

**VVA BOOK  
OF  
PRAYERS  
AND  
SERVICES**

**A MANUAL OF PRAYERS AND SERVICES FOR USE BY  
CHAPLAINS OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA**



**COMPILED BY THE  
NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF VIETNAM  
VETERAN MINISTERS  
Attleboro, MA**

The VVA Book of Prayers and Services has been compiled by the National Conference of Vietnam Veteran Ministers for use by chaplains connected with the Vietnam Veterans of America. Though most of the prayers are written from the Judeo-Christian perspective, other faith traditions may freely adapt them. The editors are aware that language used in some of the prayers is not inclusive; this occurs when we suggest prayers that were written in other times. Prayers and services that we have written use inclusive language as much as possible. In all instances we have attempted to be accurate in our citations; if an error is drawn to our attention or if we have failed to give proper credit, we will make every effort to correct it. The editors invite suggestions and submissions for future editions of this manual. These may be sent to:

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## INTRODUCTION

Members of the National Conference of Viet Nam Veteran Ministers all served in that theater of operations and are now ordained ministers. Some were chaplains; some served in other capacities in Viet Nam and were ordained later. This group held its first meeting in the fall of 1990, and has met yearly since then for education, sharing and mutual support.

Our common history has taught us that our nation experienced the Viet Nam War as unlike any other in our history. Out of our own military backgrounds, the members discovered a unique mission in helping guide the search for meaning and spiritual healing for both the veteran community and the nation as a whole.

In partial fulfillment of that mission, the National Conference of Viet Nam Veteran Ministers, at the request of Vietnam Veterans of America National Chaplain Philip Salois, has assembled the following collection of services and prayers. Recognizing the diversity of faith groups represented in the Viet Nam War, we have attempted to collect material from a variety of different faith groups.

The VVA Book of Prayers and Services contains suggested services for use upon the death of a VVA member or VVA Associate, as well as services for Memorial Day or Veterans Day. There is a service for use when we recall those who are listed as “Missing in Action” or who may remain as “Prisoners of War.” Prayers are included for opening and closing meetings, for special occasions, and for the work of VVA, as well as a section of readings which may be used in a variety of circumstances. Rituals for the installation of officers and for disposing of colors are included. In addition to other material, the VVA Book of Prayers and Services contains prayers which address what we believe are three particular concerns of Viet Nam veterans:

the reality of suffering,  
the hope for true friendship, and  
the quest for peace.

Our prayer is that this book may be a useful resource, and a source of comfort.

for the Editorial Committee  
Alan Cutter  
Duluth, MN

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Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, and are used by permission.

The editors are grateful to Patience Mason, founder and editor of *The Post-Traumatic Gazette* and author of **Recovering From the War: A Woman's Guide to Helping Your Vietnam Veteran, Your Family and Yourself**, for permission to use her copyrighted writings: *Prayer for People with PTSD* and the *Serenity Prayer for Veterans and Other Survivors of Trauma*.

The editors are grateful to the Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh, the Community of Mindful Living, and Parallax Press for permission to use two of Thich Nhat Hanh's copyrighted writings. *Meditation for 1995* is reprinted from *The Mindfulness Bell*, issue No. 13, Spring 1995. The litany in the Section of Peace first appeared in 1976 and has since appeared in several places.

The editors are grateful to Joseph Formola and the members of Chapter #151 (North Jersey) of the Vietnam Veterans of America who assembled a booklet titled *A Final Farewell to a Fallen Comrade* which contained the Services for Various Faiths which form part of this book.

The Editors are grateful to the Vietnam Veterans of America leadership and staff, especially to Mokie Porter for her help. We are grateful as well to the Vietnam Veteran Assistance Fund for its support of this project.

The Editors are grateful as well to the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette for their continued interest in and support of the National Conference of Viet Nam Veteran Ministers.

And the Editors are most grateful for the encouragement and support of the brothers and sisters of the National Conference of Viet Nam Veteran Ministers who first envisioned this book and encouraged us along the way. Any credit is theirs; any mistakes are ours.

Phil Salois  
Jack Day  
Alan Cutter

**PART I**  
**Public Services**

**Order of Commemoration**  
**for**  
**Memorial Day**

*[Prior to the observance, it would be appropriate to have patriotic music, if possible.]*

**Welcome**

by Chapter President:

On behalf of Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter #\_\_\_\_, I welcome you all to our observance upon this day. Memorial Day began following the Civil War as a time to honor the dead of that terrible conflict, both the dead of the Union and the Confederacy. This special day to remember the human loss of both sides was celebrated first in 1866, and by a provident coincidence, ceremonies took place in Columbus, Mississippi, and Waterloo, New York. In 1868, the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, John A. Logan, ordered that May 30<sup>th</sup> of that year be set aside “For the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion.” Over the years Memorial Day, since 1971 celebrated on the last Monday in May, has become the time when the United States thankfully remembers and honors its citizens who have died during war, and in the service of their country. We remember as well those of our nation who bore the honored title of “veteran of the armed forces” and who have died in the past year. I would ask you to rise as [name of unit] presents the colors of our nation, the flag under which our brothers and sisters fought.

**Presentation of colors**

*[After the colors have been brought forward, the presiding officer continues:]*

Please remain standing while *[chapter chaplain or other appropriate person]* asks the blessing of the Creator upon our gathering today.

### **Invocation**

*[An appropriate prayer may be offered at this time or the following may be used:]*

Almighty God, Creator and Sustainer of all life: we ask that Your blessing may descend on us as we gather here today. We thank you for this opportunity to once more, in freedom, assemble to honor the veterans of our nation's armed forces. May we never forget those who made the supreme sacrifice so as to secure for our nation the blessings of life, liberty, and justice for all. May our observance be a timely reminder that our freedom was purchased at high cost, and should not be taken for granted. Bless the families and friends of those we honor today, and bless the veterans who have come with memories, stories, and tears to enrich this day. Amen.

