mercy. Grant that they may be enabled, by your powerful protection, to lead our country with honesty and integrity. May they always provide enough resources for the citizens they lead, including food for the poor and quality education for all people. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reflection: “We have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.” Pope Francis, 2015 Laudato Si.

Prayer for Human Rights - O God, all peoples have their origin in you and it is your will to gather them as one family in yourself. Fill the hearts of all people with your love and the desire to ensure justice for all their brothers and sisters. By sharing the good things of the earth, may we secure justice and equality for every human being, an end to all division, and a human society built on love and peace. We make this prayer in Jesus’ name. Amen.

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