



## CHAPTER EIGHT

*"Call the Sabbath a Delight and the Holy Day of the LORD Honorable"*  
(Isaiah 58:13)

Holy Days, Holidays and Feast Days



## The Work of Christmas

*Howard Thurman*

When the song of the angel is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flock,  
The work of Christmas begins:  
To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among others  
To make music in the heart.

Prayer for Peace to Mary, the Light of Hope

*Pope John Paul II*

Immaculate Heart of Mary,  
 help us to conquer the menace of evil,  
 which so easily takes root in the hearts of the people of today,  
 and whose immeasurable effects  
 already weigh down upon our modern world  
 and seem to block the paths toward the future.  
 From famine and war, deliver us. From nuclear war, from  
 incalculable self destruction, from every kind of war, deliver us.  
 From sins against human life from its very beginning, deliver us.  
 From hatred and from the demeaning of the dignity of the children  
 of God, deliver us.  
 From every kind of injustice in the life of society, both national and  
 international, deliver us.  
 From readiness to trample on the commandments of God, deliver us.  
 From attempts to stifle in human hearts the very truth of God,  
 deliver us.  
 From the loss of awareness of good and evil, deliver us.  
 From sins against the Holy Spirit, deliver us.  
 Accept, O Mother of Christ,  
 this cry laden with the sufferings of all individual human beings,  
 laden with the sufferings of whole societies.  
 Help us with the power of the Holy Spirit conquer all sin:  
 individual sin and the "sin of the world,"  
 sin in all its manifestations.  
 Let there be revealed once more in the history of the world  
 the infinite saving power of the redemption:  
 the power of the merciful love.  
 May it put a stop to evil.  
 May it transform consciences.  
 May your Immaculate Heart reveal for all the light of hope. Amen.

## Prayer at Election Time

### *Sisters of Mercy*

Loving and gracious God, we remember that your plan for us is fullness of life lived with love, justice and mercy.

Be with us and our whole nation this year as we work together in selecting political leaders at all levels of our society. Help us keep the common good before us.

Strengthen our gifts of wisdom, courage and respect for the views of others.

Deepen in us the willingness to act in solidarity with people who are economically poor and with women seeking fullness of life in society.

Help us be persistent in testing political remedies against what they will do for people, to people, with people, and what they will mean for the health of our earth home.

Help us to support one another in exercising our precious responsibilities as citizens in a representative democracy.

After the elections, strengthen us to continue to work with our leaders, seeking an ever more just society that acts in harmony and interdependence with all creation.

We ask this in the name of Jesus in union with Your Spirit. Amen.

To Those Who Are Hungry

*Catholic Relief Services*

God our Creator,  
to those who are hungry and thirsty,  
give food and drink.

To those who are not hungry and thirsty,  
give a hunger and a thirst for justice.

Help us to share in the creation of a more just and peaceful world.

Bless the Lenten alms we set aside in our household  
for the good of any sister or brother in need.

We pray through Christ the Lord.

Amen.

Prayer for Martin Luther King's Birthday

*Attributed to J-Glenn Murray, S.J.*

O Guardian of Israel,  
Our shelter and shade,  
Stir up in us that flame of justice  
That Jesus incited on this earth,  
That rages in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.  
O arouse in us  
That very flame of righteousness  
That enticed Martin  
To be a living sacrifice of praise,  
To seek freedom for all God's children.  
O to you, God ever faithful and true,  
Be glory for ever and ever.  
Amen.

## A Prayer for the Beginning of Easter

*Jan L. Richardson*

God of community,  
who calls us to be in relationship  
with one another  
and who has promised to dwell  
wherever two or three are gathered,  
hear this prayer:

By your Spirit you have graced each of us  
with differing gifts.  
To one you have given the speaking of wisdom,  
to another, the utterance of knowledge,  
to another, faith,  
to another, gifts of healing,  
to another, the working of miracles,  
to another, prophesy,  
to another, discernment of spirits,  
to another, various kinds of tongues,  
and to another, the interpretation of tongues.  
(1 Corinthians 12:7–11)

For these and all gifts  
by which you bless our communities,  
I give you thanks.

And for any way in which I have shared  
in deepening the wounds of the body of Christ  
I seek your love-filled forgiveness.

Open my eyes, O God, to perceive the gifts  
you have placed within me  
and to honor the differing gifts  
which my sisters and brothers offer.  
Bless our hands, our hearts, our vision  
to work together for the bringing of your kindom,  
that in our differences, we may find grace;  
in our laboring, we may find justice;  
in our suffering, hope;  
in our embracing, love;  
and in our risking, transformation.

By these acts may we bring healing  
to the tender, wounded, and strong  
body of Christ,  
rising in our midst.

Note: "Kindom" denotes a world in which we recognize that we are related, that we are "kin" in God, and work to build relationships of love, peace and justice with all of creation.

## On This Memorial Day

*Jane Deren*

On this Memorial Day  
Grant peace to the souls  
of all those soldiers who died in war.  
We remember the tears and grief of their families,  
The pain of mothers, wives, husbands and children  
Who lost precious loved ones.

To build a meaningful memorial to them,  
We ask God to give us all the will  
To work for peace around the world  
So no more sons, daughters, husbands, wives, fathers, nor mothers  
Are slaughtered by the guns and bombs of war.

We ask Mary, who held the lifeless body of her son  
And was pierced by the sorrow of his suffering and death,  
To grant us the compassion and wisdom to affirm life  
And honor the dead through forgiveness and peace making.

May God have mercy on the souls of the departed.  
Grant them peace, O Lord.

May we have mercy on the living.  
Grant us peace, O Lord.  
In Your name we pray.  
Amen.