

Public Witness Weekly Prayers



October 23, 2026

Join us each week as we share new prayers for the vulnerable among us facing challenges, fears, and threats. We will name many of the harms unfolding and acknowledge what is being erased, lost, and threatened. These prayers are not a replacement for action; they are meant to offer space for grounding and discernment as we seek to bear one another's burdens in the love and way of Christ.

FOR THE PEOPLE OF FRANCE

God of justice and mercy, we give thanks for France's liberty to gather, speak, and seek change together. We give thanks especially for those who demonstrate peacefully, showing generosity and care for the youth. Comfort those who have been wounded and those who have lost businesses, livelihoods, and the fruit of their labor. Grant safety to the police and discernment to judicial officers, that they may uphold justice with restraint, dignity, and care for all. Give wisdom to those who govern. May the wrongdoing of a few never become an occasion to condemn entire groups of people, religions, or political adversaries. Guard especially against blaming migrants, or treating those who are our fellow citizens and neighbors as foreigners because of their heritage, appearance, or faith. Lead rulers to seek justice, reconciliation, and the common good. Support those entrusted with education; may they be able to provide every young person with good conditions to learn, question, grow in wisdom, and discover their gifts. In these days, rekindle in France a "liberté" grounded in dignity, an "égalité" made real in shared opportunities, and a "fraternité" lived in love of neighbors. Through Jesus Christ, our teacher and our peace. Amen.

FOR THOSE WHOSE SUFFERING IS MADE A SPECTACLE

Creator God, who fashioned each of us in your image, you call us to bear witness to the suffering of others. We lament when we fail to honor the sacred dignity of our neighbors and violence is made available for others to watch and share, especially when children are exposed to images they cannot yet comprehend. We reject the making of public execution into a spectacle that will cause moral injury to everyone involved, even when such plans are ultimately abandoned. When we dehumanize prisoners, remind us that we are called to care for them. When we ignore the downtrodden, remind us that we are called to bring Good News. Teach us, O Lord, to guard what we see and share and to resist treating another's suffering as something we consume. Stir our hearts with compassion, and strengthen us to bear witness for those whose humanity is disregarded. Renew your image in us and teach us to recognize it in every person. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FOR AN END TO SCHOOL SHOOTINGS AND VIOLENCE

God of life, who calls us to beat our swords into ploughshares and to turn from violence toward the ways of healing, we lament that school shootings have become so common that our hearts risk growing numb to them. Keep us from receiving another shooting as merely one more tragedy and help us remember that behind every headline are lives to be mourned and names to be remembered. With each new shooting, bombing, and violent attack, we struggle to grieve and respond faithfully. Awaken us, O Lord, for your children cry out. Families grieve, the wounded suffer, and many are weary and afraid. Help us to remain compassionate amid so much suffering, and move us to act on behalf of those at risk of violence. Help us, as a nation and as a world, to seek just and effective measures to prevent violence and pursue peace, so that no child may know the terror of violence at school. You have called us to protect life through love. Give us the strength to live this out each day through the power of your Holy Spirit. Amen.