

SPECIAL PRAYER;

LET US PRAY:

Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ taught us to pray, and promised that what we ask in his name will be given us: so guide us by thy Holy Spirit, that our prayers may serve thy will and show thy steadfast love.

We pray now, O Lord, for unity and harmony among the citizens of our land which is now so torn by strife, hatred, looting, burning, shooting, and violation both of the laws of the land and of the rights of the people. Forgive us, O merciful Father, for our personal and national sins.

We remember in tender respect and mourn in sincere sympathy the tragic death of thy servant Martin Luther King, Jr. Our hearts are saddened that the mighty voice that preached thy gospel is now silenced by an assassin's bullet. Bless, we pray thee his bereaved widow and other loved ones, and help them to practice the Christian

faith and virtues of the Savior who called Dr. King into his service. We remember, too, O Lord, the scores of others who have likewise died violently because of the divisiveness which has split our beloved country. Many of them are not so well known publicly as Dr. King, but they are missed just as dearly by their loved ones, and they are fellow victims of violence and bloodshed and lawlessness - some of them innocent bystanders, or peaceful demonstrators, or policemen or firemen merely trying to do their duty. Whatever the circumstances, we commit them all to thy tender love and pray for their broken hearted loved ones.

Mighty God, Lord of the nations; direct all those who govern us; thy servant (Lyndon B. Johnson,) President of the United States, all who serve with him in the executive department of the federal government; all congressmen, senators, and legislators; all judges in every court of our land; all officials in all states and those in every level of government down to the lowest civil servant. Bestow thy blessing, we beseech thee, upon all

who labor for peace, righteousness, unity, and harmony among our people, and restrain those who would fan the flames and add to our burdens rather than help solve the problems and work constructively toward peace and progress.

O God, give us grace to understand how our lives depend upon the courage, the industry, the honesty, and the integrity of our fellow men; that we may be mindful of their needs, grateful for their fidelity, and faithful in our responsibilities to them. Teach us, O Lord, to see other peoples by the light of the faith we profess, that we may check in ourselves all ungenerous judgments, all presumptuous claims, that being ever ready to recognize the needs and rightful claims of other people, we may do whatever in us lies to remove old hatreds and rivalries, and to hasten new understandings, that each may bring his tribute of excellence to the treasury of our common humanity.

And to this end we do here and now rededicate ourselves to the principles of justice, freedom, equality, brotherly kindness, and social progress for all of our citizens. We would indeed make this more than a superficial thing, but we do from our hearts rededicate our lives to Christ our Lord and Master, for we know that this is the way He taught and the way he would have us live. In his holy name we pray. Amen.

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