### **Pledge of allegiance**

*[An appropriate person, perhaps a chapter officer or member, or a young person, should lead those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance. If a band or music is available the National Anthem may be played and sung at this time as well, after which the Presiding officer may invite those assembled to be seated or stand at ease.]*

***I pledge allegiance to the flag  
of the United States of America,  
and to the republic for which it stands,  
one nation under God,  
indivisible,  
with liberty and justice for all.***

### **Words of Introduction**

*[At this time it would be appropriate to introduce those who are gathered at the front, and to introduce the speaker(s) who have been invited. During this period it would be appropriate for a chapter member or other person to read, if so desired, the proclamation by the President of the United States for this celebration. The speaker(s) for*



*the day may wish to focus upon the topic of those who are remembered and the price they paid for our freedom. A personal witness or memory would be appropriate. The speaker(s) may wish to focus on reminding those gathered that our liberty has been purchased at a great price, and neither the price nor the liberty should be forgotten.]*

## **Speaker(s)**

### **Prayer of remembrance**

*[The chaplain, or other appropriate person may invite those assembled to stand and then lead them in a prayer of remembrance as he/she wishes, or may use the following:]*

Creator and Sustainer of all life, who has received into eternal care the gift of the lives we today honor: we who are veterans of the Vietnam War often think of our brothers and sisters whose names are engraved upon the black granite of “The Wall” in our nation’s capitol, [and upon the memorial here], and we honor with respect and thanks the great sacrifices made by those who were engaged in other wars, actions, conflicts, and missions while serving our nation and its people. We miss them, and we will not forget them. We pray for their families and friends, those who were left to their loss, and we ask that they may be comforted by the knowledge of our support, and by our tears. We pledge to them through You that their sacrifices will be remembered, and that to honor them we will work diligently for peace so that our children may know a world without war. Amen.

### **Reading of names**

*[Some appropriate person(s) may here read a list of names. The list could be the names of those veterans who have died since the last Memorial Day, or it could be a list of randomly selected names honoring all war, actions, conflicts, and missions. Such a reading might be introduced by the following words:]*

Each year, the people of our nation gather on a Monday in May, on Memorial Day, to pay solemn tribute to those who have served our nation in their time, helping to secure for us and our children the blessings of truth and freedom. Among those we

remember today are:

*[names]*

### **Reading of remembrance**

Upon this Memorial Day, we gather thankfully, for God has given to us the gift of memory that we might keep alive those we love.

In the rising of the sun and in its going down, we remember them.

In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter, we remember them.

In the opening of buds and in the rebirth of spring, we remember them.

In the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of the summer, we remember them.

In the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn, we remember them.

In the beginning of the year and when it ends, we remember them.

When we are weary and in need of strength, we remember them.

When we are lost and sick at heart, we remember them.

When we have joys and special celebrations we yearn to share, we remember them.

When we see our nation's young marching behind our flag, or hear 'taps' played, we remember them.

So long as we live, they too shall live, for they are part of us.

And when we answer the final roll, we know that our brothers and sisters will fulfill their duty, and greet us with the words of compassion and friendship, peace and love:

“Welcome home!”

*[At the conclusion of the reading, it may be appropriate to lay a wreath or flowers upon a memorial.]*

**Gun Salute**

**Taps**

**Benediction**

[The chaplain or other appropriate person may ask God's blessings using the following or another prayer:]

May the Creator and Sustainer of all life bless our memories as we depart from here, and grant to us all grateful hearts, peaceful souls, and loving hands. Amen.

**Retire colors**

**Dismissal**

*[The chapter president or presiding officer should dismiss the gathering after the colors have been appropriately retired.]*

**ORDER OF COMMEMORATION  
FOR  
VETERANS DAY**

*[Prior to the observance, it would be appropriate to have patriotic music, if possible.]*

**Welcome**

by Chapter President:

On behalf of the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter #\_\_\_\_, I welcome you all to our observance upon this day. Veterans Day began when the governments of the United States, Great Britain, and France together set aside time to remember and honor those killed in World War I; the celebration was originally called Armistice Day, and the date was set to commemorate the ending of World War I on November 11, 1918. Following World War II, this day was recognized as a day of tribute to the dead of that conflict as well. In 1954, after the Korean War, the date was officially designated as Veterans Day to honor all the men and women who have served our nation in the armed forces. I would ask you to rise as [name of unit] presents the colors of our nation, the flag under which our brothers and sisters served and presently serve.

**Presentation of colors**

*[After the colors have been brought forward, the presiding officer continues:]*

Please remain standing while *[chapter chaplain or other appropriate person]* asks the blessing of the Creator upon our gathering today.

**Invocation**

*[An appropriate prayer may be offered at this time or the following may be used:]*

Almighty God, Creator and Sustainer of life: we ask that Your blessing may descend on us as we gather here today. We thank you for this opportunity to once more, in freedom, assemble to honor the veterans of our nation's armed forces. May we never forget those who made the supreme sacrifice so as to secure for our nation the blessings

of life, liberty, and justice for all. May our observance be a timely reminder that our freedom was purchased at high cost, and should not be taken for granted. Bless the families and friends of those we honor today, and bless the veterans who have come with memories, stories, and tears to enrich this day. Amen.

### **Pledge of allegiance**

*[An appropriate person, perhaps a chapter officer or member, or a young person, should lead those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance. If a band or music is available, the National Anthem may be played and sung at this time as well, after which the Presiding officer may invite those assembled to be seated or stand at ease.]*

***I pledge allegiance to the flag  
of the United States of America,  
and to the republic for which it stands,  
one nation under God,  
indivisible,  
with liberty and justice for all.***

### **Words of Introduction**

*[At this time it would be appropriate to introduce those who are gathered at the front, and to introduce the speaker(s) who have been invited. During this period it would be appropriate for a chapter member or other person to read, if so desired, the proclamation of the President of the United States for this celebration. The speaker(s) for the day may wish to focus upon the topic of those who have served and presently serve in the armed forces. A personal witness or memory would be appropriate. The speaker(s) may wish to focus on reminding those gathered that our continued liberty depends upon the willingness of our nation's youth to served in the armed forces and upon the resolve of the nation as a whole to teach both the history and responsibility of freedom as well as share the burden of supporting the armed forces.]*

### **Speaker(s)**

### **Prayer for the armed forces**

*[The chaplain, or other appropriate person may invite those assembled to stand and then lead them in a prayer of remembrance as he/she wishes, or may use the following:]*

Lord God of hosts, whose power and authority is from everlasting to everlasting: keep under your protecting care the armed forces of the United States of America and all who serve therein. Grant that they may be a sure defense and a safeguard for the people of the United States, providing security for all who come and go in peaceful and lawful pursuits. Support them wherever duty takes them, on land or sea or in the air, and grant that they may fulfill their high calling as defenders of justice and freedom. In times of peace, keep them from evil; in times of danger, grant them fortitude; and in times of conflict, give them the gift of your presence. May our men and women in the armed forces stand firm as they guard our goodly heritage, that the gifts of freedom and liberty, justice and peace, may be transmitted from one generation to the next. Amen.

