

Opening Acclamation

Everything as it moves, now and then, here and there, makes pauses.

The bird, as it flies, stops on one place to make its nest, and in another to rest in its flight.

In the same way, God has paused as well.

The sun, which is so bright and beautiful, is one place where God has paused.

The moon, the stars, the wind; God has been with them, too.

The trees, the animals, are all places where God has stopped, leaving the touch of the Holy in all these things.

We, too, have had God pause in us. We, too, have the Holy touch in our beings.

Let us now pause ourselves, and listen for the voice of God on our hearts

Lakota teachings, USA

Ho! Grandfather, Grandmother, You have made everything and are in everything. You sustain everything, guide everything, provide everything, and protect everything because everything belongs to You. We are weak, poor, and lowly, nevertheless help us to care in appreciation and gratitude to You and for everything. We love the stars, the sun, and the moon, and we thank You for our beautiful mother, the earth, whose many beasts nourish the fish, the fowl, and the animals too. May we never deceive mother earth, may we never deceive other people, may we never deceive ourselves, and above all may we never deceive You. Amen.

Bishop Vine deLoria, Lakota, USA

Reading from Ohiyesa (Charles Alexander Eastman)

The first missionaries who came among us were good men, but they were imbued with the narrowness of their age. They branded us as pagans and devil-worshippers, and demanded that we renounce our gods as false. They even told us that we were eternally lost unless we adopted their faith and all its symbols.

We of the twentieth century know better. We know that all religious aspiration, all sincere worship, can have but one source and goal. We know that the God of the educated and the God of the child, the God of the civilized and the God of the primitive, is after all the same God; and that this God does not measure our differences, but embraces all who live rightly and humbly on the earth.

Hear what the Great Spirit is saying to the people.

Thanks be to God.

Reading from “The True Spirit of Jesus”, Kent Nerburn

This lust for money, power, and conquest did not escape moral condemnation at our hands, nor did we fail to contrast this conspicuous trait of the dominant race with the spirit of the meek and lowly Jesus.

I remember the words of one old battle-scarred warrior. I was, at the time, meeting with groups of young men — Sioux, Cheyenne, Cree, Ojibwe, and others — in log cabins or little frame chapels trying to set before them, in simple language, the life and character of the man Jesus.

The old warrior got up and said, “Why, we have followed this law you speak of for untold ages! We owned nothing, because everything is from the Creator. Food was free, land as free as sunshine and rain. Who has changed all this? The white man. And yet he says he is a believer in God! He does not seem to inherit any of the traits of his Father, nor does he follow the example set by his brother Christ.”

Another of the older men, called upon for his views, kept a long silence. Finally he said, “I have come to the conclusion that this Jesus was an Indian. He was opposed to material acquisition and to great possessions. He was inclined to peace. He was as unpractical as any Indian and set no price upon his labor of love. These are not the principles upon which the white man has founded his civilization. It is strange that he could not rise to these simple principles which are so commonly observed among our people.”

Hear what the Great Spirit is saying to the people.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer of the People

Come, let us do service for God, our Creator!

Help us open our eyes wide so that we may see all the glory of Your creation surrounding us.

We come from all tribes, we come from the plains, desert, mountains and valleys; we represent many nations and backgrounds and we dwell together in a village that has gathered from a need for survival in this, Your creation.

Help us to recognize that our survival as a people, as a village, depends first on our willingness to serve You and second on our willingness to serve our brothers and sisters in the ways you have taught us.

We live in a world of turmoil, O Great Creator. Our people are but a few blades of grass in a great field and our village is but an obscure leaf of a tree.

Help us to remember that the blades of grass take root in a soil of moisture and beauty and spread their seeds of life and renewal throughout the land; and that a leaf is what makes the tree beautiful and majestic.

We feel so inadequate. There is so much to do in our service to You and to our brothers and sisters that oftentimes we are overwhelmed, and we linger in a season of winter when the cold freezes our growth.

Help us recognize, Great Spirit, that the brief season of winter adds rich moisture to the soul of the earth; that the growth of all living things is not stunted by the seasons; but is given renewed life, just as you gave us the chance to renew our lives in our service for You and all our brothers and sisters.

We need to drink of Your word daily, O Great Spirit, to regain the strength to grow from Your earth as part of Your circle of life. Give us the wisdom to know that each blade of grass, each leaf, is a little different but yet has a distinct purpose; and to understand that through You and with one another all things are possible.

We pray for our needs and those of others. The community is now welcome to offer these prayers silently or aloud.

Our lives will adjust to Your stride, Creator God!

Juanita Helphrey, Hidatsa, USA

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven,
 Great Spirit, whose tepee is in the sky
 and hunting ground is the earth,
Hallowed be Thy name;
 all afraid of You and mighty are You called;
Thy kingdom come,
 Ruler over storms, over people, and birds,
 and beasts, and mountains,
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;
 have Your way overall,
 over earthways and skyways;
Give us this day our daily bread;
 find us this day our meat and corn,
 that we may be strong and brave;
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;
 and put aside from us our wicked ways,
 as we put aside the bad of all who do us wrong;
and lead us not into temptation;
 and let us not have troubles that lead us into crooked paths;
But deliver us from evil;
 but keep everyone in our camp from all danger;
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.
 For Yours is all that is: the earth and sky,
 the streams, the hills, and the valleys, the stars,
 the moon, and the sun; all that live and breathe.
 Wonderful, Shining Mighty Spirit

The Prayer of Our Savior from Many Cultural Traditions,
Council of American Indian Ministries