

Opening Prayer

Though the mountains fall and the hills give way, your love for us oh Lord will always stay the same.

Here we are again, God
With all that makes us who we are,
all that fills our lives;
Carrying into this place of joy and freedom
the burdens we just can't seem to lay down,
The weight of all the scores we long to have settled,
the justice we want to demand
for the wrongs we have suffered

Yet we also know what would happen if you were to deal with us justly;
with our greeds and violences, our betrayals and lusts.
If justice was served in our lives we could not stand.

So forgive us our wrongs, God,
forgive us as we do not deserve;
forgive us against the demands of justice;
And forgive our obsession that justice be done
to those who have wronged us.

Lord God, No one is a stranger to you. And no one is ever far from your loving care. In your kindness, watch over refugees and victims of war, those separated from their loved ones, Young people who are lost. And those who have left home or who have run away from home. Bring them back safely to the place where they long to be. And help us always to show your kindness to strangers and to all in need.

We echo the prayer of the pope in saying:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, we implore You! Hold fast the hand of Cain! Illumine our consciences; may our will not be done; abandon us not to our own actions!
Stop us, O Lord, stop us! And when you have held back the hand of Cain, care also for him.
He is our brother. O Lord, put a halt to the violence! Stop us, O Lord! Amen.

May our worship today lead us to the place
where our hunger for grace and mercy may be filled,
and where we may be freed from the tyranny of vengeance.

Amen.