### **Memorial Moment**

*[It may be that within the context of the Veterans Day celebration, a few moments might be taken to remember various events from our nation's history. The following brief statement, or some other reading, might be used, along with the Reading of Remembrance.]*

In his second inaugural address (March 4, 1865), President Abraham Lincoln spoke these timeless words of challenge and commitment:

*With malice toward none;  
With charity for all;  
With firmness in the right,  
As God gives us to see the right,  
Let us strive to finish  
the work we are in;  
To bind up the nation's wounds;  
To care for him who shall have  
borne the battle,  
And for his widow,  
And for his orphan—*

*To do all which may achieve and  
cherish a just and lasting peace  
among ourselves,  
And with all nations.*

Today we gather to renew our commitment to the vision of Abraham Lincoln, and to re-affirm to those who have served in our nation's armed forces and to those who presently serve our country our continued support. Throughout our nation, as part of today's celebrations, there have been parades and solemn processions. Often the parades and processions include color guards and units comprised of those who presently serve in the armed forces of our nation. We take off our hats and salute as our nation's colors pass by; we look with awe and respect as the young wearing the uniforms of our country march by. But as they march by, do you see the others who accompany them? Look hard; do you not see in "Old Glory" all the flags of our nation from the flags of the revolution on through our history? See how proudly the flag advances, even as it did at Gettysburg and Guadalcanal, on Omaha Beach and in the Middle East. Notice the one who carries that symbol of liberty; see in that stride the determined march of the patriot at Concord and Bunker Hill, the wary run of the warrior at Antietam and Leyte Gulf, the cautious movement of the tunnel rats of Vietnam and the deliberate caution of ground crews. *[Others may be added as desirable.]* They are all there. And there are others moving in this line of honor: the wounded hobbling and limping, others borne upon stretchers attended by corpsmen and nurses and chaplains, the prisoners of war, bearing the marks of brutality, and the shadows of the dead and missing surround them all. See them now and do not forget. And who is standing beside you watching the procession pass by? Is it a Gold Star mother, still bearing the pain of loss, or perhaps a child who never knew a parent, or perhaps a veteran, bearing wounds and scars not visible? They are here as well; the widow and orphan of whom Abraham Lincoln spoke, as well as the ones who have borne the battle. All these are gathered to renew a common commitment to freedom, to liberty, to justice, and to peace! All these are gathered to answer the challenge to never forget, but to always remember!

## **Reading of remembrance**

Upon this Veterans Day, we gather thankfully for God has given to us the gift of memory that we might keep alive those we love.

In the rising of the sun and in its going down, we remember them.  
In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter, we remember them.  
In the opening of buds and in the rebirth of spring, we remember them.  
In the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of the summer, we remember them.  
In the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn, we remember them.  
In the beginning of the year and when it ends, we remember them.  
When we are weary and in need of strength, we remember them.  
When we are lost and sick at heart, we remember them.  
When we have joys and special celebrations we yearn to share, we remember them.  
When we see our nation's young marching behind our flag, or hear 'taps' played, we remember them.  
So long as we live, they too shall live, for they are part of us.  
And when we answer the final roll, we know that our brothers and sisters will fulfill their duty, and greet us with the words of compassion and friendship, peace and love:  
"Welcome home!"

*[At the conclusion of the reading, it may be appropriate to lay a wreath or flowers upon a memorial.]*

## **Gun Salute**

## **Taps**



**Benediction**

[The chaplain or other appropriate person may ask God's blessings using the following or another prayer.]

May the Creator and Sustainer of all life bless our memories as we depart from here, and grant to us all grateful hearts, peaceful souls, and loving hands. Amen.

**Retire colors****Dismissal**

*[The chapter president or presiding officer should dismiss the gathering after the colors have been appropriately retired.]*

**PART II**  
**In the Chapter**

**A RITUAL FOR THE  
INSTALLATION OF  
CHAPTER OFFICERS**

*[Chapters of the Vietnam Veterans of America are known for their independence and originality. This brief ceremony of installation may be adopted as wished. It would be appropriate to have either the outgoing Chapter president or some other invited member act as Installing Officer.]*

**Outgoing Chapter President:** I now have the honor (to present to you \_\_\_\_\_, who will/to) install our Chapter's officers for the coming term.

**Installing Officer:** It is indeed a privilege for me to install the officers of Chapter # \_\_\_\_\_. I will now ask the following to come forward:

\_\_\_\_\_ to be installed as President  
\_\_\_\_\_ to be installed as Vice President  
\_\_\_\_\_ to be installed as Secretary  
\_\_\_\_\_ to be installed as Treasurer  
\_\_\_\_\_ to be installed as Chaplain

*[It may well be that various chapters will have a greater variety of officers than listed above; these should be invited forward in the same manner.]*

Years ago each of these men and/or women answered the call to service when it was issued by our nation; they proudly served, to the best of their abilities, our nation. We now recognize that you have each answered once more a call to service, a call that was extended to you by the brothers and sisters of this chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America when they, proudly voting in the great tradition of a democratic society, elected you to office.

I ask you to answer the following three questions:

Will you faithfully discharge the duties of your office in accordance with the bylaws of this Chapter and the constitution and bylaws of the Vietnam Veterans of America?

Will you endeavor to remember how you have arrived at this point, those who helped you along the way, and those with whom you served in the past, encouraging by act and example the entire membership of Chapter #\_\_\_\_\_ to remember similar companions through life, and thereby act at all times and in all ways so as to reflect honor upon these people and this Chapter?

Will you faithfully teach the lessons of freedom to the young, sharing honestly with them the history of who we are and how we came to be, and encourage the children of our nation to cherish the ideals of liberty and justice?

I now ask the members of Chapter #\_\_\_\_\_ to answer this question.

Do you, the members of Chapter #\_\_\_\_\_ of the Vietnam Veterans of America, accept these men and/or women as your duly elected officers for the coming term, promising to support and encourage them as they seek to serve you and our community?

Then I now declare that these men and/or women are duly installed. The Chaplain will offer prayer.

*[Either the outgoing chaplain or the incoming chaplain may offer the prayer.]*

**Chaplain:** Creator of all that is: we give you thanks that you have called forth these individuals to be our officers for the coming term. May they be blessed in all that they do, and may they lead us always in the paths of peace and freedom. Guide us all as together we seek to preserve and pass on the gifts we have received. Amen.

**Installing Officer:** It is now my privilege to turn the meeting over to the new President.

**Newly Installed President:** I would be remiss if I did not take this occasion to thank \_\_\_\_\_ for acting as Installing Officer, and if I did not take a moment to extend to the outgoing officers the thanks of the entire Chapter, those who have served us so well in

the term now concluded.

*[It may be that there are suitable certificates or other items to be presented to the outgoing officers. After this the meeting may continue as a regular meeting.]*

### **A RITUAL FOR USE WHEN RETIRING OLD COLORS**

*[This ritual provides an outline that can be used to retire a variety of colors which have been used by a VVA Chapter. This ritual is specifically written to retire a VVA flag, but could be easily adopted for any other colors.]*

**Chapter President:** It has been recommended that our current Vietnam Veterans of America flag, having been used by our chapter for [number] years, be properly retired and retained in a place that is appropriate. I will ask that the VVA flag to be retired be brought forward.

