

In the Morning Wednesday, April 14, 2021
Zenaida, Philonella, and Hermione, Unmercenary Physicians, c.100, c.117 (Trial Use)

Welcome

Opening Prayer

Remembering All Who Have Been Affected By Gun Violence

(Adapted from *Moral Call: a Vermont Interfaith Prayer and Remembrance Vigil*) from the Website of Bishops United Against Gun Violence (https://bishopsagainstgunviolence.org/liturgical_resource/remembering-all-who-have-been-affected-by-gun-violence-2/)

Leader: We pray in remembrance of those impacted of gun violence, both those who have been injured and those who have been killed in cities and towns across our country, and close to home in Connecticut. We hold their memories dear. We treasure those lives permanently altered through injury or those taken in senseless acts of violence, and we pray that they might find rest and peace. May their lives continue to make a difference in our world.

Together we pray.

All: God of Mercy, heal our broken hearts.

Leader: We raise our prayers in remembrance of the families and friends of the victims of gun violence in our nation and in Connecticut. Comfort those who mourn. Dry the tears of those who weep. Sustain those who feel diminished. Impart courage to the hearts of those who feel helpless.

Together we pray.

All: God of Peace, sustain our broken hearts.

Leader: We pray in remembrance of all communities torn apart by gun violence. We are too familiar with places like Parkland, Columbine, Aurora, Orlando, Newtown, Roseburg, Charleston and El Paso and *today we remember Ja'Mari Preston (age 16) or Randell Tarez Jones (age 3) killed Saturday in Hartford* and there are countless others. Each incident of violence affects all of us in our daily lives and work. Renew our resolve to pursue peace in our cities and towns and to respect the dignity of all human beings.

Together we pray.

All: God of Comfort, encourage our broken hearts.

Leader: We pray in remembrance of school teachers and administrators who put their students' needs ahead of their own safety. We pray for first responders who witness the horror of gun violence while in service to our communities, and we pray for all those with

responsibility for law enforcement. We give thanks for their call to protect and serve and to seek justice, which is inspirational to others, and we pray that their emotional wounds will be healed.

Together we pray.

All: God of Courage, inspire our broken hearts.

Leader: We pray for those lives taken by gun violence through suicide, and through accidental shootings, especially when those shootings involve children. We pray for those who are impacted by gun violence through domestic violence during this time of pandemic. Console and strengthen those whose despair is great.

Together we pray.

All: God of Hope, comfort our broken hearts.

Leader: We pray in remembrance of all people impacted by gun violence, as gun violence knows no boundaries but can affect all nationalities, races, cultures, faiths, genders, and socioeconomic classes; it can affect us where we live, where we worship, where we work, where we study, and where we play.

Together we pray.

All: God of Love, transform our broken hearts.

Leader: We pray for those who have committed acts of gun violence and for their families. We remember those suffering from mental illness who have gone untreated, and those suffering from loneliness and isolation. We pray for those who use guns, power and violence rather than respect and dignity to reconcile differences. Grant us the strength to pursue justice with a voice of love.

Together we pray.

All: God of Forgiveness, enlighten our broken hearts.

Leader: We pray for all community leaders and elected officials. We pray especially for the young adult leaders of the gun violence prevention movement. Give them insight, wisdom, and courage to address the epidemic of gun violence. Pour forth your Spirit on all our neighborhoods and break the chains of violence that bind your people.

All: God of Power, strengthen our broken hearts.

Leader: We pray today for ourselves and for others in our lives who have been touched by gun violence.

During the silent pause, we invite you to offer the names (either silently or aloud) of those for whom you pray.

Together we pray.

All: God of Astonishing Mercy, Compassion and Immeasurable Love, restore our broken hearts and enliven our confidence to find new ways to revive our world to become one of peace. Amen.

Dwelling in the Word: Mark 1:29–34

As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

As you hear the passage being read, what word or phrase is God calling you to notice?
As you hear the passage read a second time, what might God be calling you to try on at this time?

Following your silent meditation after the second reading, please type your word or phrase into the Chat if you would like to share it. The officiant will invite all of us into a quiet time for a few minutes to prayerfully read and reflect on the words offered in the Chat.

The officiant will end this time of silent prayer with The Lord's Prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

Zoom Call

At end of zoom call

Closing Prayer

Merciful God, whose most dear Son came to heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out demons, and preach good news to the poor: Lead us by the example of your servants, Zenaida, Philonella, and Hermione, to freely give even as we have freely received; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing

APRIL 14: ZENAIDA, PHILONELLA, AND HERMIONE, Unmercenary Physicians, c.100, c.117

Zenaida, Philonella, and Hermione were three early Christian women who are commemorated in the Orthodox Church as the first “unmercenary physicians”- Christian medical doctors who offered their skill to everyone and refused to accept payment.

According to Orthodox tradition, Zenaida and Philonella were sisters, born into a well-educated and wealthy Jewish family in the city of Tarsus. They were baptized by their brother Jason after his conversion and ordination as a priest.

Both sisters were said to be well-educated in philosophy and medicine, but were unable to find employment in either field in an age when both professions were controlled by men. Therefore, they built a chapel, two cells, and a medical clinic on the outskirts of the city of Thessaly, where they devoted themselves to treating all who came to them regardless of their ability to pay, and refused to accept money for their services.

Philonella was particularly skilled in experimental treatments, and Zenaida specialized in pediatric medicine and the treatment of psychological disorders, particularly depression. Zenaida became particularly renowned as a spiritual director as well as a physician. Three of her male disciples founded a monastery a short distance away from the sisters. Varying accounts are given of their death, with one tradition relating that they were martyred, and others relating that they continued in their ministry until dying peacefully of old age.

Hermione is the third woman to be given the title of “unmercenary physician.” She is reported to be one of the daughters of Philip the Deacon (Acts 6). After studying medicine in Caesarea, she went to Ephesus in the hopes of meeting the Apostle John, but he found that had already died. She therefore used her income to open up a medical clinic, with the help of her younger sister Eukhidia. Eventually, she expanded the clinic into a residential facility to allow for more extended treatment. Orthodox Christians believe that this was the first example of a Christian hospital, and it became the inspiration for later developments in Christian medical care, particularly in the Christian East.

(Lesser Feasts and Fasts 2018)

First Lesson: Ecclesiasticus 38:1–15

- 1 Honour physicians for their services,
for the Lord created them;
- 2 for their gift of healing comes from the Most High,
and they are rewarded by the king.
- 3 The skill of physicians makes them distinguished,
and in the presence of the great they are admired.

- 4 The Lord created medicines out of the earth,
and the sensible will not despise them.
- 5 Was not water made sweet with a tree
in order that its power might be known?
- 6 And he gave skill to human beings
that he might be glorified in his marvellous works.
- 7 By them the physician heals and takes away pain;
- 8 the pharmacist makes a mixture from them.
God's works will never be finished;
and from him health spreads over all the earth.
- 9 My child, when you are ill, do not delay,
but pray to the Lord, and he will heal you.
- 10 Give up your faults and direct your hands rightly,
and cleanse your heart from all sin.
- 11 Offer a sweet-smelling sacrifice, and a memorial portion of choice flour,
and pour oil on your offering, as much as you can afford.
- 12 Then give the physician his place, for the Lord created him;
do not let him leave you, for you need him.
- 13 There may come a time when recovery lies in the hands of physicians,
- 14 for they too pray to the Lord
that he will grant them success in diagnosis
and in healing, for the sake of preserving life.
- 15 He who sins against his Maker
will be defiant towards the physician.