Prayers of Lament

_Spiritual Care Chaplains Concord VNA:_

Tavo L'fanchecha (English Translation)

Our God and God of our mothers and fathers, grant that our prayers may reach You. Do not be deaf to our pleas, for we are not so arrogant and stiff-necked as to say before You, Lord our God and God of all ages, we are perfect and have not sinned; rather do we confess: we have gone astray, we have sinned, we have transgressed.

For being a chaplain in the time of Covid, I lament. For all the people in nursing homes, who are separated from their loved ones, I lament. For people with dementia, who don’t even know why their loved ones have suddenly disappeared, I lament. For all of their family members waiting outside, for a window visit, or a glimpse, I lament. For trying to do a ministry of presence, while wearing all of this, I lament. For trying to do a ministry of presence, without being present, I lament.

I lament. The grief that patients and their families experience due to separation and isolation is palpable, I lament.

I lament, as a chaplain, families who have been separated from loved ones who have to live in nursing homes. I lament increased anxiety I see in households in souls that seek peace, and as I lament the Lord asks me what did you see my green eyed son, what did you see my darling young ones. And I had to tell the Lord I saw a newborn baby with wild wolves all around it. I saw a highway of diamonds with nobody on it. I saw a black branch with blood that kept the dripping. I saw a room full of men with their hammers bleeding. I saw a white ladder all covered with water. I saw ten thousand talkers whose tongues were all broken. I saw guns and sharp swords in the hands of young children. I lament.
Isolation; loneliness; grief upon grief; hunger of body, mind and spirit. I see the pain and suffering as I feel my own pain and suffering. Without the unspoken comfort of physical touch, showing how I care changes. Somehow I think this is where hope arises.

I lament that I have to hold my own phone because my colleagues have to keep their social distance. My lament is for the chaplains, the social workers, the nurses, the LNAs, the physicians, the physicians’ assistants, the first responders, the ambulance drivers who transport our patients. My lament is for all who feel the moral distress of being called to serve, and not being able to serve fully. Being called to witness but not being able to see behind masks and goggles. Of being called to love, and fortunately being creative enough to love in the midst of this pandemic, this crisis, and this chaos. Love is stronger than death. So be it.

**Spiritual Care Chaplain Concord Hospital:**
I lift to God those who are sick, and those who are injured, and those who are also lonely and scared while lying in a hospital bed and also for the medical staff caring for them.

**Spiritual Care Chaplains Havenwood Heritage Heights:**
Why, oh Lord, are we losing our elders at every turn? Why oh Lord.
I am so rage full at the loss?
Wait for the Lord, whose day is near. Wait for the Lord, be strong, take heart.

Why, oh Lord, in the loneliness and isolation do you feel far away too when we need to feel you close?
Wait for the Lord, whose day is near. Wait for the Lord, be strong, take heart.

Why, oh Lord, is there so much pain, in my joints, in my bones, why is there so much collective pain?
Wait for the Lord, whose day is near. Wait for the Lord, be strong, take heart.

All things are supposed to work together for good for those of us who trust and love the Divine, but we didn’t ask for this chaos. Nobody asked for this.
Wait for the Lord, whose day is near. Wait for the Lord, be strong, take heart.

Why does the silence of the trees not work anymore?
Wait for the Lord, whose day is near. Wait for the Lord, be strong, take heart.
Why do all our loved ones be so separate from us during this time when we need hugs, when we need comfort, when we need care? Why do we have to have such separation?
Wait for the Lord, whose day is near. Wait for the Lord, be strong, take heart.

How long, oh Lord, will we wait before we can sing together again? Before we can be together, freely, to hold each other?
Wait for the Lord, whose day is near. Wait for the Lord, be strong, take heart.

Why, oh Lord, do I have to wear this mask? I can’t hear others. Others can’t hear me. I can’t see. Please, oh Lord, let this pass.
Wait for the Lord, whose day is near. Wait for the Lord, be strong, take heart.

Dear God, how come in the middle of all this pain and anguish and angst, are there still so many people who do not care?
Wait for the Lord, whose day is near. Wait for the Lord, be strong, take heart.

Praying into the Breach / Prayers of the People
Rev. Dr. Lynn Wickberg, Westmoreland United Church, UCC

Let us pray.
God, you have promised to answer when we call for help to loose the bonds of discrimination built into our society – so that the color of one’s skin, whom one loves, where we are born, by what name we call you no longer divide and impoverish.
Help us repair societal structures.

God, you have promised to be near as we seek to build community on foundations of your justice - such that all have what is needed for life and well-being, including breath, food, water, shelter, and love.
Help us restore your kin-dom on earth.

God you have promised to guide us to newness of being where there is no more hunger for food and hope, where there is no more thirsting for water and belonging.
Help us re-new ourselves – your children; our churches – your body of Christ; our communities – your people; our nation and our world – which are your nations and your world.

God you have promised more than we can imagine and you in mercy give more than we know. Receive our thanksgiving, our hopes, and our very beings.
And in the quiet of this moment, we offer prayers of hope for repairing, restoring, and renewal as expressed through these images.

Merciful God, our hope and our lives are in your hands. Amen.