*[A member or members so appointed shall bring the colors forward.]*

**Chapter President:** This flag has become faded and worn as a result of use at chapter functions. Let us remember the symbolism of the flag of the Vietnam Veterans of America flag. The **golden yellow background** is the major color of the Vietnam Service Ribbon. The **seventeen campaign stars** represent the seventeen official campaigns of the Vietnam War. In the center, between the campaign stars, is the **VVA Official Design**. A **wreath** surrounding the insignia is in natural colors, and is made up of a **laurel branch** and a bundle of **rice stalks**, both tied together at the bottom with a **strand of barbed wire**; the **rice** represents Southeast Asia, the **laurel** signifies honor to all who served there, and the **barbed wire** reminds us of the POW's and MIA's for whom there still must be a proper accounting. As we retire these colors, I will ask you to stand as our chaplain offers a prayer.

**Chaplain:** Almighty God, Creator of all, and Companion in all of life: we ask your continued blessing upon the Vietnam Veterans of America. We give you thanks for our nation, and our nation's flag, and the freedom which it represents; we give you thanks for the many times we have gathered under our nation's flag and this banner, which we are now retiring from use. May its replacement remind us of our particular time of service to our nation and its people, and may it remind us that, as we were called forth to war, we continue to be called forth to serve in peace. Amen.

**Chapter President:** These colors are now retired from active use.

*[The one(s) who brought the colors forward now take them away. It is presumed that Chapters will wish to retain old colors.]*

**A RITUAL FOR USE  
WHEN DISPOSING OF  
FLAGS NO LONGER USEABLE**

*[The American Legion has long had a ceremony to dispose of unserviceable flags; this ceremony follows that pattern. It may well be that VVA Chapters might wish to coordinate-ordinate and cooperate with local American Legion Posts and other veterans' organizations in such a ceremony, and thereby display our common bonds as veterans. However, there may well be instances when there are no other organizations available and this service may be used as a resource. The Chapter would assemble outdoors in the evening around a small, which has over it some sort of grill. It will also be necessary to have a container of kerosene.]*

**Chapter President:** We have gathered here this evening to properly dispose of *[a number]* United States flag(s) which are no longer useable. I will ask that the flag(s) to be disposed of be brought forward.

*[A member or members so appointed shall bring the flag(s) forward.]*

**Chapter President:** Soon after the Declaration of Independence was signed on July 4, 1776, our nation's leaders felt a symbol was needed to represent the newly claimed independence and commitment to unity in the face of tyranny. Though the early

history of our nation's symbol is lost in time, we do know that the following resolution was adopted in Congress of June 14, 1777:

*Resolved, that the Flag of the United States be thirteen stripes alternate red and white, that the union be thirteen stars white in a build field representing a new constellation.*

Over the years, the United States Flag has changed a little, and now stands at thirteen stripes for the thirteen original colonies, and one star for each of the states.

Though no record is left to tell us about the colors, we do know that in 1782, the colors red, white, and blue were made part of the new Great Seal of the United States, and that the Department of State issued the following explanation of the colors:

**Red** stands for hardiness and courage.

**White** is the symbol of purity and innocence.

**Blue** is the color of vigilance, perseverance, and justice.

It is told that George Washington had the following opinion:

*We take the stars and the blue union from Heaven, the red from our mother country, separating it by white stripes, thus showing we have separated from her, and the white stripes shall go down to posterity representing liberty.*

Over the years we have seen the United States Flag used and abused in many ways; yet we gather here tonight as men and women who honor and respect the Stars and Stripes. We have gathered tonight to dispose of these flags in an appropriate manner. As we dispose of (this flag/these flags), I will ask you to stand as our chaplain offers a prayer.

**Chaplain:** Almighty God, Creator of all, and Companion in all of life: we ask your continued blessing upon all who have served and presently serve our nation, pledging their allegiance "to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." We thank you for this great heritage, and now to the cleansing and refining fire we commit (this flag/these flags), well-used, worn out, yet still beloved symbols of liberty. As they burn yielding forth light and heat, may our vision be cleared and our hearts warmed so that we

may renew our devotion to our country, and to its high ideals. Amen.

**Chapter President:** I now ask all present to stand and salute as the fire does its work...

*[The one(s) who brought the colors forward now take them to the fire. Dipping and soaking the flag(s) to be destroyed in kerosene, then placing the flag(s) on the rack to burn. If a bugler is present it maybe appropriate to sound "To the Colors," or some other appropriate music may be played. After the flag(s) are consumed, the President continues.]*

**Chapter President:** You may stand at ease. The members of VVA Chapter # \_\_\_\_ thank you for your attendance at this ceremony. Be assured that (a new flag/new flags) will replace the destroyed, and that, in all her beauty, "Old Glory" will continue to proudly fly, witnessing to the hope of freedom. This concludes our ceremony.

## **FOLDING THE UNITED STATES FLAG**

[It is possible that an honor guard may be asked at some time to fold the flag. These are the traditional instructions.]

1. Two pallbearers, at the appropriate time, remove the flag from the casket, hold it taut and then fold the lowered striped section of the flag over the blue field.
2. The folded edge is then folded over to meet the open edge.
3. A triangular fold is then started by bringing the striped corner of the folded edge to the open edge.
4. The outer point is then turned inward parallel with the open edge to form a second triangle.
5. The triangular folding is continued until the entire length of the flag is folded in this manner, tucking the last bit of the flag into itself.
6. When the flag is completely folded, only the blue field should be visible and it should be folded in the triangular shape of a cocked hat.



**PART III**  
**At a Time of Death or Return**

**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA**  
**SERVICES TO OFFER ON THE DEATH OF A**  
**VVA MEMBER OR A**  
**VVA ASSOCIATE**

*BASIS FOR PARTICIPATION IN SERVICES*

*VVA chapter participation in services held at the death of a Vietnam Veteran, Vietnam-era Veteran, or VVA Associate is intended to honor the deceased and to provide support to the bereaved family. Everything done by VVA members should respect first the wishes of the family, and secondly the direction of the family's clergy.*

*The VVA Chapter President or his/her designee will confer with the family, clergy and funeral director to ascertain the time and place of the viewing and services. The Chapter President or designee will notify the Chapter's Chaplain, Honor Guard, and other affected members.*

*There are four major ways that VVA can offer ceremonial support to the family and friends of a deceased member:*

- 1. Escort at the Funeral Home*
- 2. A Special Memorial Service either at the funeral home prior to the funeral, or at another time and place when the casket is not present.*
- 3. Ceremonial participation in the funeral itself by arrangement with clergy and family.*
- 4. Ceremonial participation in the graveside service by arrangement with clergy and family.*

*1. Escort at the Funeral Home*

*The following apply when an escort is requested at the funeral home:*

- 1. The Chapter President or designee will designate the Uniform of the Day to the Head of the Honor Guard/Color Guard.*

