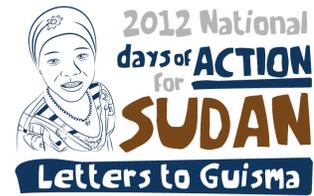


Materials for Faith-Based Events



Responsive Readings

Peace, Protection, and Justice

Leader: The plight of our brothers and sisters in Sudan resounds with horror. Over the past years hundreds of thousands have died, millions have been displaced from their homes, and many are at risk of starvation. The faith community must be vigilant and act to end this humanitarian crisis.

People: We have the power to stop it. But we must act now, before it's too late. We offer our support and prayers to the people of Sudan.

Leader: Every day more and more people die from violence, malnutrition, and disease. The faith community must be vigilant and act to end this humanitarian crisis.

People: We have the power to stop it. But we must act now, before it's too late. We lend our voices to the National Days of Action for Sudan, April 22 to April 29.

Leader: The people of Sudan experience horrendous crimes, including the rape of women and girls, burning of homes and religious buildings, killing of babies, and other atrocities. The faith community must be vigilant and act to end this humanitarian crisis.

People: We have the power to stop it. But we must act now, before it's too late. We will join citizens from around the world to complete the postcard calling for an end to the violence in Sudan.

Leader: In the 20th century, we have known mass slaughter of human life, displacement, starvation, and rape in Armenia, The Holocaust, Cambodia, Bosnia, and Rwanda. Now in Sudan hundreds of thousands of lives have been lost in the 21st century, but countless more can be saved. The faith community must be vigilant and act to end these acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing.

All: We are witnessing the destruction of human life. Let us join hearts with the faith community throughout America—in prayer, in action, and in spirit, to let the people of Sudan know that they are not abandoned. We will not stand idly by and let genocide occur. We pray that peace, protection, and justice prevail in Sudan. Amen.

We Trust in God

Adapted form Psalm 77: 7-14

Leader:

Oh god we place our trust in you. Remember our brothers and sisters in Sudan during these trying times. Even as we hurt for our Sudanese brothers and sisters, we remember the mighty things you have done in the past. While trouble comes to us, your children from time to time, you always restore us.

Split participants into two groups.

Group 1:

Will the Lord spurn forever, and never again be favorable?

Has his steadfast love forever ceased and his promises at an end for all time?

Has God forgotten to be gracious and has he in anger shut up his compassion?

Group 2

No, in my infirmity I will remember the many years of God's mighty hand.

I will remember his amazing blessings of the past.

I will meditate on and talk of God's wonderful mercies.

All:

Your way O God is sublime, you are a great God! You have performed great deeds for your people.

Prayers and Other Remarks for Peace and for the People of Sudan

Prayer for People of Sudan

(Adapted to use with Letters to Guisma)

Out of the depths we cry to you, O Lord, for our Sudanese brothers and sisters fleeing brutal attacks. People like Guisma who saw her home destroyed and her brothers and sisters die. Please lessen their anxiety, even as they continue to face a state of uncertainty. Make your ears attentive to our cry for mercy O Lord, for the women, men and children of Sudan filling refugee camps beyond capacity, separated from their communities, and deprived of their livelihoods. Children like Guisma who must be protected and be able to return to their homes and live in peace.

The Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
 Where there is hatred....let me sow love
 Where there is injury....pardon
 Where there is doubt....faith
 Where there is despair....hope
 Where there is darkness....light
 Where there is sadness....joy
 Divine Master,
 Grant that I 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,
 It is in dying....that we are born to eternal life.

Join Me in a Prayer for Sudan

Adapted from a prayer by Archbishop Desmond Tutu

We pray for the people of Sudan who have been terrorized and forced from their homes—for those who have fled to refugee camps, and who still live in fear;
 We pray for those who have died, and for their families;
 We pray for the women in Sudan who face danger every day as they leave their camps for firewood—may you watch over your daughters;
 We pray for the children of Sudan, especially those who face a frightening world without one or both of their parents—may they be protected and comforted;
 We pray for the safety of the humanitarian aid workers as they feed and care for the people of Sudan;
 We pray that the world's leaders will be guided by you in their quest for justice and safety for all of Sudan's people—may they be inspired by your humanity;
 Remind us that we are all your children, and teach us to listen;
 We pray that those who are causing death and misery in Sudan will turn away from racism and violence—may they be forgiven when they turn to You for guidance instead;
 Teach us to rejoice in all the things we have in common and respect each others' differences;
 We pray that people everywhere will strive to live in peace, tolerance, and respect, no matter what their faith or race—may we gain the wisdom, grace, and generosity of spirit to overcome our differences and live as one.

