

Prayer Service in Times of Natural Disaster

Prayer Setting:

- *Create a prayer setting with fitting symbols as focal points. Consider creating an arrangement with a pillar candle, a globe, fabric, and a cross or crucifix.*
- *Using newspaper or on-line reports, print out appropriate photos as a visual focal point for prayer. Use sensitivity when selecting photos. Enlarge several photos and display them with the arrangement.*

Opening Ritual:

Arrange votive lights for the people and countries affected by the disaster. Begin in silence until the candles are all lit - consider using an appropriate or symbolic number of candles for remembrance.

Opening Song:

THERE IS A LONGING, by Anne Quigley, Published by OCP.

Refrain

*There is a longing in our hearts, O Lord,
for you to reveal yourself to us.
There is a longing in our hearts
for love we only find in you, our God.*

Call to Prayer:

Leader:

Compassionate Lord, we pray for those who have been devastated by recent natural disasters. We remember those who have lost their lives so suddenly. We hold in our hearts the families forever changed by grief and loss. Bring them consolation and comfort. Surround them with our prayers for strength. Bless those who have survived and heal their memories of trauma and devastation. May they have the courage to face the long road of rebuilding ahead.

We ask your blessing on all those who have lost their homes, their livelihoods, their security and their hope. Bless the work of relief agencies and those providing emergency assistance. May their work be guided by the grace and strength that comes from You alone.

Help us to respond with generosity in prayer, in assistance, in aid to the best of our abilities. Keep our hearts focused on the needs of those affected, even after the crisis is over. We ask this in Jesus' name, **Amen.**



Where is God when natural disasters strike?

Though disasters such as earthquakes, cyclones, tornadoes, floods, hurricanes and other nature-related events are often referred to as "acts of God," which test our faith, God does not will natural disasters to punish us or get our attention. The laws of nature are simply at work.

When such disasters wreak untold harm and loss of human life, we are challenged to find God in the midst of suffering and devastation. Such a search can reveal God's presence among us as One who suffers with us and is present to us.

Such moments can purify our faith by opening us more to the depths of the mystery of who God is as the source and destiny of all of creation and who calls us to journey endlessly into God.

When we witness small miracles, the generosity and selflessness of others, the healing comfort of strangers, God is present.

Prayer is our natural response to these tragedies and our concern and care for the victims reveals God's presence among us.



Psalm: Psalm 77: 11-20

Psalm is read in stanzas by reader; antiphon is recited or sung by all.

Antiphon: **When I cry out to You, O God, You hear me.**

Gospel Reading:

Mark 4:35-41

Reflection Song:

O LORD, HEAR MY PRAYER - Taizé

Intercessions:

L: Please Respond: Comfort your people, O God

Participants are invited to offer their own spontaneous prayers...

**For those who have lost their lives
For those who have been injured
For those who have been orphaned
For those who have lost their children
For those who have lost their loved ones
For those who have lost their homes
For those who have lost everything
For rescue workers and emergency personnel
For relief workers bringing food, supplies and hope
For all those involved in plans for rebuilding
For the courage to go on and rebuild lives and communities**

Our Father:

L: Let us lift up the needs we have heard and with confidence we pray,
“Our Father...”

Concluding Prayer:

Loving and compassionate God,
You understand the pain of loss, the heartache of bereavement,
May we hold in our hearts all those whose families or friends have died.
You are a light that shines in the darkest times,
Guide us and heal our brothers and sisters in their sorrow.

You comfort us in times of fear,
May we comfort each other, even across the miles that keep us apart.

You console and lead us in times of doubt and confusion,
May we follow the light of your love, and spread hope.

You move our hearts to acts of generosity,
May we be led to share what we have with those in need.

God of Life,
We thank you for the signs of your light in the midst of our darkness.
May we be signs of your compassion in the heart of your world.

Amen.

Closing Song