2. *The Head of the Honor Guard will contact members of the Honor Guard/Color Guard to arrange for a roster of Chapter members who will provide escort service at the funeral home during the times of viewing.*
3. *Designated escorts will stand in a respectful fashion at the head and foot of the casket for the designated shift.*

### 2. Special Memorial Service

1. *The VVA Chapter may conduct one of the following special services at the funeral home or other location where the casket is present, for the purpose of honoring the deceased veteran's military service or associate's service to the VVA, if asked to do so by the family. The service should take place at a time other than the funeral. Arrangements should be made beforehand with the funeral director.*
2. *Alternatively, the Special Memorial Service may be used at another time and place, such as VVA Chapter Hall, where the casket is not present, following the funeral.*
3. *The family's clergy need not be involved in such a service, and the VVA Chapter leadership will rely on the family and funeral director to keep the clergy informed that it is to take place.*
4. *The Chapter President or designee will designate the Uniform of the Day to the Head of the Honor Guard/Color Guard.*
5. *The Head of the Honor Guard will arrange for the participation of the following in the special service:*
  - Chaplain*
  - Three Chapter Officers/Representatives*
  - Chapter President or Designee*

### 3. Participation in Funereal Services

1. *The funeral is properly the concern of the deceased's family, the clergy and the religious denomination to which the clergy belongs. VVA does not have a separate funeral service intended as a substitute for the funeral service of a religious tradition. If the family desires a military funeral, the chapter President, designee, or chaplain may assist the family in locating clergy, ideally current or former military chaplains, who are comfortable conducting a service approved by the Armed Forces Chaplains Board and the chaplains' denomination.*

2. *When family and clergy request that VVA participate in the funeral itself, participation may, as appropriate, involve:*  
*Pallbearers (Honor Guard)*  
*Color Guard*  
*Chaplain, if requested to participate by the family's clergy*
3. *If the family's clergy and the VVA Chaplain are the same individual, it still should be expected that the clergy will use the prescribed funeral service of his or her own tradition.*

#### 4. Participation in Graveside Service

1. *When family and clergy request that VVA participate in the Graveside service, participation may, as appropriate, involve:*  
*Pallbearers (Honor Guard)*  
*Color Guard*  
*Chaplain, if requested to participate by the family's clergy*  
*Firing Squad*  
*Bugler*
2. *The VVA leader may indicate to the clergy specific participation which the VVA detail is prepared to have; however the wishes of the family and clergy must come first.*

### **VVA MEMORIAL SERVICES**

1. *Before the services begin, position a staffed Flag of the United States at the front of the room so that it will be to the left as viewed from the audience, and position the VVA colors to the right as viewed by the audience.*
2. *At the agreed upon time for the VVA service, the congregation will be seated.*
3. *The VVA officers stand facing the assembly, before or near the casket if the casket is present. Those assembled are, left to right, Chapter President or Designee, three Chapter Officers or Representatives, and Chaplain.*

## SERVICE FOR A VIETNAM VETERAN

**Chapter President/Designee.** We, the members of Chapter #\_\_\_\_, Vietnam Veterans of America, have assembled here to honor [Name], who was a Vietnam Veteran, having served in [service branch and dates of service may be mentioned].

Those who served in Vietnam share with all other war veterans an awful knowledge and understanding of the true cost of war, for we are all individuals who survived an experience of fright and terror which has no equal, an experience which forever changed and shaped each veteran's life. Veterans of Vietnam have borne an additional burden, for the conflict was not neatly resolved, and many questions remain unanswered.

On this day, however, we know one thing. [Name] has left us. In years gone by many men and women, responding to the call of our nation, answered the summons given and left family and familiar surroundings, people and places loved, to serve in a far off land, returning home to an uncertain reception. Now [Name] has left us once more, answering a roll call we all must face, and we gather to remember him [her], trusting that he [she] has found a reception, a homecoming, of gentleness, health, peace and love.

Parade rest. (*Detail responds.*) The chaplain will seek God's presence and blessing at this occasion. (*Detail hold caps over heart with right hand.*)

**Chaplain.** (*May extemporize or repeat*): O loving God, be with us as we honor the life of one who served our nation, for [Name], who died on [date], is now in your care. Accept our prayers on behalf of [Name]. May he [she] have a place in your house, may he [she] rest in peace, and may light perpetually shine upon him [her]. Look with mercy upon those among us, family and friends, who are bereaved by his [her] passing. Comfort and console them with your presence and tenderness. We ask these things in your name. Amen. (*All repeat Amen. Replace caps.*)

**Chapter President/Designee.** One by one, as years roll by, our numbers decrease, and we who survive gather to mark the end of the earthly tour of duty of those who have departed.

Attention! Officers of Chapter #\_\_\_\_ of the Vietnam Veterans of America, you will now perform the last duties of your stations.

*When the service is used with casket present, a corner of the casket flag may be folded back at this time, and the three symbols may be placed on the casket in the area uncovered by the flag. Where the service is used at some other time and place, a table at the front of the room, perhaps containing a photograph or some other reminder of the deceased, may be the place where the symbols are placed.*

**Officer 1:** On behalf of Chapter #\_\_\_\_, we place this emblem/flag of the Vietnam Veterans of America, which signifies a bond formed years ago, a bond of common experience which cannot be broken.

**Officer 2:** I bring to a place of honor this unblemished piece of black granite<sup>1</sup> reminding us that our brother's [sister's] name is now enrolled with the many whose names are written in stone, but even more, written upon the hearts of this community.

**Officer 3:** I present this rose, a most delicate and beautiful flower, which lives but a brief time, a reminder of the transitory and fragile nature of the life we have been given.

**Chapter President/Designee.** On behalf of our nation, whose call we answered, we place this emblem of our country, and with it, we dedicate ourselves once more to be witnesses for truth and freedom, the highest ideals of our country but the first casualties of war.

*(The Chapter President/Designee then replaces folded corner of the casket flag, laying it over VVA Emblem, granite, and rose. The President then salutes casket and returns to his place in line. When this Memorial Services is used at another time and place, the President returns to his/her seat at this time.)*

**Chaplain.** Each year America's veterans gather in November, on Veteran's Day, to remember with solemn ceremony friends and companions made while serving in our nation's armed forces. We gather to renew ties and friendships, to tell stories, to laugh

and to cry, and to ask ourselves, “Did this really happen?”

Many of those gatherings are similar to those held at the Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial, the ‘Wall’, in our nation’s capital. Vietnam veterans walk side-by-side, arm-in-arm, by the polished, black granite, by the roll of names, perhaps pausing at a panel to look, or to touch a name or a memory. Groups and individuals come, placing mementos, wreaths, and flowers, often roses.

