PRAYER IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE

The setting includes a large bowl of water and a large dish of salt.

God has sent us to bring good news to the poor,
  to bind up hearts that are broken,
  to proclaim liberty to captives,
  to proclaim a year of favour from God.

Luke 4:18

Leader: Today we gather in the name of our God, a God of justice and compassion. We take time to recognize our meeting place and each other as holy.

Reader 1: Come Indigenous Ancestors. Come wise ones from of old, first inhabitants of this place. Come ancient ones, gift of God. Come original guardians of this land. Come with the heart you wore as you stood on this hallowed earth and held her treasures with gentle care.

All: We are on holy ground.

Reader 2: Come Saints of God. Come courageous and compassionate prophets. Come Oscar Romero, Mary Ward, Charles Luanga, Clare of Assisi, Dorothy Day and all those who have been bearers of light and of hope for the poor and oppressed peoples of this world.

All: We are on holy ground.

Reader 3: Come Nano Nagle, and all of our Presentation foremothers who courageously and compassionately embodied God’s continuing life-giving presence in the cosmos and in the human spirit.

All: We are on holy ground.

The Leader blesses the water, and blesses the people and the gathering space with the water.

Reader 1:

“This is the duty of our generation as we enter the twenty-first century - solidarity with the weak, the persecuted, the lonely, the sick and those in despair. It is expressed by the desire to give a noble and humanizing meaning to a community in which all members will define themselves not by their own identity but by that of others.”

(Elie Wiesel)

Reader 2:

“We learn to see the face of Christ - the face of Christ that is also the face of a suffering human being, the face of the crucified, the face of the poor, the face of a saint, and the face of every person - and we love each one with the criteria with which we will be judged: ‘I was hungry and you gave me to eat’.”

(Archbishop Oscar Romero)
Reader 3:

“The fundamental sin is exploitation, whether it be expressed in the domination of male over female, white over black, rich over poor, strong over weak, armed military over unarmed civilians, human beings over nature. These analogously abusive patterns interlock because they rest on the same base: a structure where an elite insists on its superiority and claims the right to exercise dominative power over all others considered subordinate, for its own benefit... What is being looked for is not simply the solution to one problem, but an entire shift of world view away from patterns of dominance toward mutually enhancing relationships.”

(Elizabeth Johnson CSJ, She Who Is, 27-28)

Reader 4:

“I have heard your prayers and seen your tears. I will heal you.
(2 Kings 20:5)

Pause for Reflection

Psalm

All: Blessed are you O God. May the Covenant of Salt between us and those who are oppressed bring justice.

Side 1: Blessed are they who are worth their salt, who are pillars of strength and integrity, who are valuable and valued, on whom our world depends. Blessed are they who are salt of the earth, who never lose perspective, who carry on and follow through and always do a whole lot more than what has been intended; for example, they go the extra mile; for example, they turn the other cheek, and are examples to us all.

All: Blessed are you O God. May the Covenant of Salt between us and those who are oppressed bring justice.

Side 1: Blessed are they who are pillars of salt, symbols of all who take a stand, signs of life in a desolate land, telling us of the need to look back in order to understand.

Side 2: Blessed are they who share the salt of human sweat and human tears, assuming some of the bondage of the more desperate among us, shouldering some of the crippling weight of oppression in our midst.

All: Blessed are you O God. May the Covenant of Salt between us and those who are oppressed bring justice.

Side 1: Blessed are You who season with salt, O God of all occasions. You give our sometimes insipid selves a radical new perspective, even as you preserve the best of what we already are.
Side 2: Blessed are You, our Protector.
Throw salt on our doubts and our demons;
let them chase their tails forever.
Pour salt on the wounds of all who dare
to lift their hand against You.
May they wallow in the wasteland
of their arrogance and pride.
All: Blessed are you O God. May the Covenant of Salt between us
and those who are oppressed bring justice.

(Source of the Psalm is unknown)

Reader 10: Matthew 5:11
You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can saltiness be restored? It is no longer
good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city built
on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under a bushel basket, but on the
lampstand, and it gives light to the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so they may
see your good works and give glory to God in heaven.

Bowl of Tears Ritual

The leader puts some salt in the bowl of water and then says:

As we pray before this bowl of tears, let us remember the suffering people of Samar Island in
the Philippines and the suffering people of Zimbabwe. Let us remember in a special way all
our sisters and the people they serve. Let us remember also all our sisters around the world
who work with those who suffer poverty, devastation and oppression. Let us acknowledge
their tears and their courage in resisting oppression and injustice.

Each person is invited to put salt in the water and to pray aloud or silently.

Leader: Let us pray...
All: God of justice, open our eyes to see you in the face
of those who are poor, those who are oppressed and marginalized.
Open our ears to hear you in the cry of those who are exploited,
those whose human rights have been denied,
those abandoned and dismissed.
Open our mouths to defend you in all places:
in public places, in our schools and universities,
in our workplaces and our streets, as well as in our
private deeds.
Remind us that what we do to the least ones we do to
you.
Amen.

Leader: In a world marred by violence and oppression
All: May our hearts hold the promise of compassion.

Leader: In the midst of oppression and tyranny
All: May our hearts hold the dream of freedom.

Leader: In the midst of doubt and despair
All: May our hearts hold the comfort of hope.

Leader: In the midst of fear
All: May our hearts hold the remembrance of God’s faithfulness.

Leader: In the midst of hatred and death
All: May our hearts hold the promise of peace.

Leader: Let us pray.

All: Creator God, we gather as a community in solidarity with our brothers and sister in Zimbabwe. Send your Spirit of peace and reconciliation into the hearts of the leaders and the people of Zimbabwe. We believe that together, through the power of love, revealed in the death and resurrection of your Son, we can transform resentment into reconciliation, war into peace, and sickness into health. Awaken within us the power of your Spirit. May we learn to live in solidarity, and come to believe in the transforming power of your love. We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.