



A Prayer of Lament *to the God Who Weeps With Us*

O God, today we remember with sorrow all those who lost their lives to the COVID pandemic as well as to other causes. We grieve with their families, many of whom could not be with them as they died, and could not find consolation in gathering for services and support. We pray for all who have been sick - isolated and fearful in the face of an unknown disease, and for their continued recovery. We pray for those who continue to deal with the effects of this horrible plague in their bodies, their families, their communities. Be with us in our sorrow and give us strength, we pray.

Creator of all, the struggles of 2020 raised our awareness of the essential workers among us. We give thanks for doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals. We honor those grocery store clerks, delivery drivers, cooks and servers, postal workers and caregivers who had little choice but risked their lives to keep businesses and services running. We are grateful for teachers and all who stepped up with grit and creativity to keep learning going for students. May we demonstrate our growth by working to build systems that value the work of all.

Most loving God, so many have lost their jobs this year. Along with loss of income, they face the fear of losing their homes and being unable to provide for their families. Many businesses were forced to close, shattering the dreams of individuals and families who labored to build them, as well as the communities that relied upon and supported them. Surround all those who are in pain with your love, and strengthen our will to help our towns, cities, and nation rebuild with dignity for each and every person.

God of all, this year brought to light the significant inequalities among people in our country and world. We recall with great sadness those who died in incidents of racial violence. And our hearts are broken for our brothers and sisters who live daily with prejudice because of the color of their skin, their faith, or their sexuality. We share the anxiety of those who do not have health insurance or access to necessary services in their communities. And for families who cannot access quality education for their children. May we be forever changed by our new awareness and seek justice for all in our human family.

Jesus, our brother, who prayed for us to be united, we suffer from the broken bonds of family and community that we have experienced this past year. Many have been forced into isolation; all have lost the daily interactions with acquaintances and strangers that enriched our lives. We can't gather for worship or celebrations of important milestones. Families and communities have been torn apart by the polarization of our politics. Fear and mistrust have replaced openness and neighborliness. Open our minds and hearts, that we might once again rely upon our shared values and your gift of love to build our world. Help us to persevere in the remaining months of restrictions, that we might soon raise our voices together in joy and praise.

When used in shared prayer, we sang the refrain
O God, Hear Us by Bob Hurd after each petition.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KYBnAjQFWhs>

Mary da Silva Abinante, 2020