Perhaps [Name] attended those gatherings, if not in body, certainly in spirit. But he [she] will be there no more, to laugh or cry or place a flower, to share a story or a memory, to ask the haunting questions of war. He [she] will be missing, but will our friend be forgotten?

Each year, the people of our nation gather one day in May, on Memorial Day, to pay solemn tribute to those who have served their nation in their time, helping to secure our nation’s hopes of truth and freedom. Children come as well and walk and run among the stones and flags, wondering what is going on, asking, “What happened?”

And on this day, we will be there to answer this question. We will tell the children the truth, spurred on by the task entrusted to us by those whose names are written in marble and in our hearts, a duty arising out of our common bond and our knowledge of the fragile nature of life. As we speak, we will remember [Name], for God has given us the gift of memory that we might keep alive those we love.

In the rising of the sun and in its going down, we remember  
them.

In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter, we  
remember them.

In the opening of buds and in the rebirth of spring, we  
remember them.

In the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of the summer,  
we remember them.

In the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn, we remember them.  
In the beginning of the year and when it ends, we remember them.  
When we are weary and in need of strength, we remember them.  
When we are lost and sick at heart, we remember them.  
When we have joys and special celebrations we yearn to share, we remember them.  
When we see our nation's young marching behind our flag, or hear 'taps' played, we remember them.  
So long as we live, they too shall live, for they are part of us.  
And when we answer the final roll, we know that [Name] will fulfill his [her] duty, and greet us with the words of compassion and friendship, peace and love:  
"Welcome home!"<sup>2</sup>

**Chapter President/Designee:** This concludes our service. *Chapter President then gives orders necessary to return members of the detail to their seats.*

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<sup>1</sup> Some other suitable symbol of The Wall may be substituted.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from a traditional Jewish prayer.

## SERVICE FOR A VIETNAM-ERA VETERAN

**Chapter President/Designee.** We, the members of Chapter #\_\_\_\_, Vietnam Veterans of America, have assembled here to honor [Name], who was a Vietnam-era Veteran.

Those who served during the Vietnam-era share a knowledge and understanding of the uncertainty and ambiguity of war. Though not assigned to service in Vietnam, [Name] served his [her] nation in [service branch and dates of service may be mentioned]. He [She] knew the mixture of relief and disappointment that came when orders arrived that sent some to Vietnam and others to different assignments. He [She] understood the demands that military life made.

On this day, however, we know one thing. [Name] has left us. In years gone by men and women, responding to the call of our nation, answered the summons given and left family and familiar surroundings, people and places loved, to serve in far off lands, returning home to an uncertain reception. Now [Name] has left us once more, answering a roll call we all must face, and we gather to remember him [her], trusting that he [she] has found a reception, a homecoming, of gentleness, health, peace and love.

Parade rest. (*Detail responds.*) The chaplain will seek God's presence and blessing at this occasion. (*Detail hold caps over hear with right hand.*)

**Chaplain.** (*May extemporize or repeat*): O loving God, be with us as we honor the life of one who served our nation, for [Name], who died on [date], is now in your care. Accept our prayers on behalf of [Name]. May he [she] have a place in your house, may he [she] rest in peace, and may light perpetual shine upon him [her]. Look with mercy upon those among us, family and friends, who are bereaved by his [her] passing. Comfort and console them with your presence and tenderness. We ask these things in your name. Amen. (*All repeat Amen. Replace caps.*)



**Chapter President/Designee.** One by one, as years roll by, our numbers decrease, and we who survive gather to mark the end of the earthly tour of duty of those who have departed.

Attention! Officers of Chapter #\_\_\_\_ of the Vietnam Veterans of America, you will now perform the last duties of your stations.

*When the service is used with casket present, a corner of the casket flag may be folded back at this time, and the three symbols may be placed on the casket in the area uncovered by the flag. Where the service is used at some other time and place, a table at the front of the room, perhaps containing a photograph or some other reminder of the deceased, may be the place where the symbols are placed.*

**Officer 1:** On behalf of Chapter #\_\_\_\_, we place this emblem/flag of the Vietnam Veterans of America, which signifies a bond formed years ago, a bond of common experience which cannot be broken.

**Officer 2:** I bring to a place of honor this unblemished piece of steel<sup>1</sup> reminding us that supporting every undertaking exists a hidden framework of support. Our brother's [sister's] name is now enrolled with the many whose names are known to God as having been faithful citizen-soldiers, and which are written upon the hearts of this community.

**Officer 3:** I present this rose, a most delicate and beautiful flower, which lives but a brief time, a reminder of the transitory and fragile nature of the life we have been given.

**Chapter President/Designee.** On behalf of our nation, whose call we answered, we place this emblem of our country, and with it, we dedicate ourselves once more to be witnesses for truth and freedom, the highest ideals of our country but the first casualties of war.

*(The Chapter President/Designee then replaces folded corner of the casket flag, laying it over VVA Emblem, steel, and rose. The President then salutes casket and returns to his place in line. When this Memorial Services is used at another time and place, the President returns to his/her seat at this time.)*

**Chaplain.** Each year America's veterans gather in November, on Veteran's Day, to remember with solemn ceremony friends and companions made while serving in our

nation's armed forces. Often there seem to be different groupings; some veterans are boisterous, glad to meet old companions from year and assignments past; some are quieter, full of memories of shared experiences; and some are quieter still, eyes glazed by the memories of war.

Many of these gathers are held at "memorials" erected to honor those who fell in war. Their names are written in stone or engraved in metal. But there is more to these "memorials" than meets the eye. A memorial cannot stand without a firm foundation, a planned system of support. Many died, but many more served in vital roles supporting those who were in the war zone, ready themselves to go if sent.

Perhaps [Name] attended those gatherings, if not in body, certainly in spirit. But he [she] will be there no more, to laugh or cry or place a flower, to share a story or a memory. He [she] will be missing, but will our friend be forgotten?

Each year, the people of our nation gather one day in May, on Memorial Day, to pay solemn tribute to those who have served their nation in their time, helping to secure our nation's hopes of truth and freedom. Children come as well and walk and run among the stones and flags, wondering what is going on, asking, "What happened?"

And on this day, we will be there to answer this question. We will tell the children the truth, spurred on by the memory of those who fought and those who served during the conflict, providing the framework of support. We will do, as they did, and honor a duty arising out of our common bond and our knowledge of the fragile nature of life. As we speak, we will remember [Name], for God has given to us the gift of memory that we might keep alive those we love.

In the rising of the sun and in its going down, we remember  
them.

In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter, we  
remember them.

