

Intercessions for Pentecost 16 (A) • 4 September 2005

Almighty God and everlasting Father, strength of the weak and comfort of sufferers: You teach us in Your Holy Word that You do not willingly afflict or grieve any of Your children created in Your image. Let the prayers of Your children who are in any trouble rise to You. To everyone in distress grant mercy, grant relief, grant refreshment.

We pray especially for the people of our great cities, New Orleans, Louisiana, and Biloxi, Mississippi, for the town of Gulf Port, Mississippi, and for all on our Gulf Coast who have lost life, loved ones and companions, houses and work, and the place they once called home.

While we bow before the might of Your power in the creation of which You alone are LORD, we beseech You, for the sake of Your mercy revealed in Him Who suffered all things for us and Who suffers all things with us, to relieve the suffering of the survivors and to grant wisdom to all in authority and courage and strength to those sent to rescue them.

As others work to bring them to places of refuge and care, reveal Your power now in the hearts of all our people by being our refuge and our hope in the face of things we cannot fathom. We beseech Your mercy not only on those who suffer in body, but we also beg You to send Your Holy Spirit and the Angels who serve You continually to still minds filled with terror

and anger, and to reveal to those who feel they have been forgotten that Your eye is ever on them, so that they may lift their eyes to You in faith and hope.

We pray also for those of our own community who struggle with illness: We pray especially for Your servants Tom, Ruth, Marilyn, Dale & Jackie, Dean & Joan, Elmer, Earle, Theda, John & Eardeen, and Michelle, and also for Susan, Brent, Anne, Lauren, Clare, Pastor Michael, Carol, Taylor and Darlene, as well as for all those for whom we now name with our voices or in our hearts before You. [Silence] According to Your gracious will, turn their sickness into health and our anxiety into joy.

We ask Your blessing on all who serve in the armed and emergency forces of our nation, and we beseech You not to allow the enemies of freedom and lasting peace to gain an advantage through the catastrophe that has befallen our people. We pray especially for Your servants Travis, John, Jeremy and Juan, and for all who will be deployed in the coming days to maintain civil order and minister to the sick, the injured and the homeless of our country in its hour of greatest need. We ask You also to make us mindful of their sacrifice when we chafe at the shortages of fuel and other goods we may experience or at the cost of this great effort, for it is they, not we, who are risking their lives for our countrymen.

We give thanks, O LORD, for those faithful and inspiring ones who have gone before us into Your glorious presence,

especially Your servants Albert Schweitzer, who sought Your answer to his doubts by living Your Word of love, and Elsie Downs, whose love of Your Word and Your Commandments planted seeds of faith that have taken deep root in this congregation. May we, too, follow where they have led the way.

And finally, dear LORD, we ask You to watch with those who wake or watch or weep, and to give Your Angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, rest the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous. In Your love, give us all this, through Jesus Christ Our Lord.

Amen.