

FROM THE DESK OF COREY INGOLD:

A Prayer For Our Nation

Lord of all creatures great and small, we sometimes forget that your love extends across all the barriers we construct. You are a God of creation who desires to build up rather than tear down, but we do not always follow your lead by doing that ourselves. Yet, you are the Lord of all creatures, and so we must recognize that while you love us with an everlasting love, you also love others who see the world much differently than we do.

In an era when the ability for us to have civil discourse with one another across partisan lines seems to have fallen apart, move us to do what we can to prevent that from happening. Help us persist in doing the right thing and seeking common ground when the temptation is so strong to abandon all such efforts. Lord, we seem to live in a land where there can be no truth in between competing poles of controversy. We try to raise a voice for moderation and mutual concerns but find louder voices shouting us down and drowning us out. God of persistence, do not let us grow weary in doing the right thing for it is your work we engage in when we find common ground upon which to stand.

Lord of things wise and wonderful, as the nation approaches a national election that is perhaps the most contentious one in memory, help us find ways to talk to one another peaceably. Let us open our ears and hearts to what is being said by people with whom we disagree aware that we ourselves never have all of the answers even if we acknowledge that the same thing be true of those people with whom we differ. We pray even more that you would equip us to be discerning in the most important matters of life so that we might be wise as serpents and innocent as doves in the weeks and months ahead. God of grace and truth, we cannot do what you call us to do as citizens of heaven or of earth without being enlightened by the wisdom that only you can give us.

Lord of life and light, we pray for the sickness that afflicts our land, not only the cases of COVID infection and other manner of diseases and disorder that are at work in the world, but moreover, for the kind of sickness that cripples the soul. Where the old spiritual speaks of a “balm in Gilead” that heals the sin-sick soul, we pray for that same balm to be applied upon the sores of our country at a time when it seems so beaten and battered. May you heal the fractures of family and community life where those relationships are broken. May you heal the scars left by hateful words and experiences of hostility and racism that are undeserved. May you heal the hearts of those who have lost friends and family members due to violence and unrest as well as to the pernicious virus that has affected us all in such an adverse way and changed our lives and the ways we live together.

God of the ages, we know how very limited we are in our ability to see and understand the world. We also know how easy it is to become a partisan instead of a peacemaker and how tempting it is to insist upon being right instead of admitting how little it is that we really do know. So, we pray for humility and for encouragement when it feels as if we have lost our way.

While we know that you call upon us to stand for kingdom values, help us always to value the child of God in those not like us. Shape us to transcend those narrow stereotypes imposed upon us by things we affiliate with in this life like our political party or our profession or the neighborhood in which we live. Rather, let us stand together in spite of all the things that keep us apart. Push us, even if we are kicking and screaming, to be one in the Spirit and one in the Lord with our sisters and brothers in this great land; for it is your will that your children be reconciled to one another in the manner you have reconciled the world to yourself in Christ Jesus, your only Son and our only Hope, in whose saving name we pray. Amen.