In the opening of buds and in the rebirth of spring, we  
remember them.  
In the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of the summer,  
we remember them.  
In the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn, we  
remember them.  
In the beginning of the year and when it ends, we remember  
them.  
When we are weary and in need of strength, we remember  
them.  
When we are lost and sick at heart, we remember them.  
When we have joys and special celebrations we yearn to  
share, we remember them.  
When we see our nation's young marching behind our flag,  
or hear 'taps' played, we remember them.  
So long as we live, they too shall live, for they are part of us.  
And when we answer the final roll, we know that [Name]  
will fulfill his [her] duty, and greet us with the words of  
compassion and friendship, peace and love:  
"Welcome home!"<sup>2</sup>

**Chapter President/Designee:** This concludes our service. *Chapter President then gives orders necessary to return members of the detail to their seats.*

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<sup>1</sup> This could be a section of metal rod used for reinforcing foundations.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from a traditional Jewish prayer.

## SERVICE FOR A VVA ASSOCIATE

**Chapter President/Designee.** We, the members of Chapter #\_\_\_\_, Vietnam Veterans of America, have assembled here to honor [Name], who was a VVA Associate of the Vietnam Veterans of America.

In our organization exists a group of people who have chosen to affiliate with us. Though not Vietnam-era veterans themselves, they have been drawn to us, perhaps out of a sense of appreciation for what veterans have done, perhaps to find a way to serve those who have served our nation, perhaps to join on behalf of a friend, a spouse, or a relative who served in Vietnam and was forever lost in that conflict, or perhaps for some other reason. Over the years our Associates have been a valuable support, and their presence has been a constant encouragement. [Name] served our organization in this way [here may be mentioned length of membership and any tasks that the deceased undertook].

On this day, however, we know one thing. [Name] has left us. Just as in years gone by many men and women responded to the call of our nation and answered the summons given and left family and familiar surroundings, people and places loved, to serve in far off lands. Now [Name] has left us, answering a roll call we all must face, and we gather to remember him [her], trusting that he [she] has found a reception, a homecoming, of gentleness, health, peace and love.

Parade rest. (*Detail responds.*) The chaplain will seek God's presence and blessing at this occasion. (*Detail hold caps over hear with right hand.*)

**Chaplain.** (*May extemporize or repeat*): O loving God, be with us as we honor the life of one who served our nation, for [Name], who died on [date], is now in your care. Accept our prayers on behalf of [Name]. May he [she] have a place in your house, may he [she] rest in peace, and may light perpetual shine upon him [her]. Look with mercy upon those among us, family and friends, who are bereaved by his [her] passing. Comfort and console them with your presence and tenderness. We ask these things in your name.

Amen. *(All repeat Amen. Replace caps.)*

**Chapter President/Designee.** One by one, as years roll by, our numbers decrease, and we who survive gather to mark the end of the earthly tour of duty of those who have departed.

Attention! Officers of Chapter #\_\_\_\_ of the Vietnam Veterans of America, you will now perform the last duties of your stations.

*When the service is used with casket present, the four symbols may be placed on the casket. Where the service is used at some other time and place, a table at the front of the room, perhaps containing a photograph or some other reminder of the deceased, may be the place where the symbols are placed.*

**Officer 1:** On behalf of Chapter #\_\_\_\_, we place this emblem/flag of the Vietnam Veterans of America, which signifies a bond formed years ago, a bond of common experience which cannot be broken.

**Officer 2:** I bring to a place of honor this piece of steel,<sup>1</sup> reminding us that supporting every undertaking exists a hidden framework of support. Our brother's [sister's] name is now enrolled with the many whose names are known to God as having been faithful citizens, and which are written upon the hearts of this community.

**Officer 3:** I present this rose, a most delicate and beautiful flower, which lives but a brief time, a reminder of the transitory and fragile nature of the life we have been given.

**Chapter President/Designee.** On behalf of the Vietnam Veterans of America, I present this candle, for [Name] was one who kept a light lit and in his [her] own way tried to provide a witness of hope and encouragement for our nation's veterans. With it, we dedicate ourselves as members and associates of the Vietnam Veterans of America to ensure that the welcoming beacon of home remains lit, remembering that we served with dreams of returning to the light of home.

*(The Chapter President/Designee now returns to his place in the line. When this Memorial Service is used at another time and place, the President returns to his/her seat at this time.)*

**Chaplain.** Each year America's veterans gather in November, on Veteran's Day, to remember with solemn ceremony friends and companions made while serving in our nation's armed forces. These veterans gather to renew ties and friendships, to tell stories, and to laugh and to cry.

Many of those gatherings are similar to those held at the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial, the 'Wall', in our nation's capital. Vietnam veterans walk side-by-side, arm-in-arm, by the polished, black granite, by the roll of names, perhaps pausing at a panel to look, or to touch a name or a memory. Groups and individuals come, placing mementos, wreaths, and flowers, often roses.

Others come as well. Some to stand at a distance and watch, unsure of what is happening. But a few come and stand with the veterans, listening to them, touching them, even comforting them.

[Name] attended those gatherings, if not in body, certainly in spirit for he [she] was one who stood with us. But he [she] will be there no more, to listen or hold a hand or wipe away a tear. He [she] will be missing, but will our friend be forgotten?

Each year, the people of our nation gather one day in May, on Memorial Day, to pay solemn tribute to those who have served their nation in their time, helping to secure our nation's hopes of truth and freedom. Children come as well and walk and run among the stones and flags, wondering what is going on, asking, "What happened?"

And on this day, we will be there to answer this question. We will tell the children the truth, spurred on by the memory of those who fought and those we served during the conflict, and the memory of those who received us home. We will do, as they did, and honor a duty arising out of our common bond and our knowledge of the fragile nature of life. As we speak, we will remember [Name], for God has given to us the gift of memory that we might keep alive those we love.

In the rising of the sun and in its going down, we remember them.  
In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter, we remember them.  
In the opening of buds and in the rebirth of spring, we remember them.  
In the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of the summer, we remember them.  
In the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn, we remember them.  
In the beginning of the year and when it ends, we remember them.  
When we are weary and in need of strength, we remember them.  
When we are lost and sick at heart, we remember them.  
When we have joys and special celebrations we yearn to share, we remember them.  
When we see our nation's young marching behind our flag, or hear 'taps' played, we remember them.  
So long as we live, they too shall live, for they are part of us.  
And when we answer the final roll, we know that [Name] will fulfill his [her] duty, and greet us with the words of compassion and friendship, peace and love:  
"Welcome home!"<sup>2</sup>

**Chapter President/Designee:** This concludes our service. *Chapter President then gives orders necessary to return members of the detail to their seats.*

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<sup>1</sup> This could be a section of metal rod used for reinforcing foundations.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from a traditional Jewish prayer.