Poem of Hope

Written by former Liberian refugee, Charles Saah N'Tow, author of "Dirges for My Homeland, A Collection of War and Other Poems"

Group 1: A good day will come again,
These deserted streets will come alive.

Group 2: Laughter of children and parents will fill the air,
Fear will fade and joy will gradually return.

Group 1: Calls to prayer will be heard again,
Worship spaces will be full again.

Group 2: People will serve in joyful obedience
People will dance and sing praises to their God.

All: A good day will come again
A good day will come again

When cries of anguish will no longer be heard
And death will find a place elsewhere.

A Prayer of Empowerment

Ted Yoder from "Wrestling the Light"

Empower me to be a bold participant,
Rather than a timid saint in waiting.
In the difficult ordinariness of now;
To exercise the authority of honesty,
Rather than to defer to power, or deceive to get it;
To influence someone for justice,
Rather than impress anyone for gain;
And, by grace, to find treasures of joy, of friendship,
Of peace hidden in the fields of the daily you give me to plow.

A Prayer for Overcoming Indifference

Written by Naomi Levy

I watch for news, God.
I observe it all from a comfortable distance.
I see people suffering, and I don't lift a finger to help them.
I condemn injustice but I do nothing to fight against it.
I am pained by the faces of starving children.
But I am not moved enough to try to save them.

I step over homeless people in the street.
I walk past outstretched hands.
I avert my eyes, I close my heart.
For lead us to Your abode of Peace. Forgive me, God, for remaining aloof.
While others are in need of my assistance.

Wake me up, God.
Ignite my passion, fill me with outrage.
Remind me that I am responsible for Your world.
Don't allow me to stand idly by. Inspire me to act.
Teach me to believe that I can repair some corner of this world.

When I despair, fill me with hope.
When I doubt my strength, fill me with faith.
When I am weary, renew my spirit.
When I lose direction, show me the way.
Back to meaning, Back to Compassion, Back to You.
Amen

Closing Prayer

Oh, God You are Peace
From You comes Peace
To You returns Peace
Revive us with a salutation of Peace,
And lead us to Your abode of Peace.

An Islamic Prayer: Meditations on Darfur

Adapted from remarks by Rabbi David Saperstein (Can be further adapted to include Nuba Mountains or all of the marginalized people of Sudan.)

In a makeshift refugee camp in Darfur a tear flows down the cheek of a defenseless mother as she strokes the arm and face of her starving child, her head is covered but her eyes convey a truth of overwhelming anguish.

We will not stand idly by the blood of this child.

In Darfur's open desert, a militia of Arab fighters backed by the Sudanese government rides rampant on camels and horse, fanning the flames of ethnic strife. Villages and towns are scorched. The withholding of food and water are used as weapons of death. And innocent people of Darfur's African communities are forcibly abducted, enslaved, raped and slaughtered in mass members as part of a systematic campaign to wipe out the group of peoples from this region.

We will not stand idly by their blood.

In the capital city of Khartoum, the face of a top official reddens in anger as he strongly denies evidence that the genocidal government of Sudan recruits and arms a militia to terrorize and murder black Africans, and blocks humanitarian access for relief workers in Darfur.

And we say to him, "Do not stand idly by the blood of our neighbor!"

In the eyes of the world community, the genocidal activity and terror perpetuated against millions of people of ethnic black African origin finally gain attention.

We stand in solidarity with every one of us and every one of them. And, in a moment of urgency and hope, we stand to remember that justice is our duty, to recognize the image of the Divine in every human life, to renounce inaction in the face of enormous tragedy, and, we pray, to rouse an immediate and effective response from the world at large on behalf of the victims of Sudan

Remarks

Desmond Tutu from "Peace for the Children of God"

"May we know that You want us to care for one another as those who know that they are sisters and brothers, members of the same family, Your family, the human family."

