

A Litany for Advent: God's Justice for Women

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The Virginia Synod Tapestry Team highlights Women's Justice issues as its fourth-quarter focus, with particular emphasis on the sin of human trafficking. To create awareness of this evil, that it may be brought into the Light of Christ and eradicated, you and your congregation are invited to use this Litany in your Advent worship services. Inspired by Luke 1:46-56 and Isaiah 61 (NRSV), this Litany or an excerpt from it may be used as a Call to Worship; as petitions within the Prayers of the People; or as a component of a midweek Advent worship service.

One: Let us come together in joy as the Body of Christ, united by our baptism into Jesus, filled with the Spirit of the Lord, as we gather to shine the Light of Christ into the world's darkness, where sin destroys.

Many: We rejoice in God our Savior, the Holy One whose name we bless.

One: Lord Jesus, Light of the World, we kneel before you with hearts deeply troubled by the many injustices enacted against your people, especially women of all ages, across time and in every place where evil takes root.

Many: Look upon us with favor, Lord; fill us with hope that your justice will prevail.

One: Holy One, you have done great things for us; your faithfulness is infinite; your love for us is boundless; your mercy has no end. Hear us, O Lord, as we cry to you.

Many: Look upon us with favor, Lord; preserve your humble servants.

One: Mighty One, we weep for all victims of violence, especially for women and children trapped by domestic abuse and terror. Keep them close to you, Lord God; give them courage; sustain their hope; send your holy angels to deliver them; transform evil into justice, that all life may be protected.

Many: Look upon us with favor, Lord; protect the weak, the weary, and those without hope.

One: Birther of the Universe, holy is your name. In great wisdom you chose Mary, the mother of our Lord Jesus, to bear your Son, empowering her by your Spirit to conceive him, nourish him, teach him and accompany him to the cross. Inspire all women who face unwanted pregnancies to trust in your constant presence; give strength and confidence in your promises to all women who long for a child; sustain and keep safe all pregnant women, especially those without proper medical care or support. Bless all who give mothering love, especially in places where war, famine and gang violence create terror, hardship and sorrow.

Many: Look upon us with favor, Lord; embrace all people with your goodness and strength.

One: Creator God, you alone are holy, you alone are Lord. Accompany all who suffer the tragedy of human trafficking: the victims, their loved ones, and communities in crisis. Bless all who work to rescue and liberate your captive people; inspire and equip agencies and volunteers who aid victims in recovery toward new life. Abolish the desire for greed and profit that degrades and destroys humanity; transform the hearts and minds of captors and predators to honor every person as worthy of respect and freedom, created in your holy image.

Many: Look upon us with favor, Lord; bind up the broken-hearted; liberate all captives; scatter the proud; lift up the lowly, bring us into the Light of Christ.

One: God our Redeemer, you create all people as equals, to thrive, flourish and be in relationship with you, and with each other. Inspire us to proclaim the year of your favor; to comfort all who suffer; to be present with those who mourn; to welcome the stranger and the immigrant; to remove the boundaries we invent that exclude and divide, that we may embrace all your beloved children in the unconditional love you give new to us, every day, by the power of your Son, our Lord Jesus.

Many: Look upon us with favor, Lord; we remember your great mercy; we rejoice in your promises, from generation to generation.

One: Sovereign Lord, you claim and anoint us with your Holy Spirit in baptism to be your beloved children forever. Replace the garment of mourning we wear at the injustices done to women with your garment of praise and salvation, as the day of your justice is accomplished. Fill the hungry with good things; scatter the proud; embrace the lonely, and inspire us to shine the Light of Christ into this world's darkest corners.

Many: Look upon us with favor, Lord, and give us peace. Amen.