

We Are All Connected

Leader: May we join our minds and hearts in prayer in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Optional Song: (with unity theme)

Leader: Let us pray. Loving God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: You, who are a perfect symbol of community, reveal to us that we are created in your image and that we are deeply connected with one another. Teach us to live in solidarity with our brothers and sisters throughout the world and with all creation. We pray in the name of Jesus.

All: Amen.

(Pause)

Reader 1: Let us prepare ourselves to enter more deeply into prayer by breathing in deeply the gifts of God's peace, hope, and love.

Breathe in deeply the gift of God's peace. (Take a deep breath and slowly exhale.)

Breathe in deeply the gift of God's hope. (Take a deep breath and slowly exhale.)

Breathe in deeply the gift of God's abiding love. (Take a deep breath and slowly exhale.)

Leader: We are indeed connected by the air we breathe, by the water we drink, by the fruits of the earth of which we partake, and by God's life in which we share. Let us contemplate the gifts God has bestowed upon us and our invitation to respond generously to God's call.

(Pause)

Reader 2: A Reading from the Gospel of John (15:1–5)

[Jesus said to his disciples:] "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing." The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

(Pause)

Reader 1: We are members of one human family, nurtured by the beautiful garden that we call Earth. Our life and our future are inextricably connected with one another, with our planet, and with our Creator. Help us, loving Creator, to care for one another and for the earth.

All: Lord Jesus, you are the vine and we are the branches. Strengthen us so that all people will know your love and share in your life, now and for generations to come.



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Reader 3: Listen to the words of Pope Saint John XXIII:

“The solidarity which binds all men together as members of a common family makes it impossible for wealthy nations to look with indifference upon the hunger, misery and poverty of other nations whose citizens are unable to enjoy even elementary human rights. The nations of the world are becoming more and more dependent on one another and it will not be possible to preserve a lasting peace so long as glaring economic and social imbalances persist.” (Pope Saint John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*, 157)

All: Help us, O God, to live in solidarity with all humankind, and with special concern for the poor. Help us to live more simply, so that others can simply live.

(Pause)

Reader 1: Listen to the words of Saint Ambrose:

“It is not from your own possessions that you are bestowing alms on the poor, you are but restoring to them what is theirs by right. For what was given to everyone for the use of all, you have taken for your exclusive use. The earth belongs not to the rich, but to everyone. Thus, far from giving lavishly, you are but paying part of your debt.”

Now, let us pray in the words of Saint Ignatius Loyola:

All:

Lord, teach me to be generous.
teach me to serve you as you deserve;
to give and not to count the cost,
to fight and not to heed the wounds,
to toil and not to seek for rest,
to labor and not to ask for reward,
save that of knowing that I do your will.
(Prayer for Generosity of Saint Ignatius Loyola)

Leader: Let us pray. God of all creation, open our eyes to see your vision of peace, hope, and love. Create a new heart in us so that we may give without counting the cost, and that we may act with justice and mercy in response to your call. We make all of these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior.

All: Amen. So be it!

Optional Music (with solidarity theme)

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The quotations from Pope Saint John XXIII on this handout are from *Mater et Magistra* [*Encyclical of Pope John XXIII on Christianity and Social Progress*], May 15, 1961, number 157. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_15051961_mater.html. Copyright © LEV.)

