

Love Guides Us - Six Days of Prayer as We Approach the Presidential Inauguration

January 15-20, 2021

Recent days have been difficult, and many are anxious in these days leading up to the transition between Presidential administrations. Please join us as we pray for our nation, for each other and for ourselves. May we follow the wisdom found in **I Corinthians 13** and *be guided by the transforming power of love in the coming days.*

I Corinthians 13:1-13

"If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love."

Day 1: Love Guides Us

O Lord, you have taught us that without love whatever we do is worth nothing: Send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts your greatest gift, which is love, the true bond of peace and of all virtue, without which whoever lives is accounted dead before you. Grant this for the sake of your only Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Dear Lord, the starting place is always love, isn't it? Everything we do should be viewed through the lens of love. These days, though, it is particularly hard. Self-serving opinions have taken the place of your guiding Word of Love. Help us, in these troubled times, to see

all through the lens of love, of your love, because without that prism, we see through a glass but darkly. Help us to see our siblings, even the ones we might demonize, through the lens of love. Help us to see your words guiding us in what we do and say. Let love be in our truth and truth be in our love. Without love, nothing that we do is worthy. **Amen.**

Day 2: Love is Patient

Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Divine light, we are like demanding children, wanting what we want when we want it. We expect to get your fix for that which we have broken immediately. When we don't get it, we say that you have failed. But in truth, we are the ones who have failed to heed you and follow you. Teach us your loving patience as we sort out our responsibility and our role in the broken institutions, relationships, and hearts that have led us to this day. Teach us your loving patience as we work to rebuild. Demands assume power that we do not have: work is what we are called to today. Let us define that work with love. **Amen.**

Day 3: Love is Kind

O Lord, make us have perpetual love and reverence for your holy Name, for you never fail to help and govern those whom you have set upon the sure foundation of your loving-kindness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

God of all love, let our dealings with each other be marked by kindness. Not the weak and toxic milk of "bless their heart" that carries superiority in its tone, not the avoidance of challenging conversations in the name of "keeping the peace," but instead a loving-kindness that is clear and honest and truthful and humble. Help us model the loving kindness toward others that you show us. **Amen.**

Day 4: Love is Not Arrogant

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Divine source of possibilities, in our efforts to transform that which is broken, we sometimes think that force of will or force of words will change things to what they should be. We know some of what is ahead of us and we don't know all of it. But it takes time and discernment, and we may not have all the wisdom we need. Arrogance is not the solution to the problem at hand. Love is the solution, and that will take many forms as we learn more. Teach us to approach the work with humility, not denying our gifts but seeking how best to use them for your world and your people. **Amen.**

Day 5: Love Rejoices in the Truth

O God, you have bound us together in a common life. Help us, in the midst of our struggles for justice and truth, to confront one another without hatred or bitterness, and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Source of all truth, open our hearts to your truth. In a time when truth is challenged, when narratives shift with the wind, your truth is eternal, revealed in your word. Help us find wise ways to discern the truth, to live into your truth, to love your truth and share that loving truth with others. Help us to share your truth with humility and with clarity. **Amen.**

Day 6: Love Never Ends

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. **Amen.**

God of all ages, keep us mindful of the loving guidance you give us: we may not yet know all, but if we are guided by love and are Instruments of God's love, we honor you. We do not know what lies ahead, so our best path is to look for your path of love. We may not ever know the whole story, at least in our lifetimes – Jesus reminded us of that – but we do know this: you are love. You are eternal love. You created us in love to be sharers of love. This is our work, for those who suffer, for those who are victims of injustice, for those who are hurting, for those who are confused. Guide us in this work so that we are reflections of the love that created us. Reorient us when we are mistaken, strengthen us when we are afraid, lift us up when we are tired. With love, always with love. **Amen.**