Elie Wiesel in Remarks at an Emergency Summit on Darfur

"How can a citizen of a free country not pay attention? How can anyone, anywhere not feel outraged? How can a person, whether religious or secular, not be moved by compassion? And above all, how can anyone who remembers (the Holocaust) remain silent?"

Martin Luther King, Jr.

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at in times of challenge and controversy."

Remarks by Senator Paul Douglas, Illinois

"If every member of the House and Senate had received 100 letters from people back home saying we have to do something about [the genocide in] Rwanda, when the crisis was first developing [in 1994], then I think the response would have been different."

Scriptures

The Old Testament

Leviticus 25: 9-10

Then you shall have the trumpet sounded loud; on the tenth day of the seventh month—on the day of atonement—you shall have the trumpet sounded throughout all your land. And you shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all of its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family.

Psalms 82: 3-4

Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

Proverbs 3: 27

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it.

Proverbs 14: 31

Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker, but those who are kind to the needy honor him.

Proverbs 24: 11-12

If you hold back from rescuing those taken away to death, those who go staggering to the slaughter; if you say, "Look we did not know this"--does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it? And will he not repay all according to their deeds?

Ecclesiastes 4: 1-3

Again I saw all the oppressions that are practices under the sun. Look, the tears of the oppressed—with no one to comfort them! And I thought the dead, who have already died, more fortunate than the living, who are still alive; but better than both is the one who has not yet been; and has not seen the evil deeds that are done under the sun.

Isaiah 2: 4

He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Isaiah 10: 1-3

Ah, you who make iniquitous decrees, who write oppressive statutes, to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be your spoil, and that you may make the orphans your prey! What will you do on the day punishment, in the calamity that will come from far away? To whom will you flee for help, and where will you leave your wealth, so as not to crouch among the prisoners or fall among the slain?

Isaiah 58: 9-10

Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

Daniel 12: 3

Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

Micah 6: 8

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

The New Testament

Matthew 5: 3-10

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 6: 33

But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Matthew 25: 35-40

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me. Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it when we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it when we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

Luke 4: 18-19

The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

John 14: 23-24, 27

Jesus answered him, "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me." Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you, I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."

1 Corinthians 12: 24-26

.....But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If

one member suffers, all suffer together with it, if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

James 1: 22-27

But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing. If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

James 3: 17-18

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

The Qur'an

Surah 3:104

And let there be from you a nation who invite to goodness, and enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency. Such are they who are successful.

Surah 5:32

For that cause We decreed for the Children of Israel that whosoever killeth a human being for other than manslaughter or corruption in the earth, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind, and whoso saveth the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind.

Surah 49:9

And if two parties of believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them.

Surah 49:10

The believers are naught else than brothers. Therefore make peace between your brethren and observe your duty to Allah that haply ye may obtain mercy.

Quotations from the Hadith

"Avoid cruelty and injustice...and guard yourselves against miserliness, for this has ruined nations who lived before you" Riyadh-us-Salaheen, Hadith 203

"He who has been a ruler over ten people will be brought shackled on the Day of Resurrection, until the justice (by which he ruled) loosens his chains or tyranny brings him to destruction." Al-Tirmidhi, Hadith 1037

"(Allah) has revealed to me that you should adopt humility so that no one oppresses another." Riyadh-us-Salaheen, Hadith 1589

"Anyone who believes in God and the Last Day (of Judgment) should not harm his neighbor. Anyone who believes in God and the Last Day should entertain his guest generously. And anyone who believes in God and the Last Day should say what is good or keep quiet." Sahih AlBukhari, Volume 8, Book 73, Number 47

"Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or he is oppressed." People asked, "....It is right to help him if he is oppressed, but how should we help him if he is an oppressor?" The Prophet said, "By preventing him from oppressing others." Sahih AlBukhari, 3:624

Faith-based Material Sources:

The Old Testament: The The New Oxford Annotated Bible: An Ecumenical Study Bible New Revised Standard Version

The New Testament: The New Oxford Annotated Bible: An Ecumenical Study Bible New Revised Standard Version

The Qur'an: The Glorious Qur'an: Text and Explanatory Translation by Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall

Quotations from the Hadith: http://www.religioustolerance.org/isl_hadiq.htm