**VIETNAM VETERRANS OF AMERICA  
SERVICE TO REMEMBER/GREET THOSE LISTED  
AS MIA/POW**

**BASIS FOR PARTICIPATION IN SERVICES.**

*VVA chapters have a special responsibility to remember those who are listed as Missing in Action or as Prisoners of War. If one of those so listed were to return, or if the remains of one so listed were found and returned, it would also be appropriate for the local VVA Chapter to be prepared with appropriate ceremony to receive the one returning. This service can be adopted for that purpose as indicated.*

*1. The VVA Chapter President or his/her designee will determine an appropriate place and time for such a service of remembrance; if there is a service of welcome the VVA Chapter president or his designee will confer with the family of the returnee. The Chapter President or designee will notify the Chapter's Chaplain, Honor Guard, and other affected members.*

*2. The Chapter President or designee will designate the Uniform of the Day to the Head of the Honor Guard/Color Guard.*

*3. The Head of the Honor Guard will arrange for the participation of the following in the special service:*

*Chaplain  
Chapter Officers/Representatives as needed  
Chapter President or Designee  
Flag detail (if needed)*

*Service of Remembrance/Greeting*

- 1. Before the services begin, either a staffed Flag of the United States should be properly positioned at the front of the room, with the VVA colors to the right and the POW/MIA flag to the left as viewed by the audience, or the flags may be presented by a flag detail.*
- 2. At the agreed upon time for the service, the VVA officers stand facing the assembly. Those assembled are, left to right, Chapter President or Designee, Chapter Officers or Representatives, and Chaplain.*
- 3. Items bracketed are suggested for a service to receive one returning.*



**Chapter President/Designee:** We, the members of Chapter #\_\_\_\_, Vietnam Veterans of America, have assembled here to remember [receive home] those who did not return from their tour of duty in Vietnam and who are listed as either Missing in Action or as a Prisoner of War [one who did not return as scheduled from his/her tour of duty in Vietnam].

Those who served in Vietnam share with all other war veterans an awful knowledge and understanding of the true cost of war, for we are all individuals who survived an experience of fright and terror which has no equal, an experience which forever changed and shaped each veteran's life. We also share a knowledge and understanding of the deep bonds of friendship and companionship which were forged by that experience, and a knowledge and understanding of the profound pain caused by the breaking of those bonds when those with whom we served disappeared from our midst, or fell into unfriendly hands. That deep pain lingers still as we continue our quest for an answer to our question, "Where are they?"

On this day, however, we know one thing. They are not here. [One has returned, though others have not.]

Parade rest. (*Detail responds.*) The chaplain will seek God's presence and blessing at this occasion. (*Detail hold caps over heart with right hand.*)

**Chaplain:** (*May extemporize or repeat*): Lord our God, as you are with us here this day be also with and shelter the Prisoners of War and those Missing in Action in Southeast Asia, and in all wars. Comfort them with some sign of your presence for:

each one has carried the burden of battle,  
each one has courageously discharged the duty due his or her nation,  
each one has been subjected to hazard,  
pain, or imprisonment beyond the lot of an  
ordinary soldier.

O Lord, these gallant men and women who bore so great a burden must not be forsaken. God of justice to whom we pray – your compassion we beseech for those for whom no

accounting has been made:

lift their burden,

give them strength,

strike the shackles that deny them freedom.

[For the one whose fate we now know, we give you thanks that the long period of uncertainty is over and he/she has returned to our presence.] Amen. (*All repeat Amen. Replace caps.*)

**Chapter President/Designee.** As years roll by, memories fade and life goes on, and it becomes easy to forget what has gone before. We gather today to affirm our duty to remember those who have not returned from Vietnam [and to receive back on who has].

Attention! Officers of Chapter #\_\_\_\_\_ of the Vietnam Veterans of America, remind us of those in whose honor we gather.

*If this service is held inside, sections one and two may be used; if the service is held outside, section one may not be possible and then only section two would be used. Section one requires a table and a white cloth upon it, five chairs, a vase and a single rose and with a red ribbon tied around the vase, five plates, each plate having upon it a slice of lemon and some table salt, and five inverted glasses. Section two requires simply a lit candle, preferably within a glass container so that the flame might be protected.*

### Section One

**Officer:** Before us is set a table. Many of you may look at it and wonder. Let me, on behalf of Chapter #\_\_\_\_\_ of the Vietnam Veterans of America, explain. The table before you has five places representing the branches of our armed forces – the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard. The military is filled with symbolism. This table is one way of symbolizing those who are not yet accounted for, and who are missing from our midst. Some call the people MIA's or POW's; we call them brothers and sisters.

*pause*

The table cloth is white, symbolizing the purity of their intentions to respond to their country's call.

*pause*

The single rose displayed in the vase is symbolic both of their frailty, and of their families, friends, and loved ones who keep faith, waiting for their return.

*pause*

The red ribbon tied so prominently on the vase is reminiscent of the red ribbon worn upon the lapel and breast of thousands who this day bear witness to their unyielding determination to demand a proper accounting for our missing, and for the return of all live POW's and those left on foreign soil.

*pause*

The slice of lemon on the plate is to remind us of their bitter fate.

*pause*

There is salt on each plate, symbolic of the tears of those who wait for their return.

*pause*

The glasses are inverted. They cannot toast with us this season.

*pause*

The chairs are empty. They are not here.

*pause*

Remember, all of you who served with them and called them friend and buddy, who depended upon their might and relied upon them. Remember, for surely they have not forgotten you!

*pause*

## **Section Two**

**Officer:** I bring [to set upon this table] this lit and flickering candle.

In the strange and terrifying ways of war that which is through to be good becomes dangerous. So it was with light. In the darkness of the night to show a light, to strike a match, could give away a position and invite the terror of battle and sudden death. So the warrior learns to live in the darkness.

This does not mean, however, that the warrior forgets the light. No, the light becomes a dream. The flame of freedom, the warmth of family, and the bright welcome of home make up the warrior's dream.

For those who are missing, or remain as prisoners in a foreign land, darkness is a companion. Hear the names of those we remember upon this day. (*Names of those listed as MIA's or as POW's may here be read; if only the names of those who are from the local area are read, it should be made clear that the names read also represent all those who are POW's or MIA's.*)

Surely they yearn for the light. Those of us here gathered have that gift, and so we keep the flame lit.

However, a flame is a delicate thing, easily extinguished, susceptible to breezes and in need of a constant source of fuel. Unless the lamp is tended, the flame is always in danger of dying. Will the flame die?

**Chapter President/Designee.** On behalf of our nation, whose call we answered, on behalf of Chapter #\_\_\_\_ of the Vietnam Veterans of America, we gather to dedicate ourselves once more to keep the flame alive, to be beacons waiting to welcome home those who for whom there is yet no accounting. For this task we need strength. From where will it come?

**Chaplain:** The Creator sends to us times and events which are common in our experience, and easily overlooked. We claim these events as reminders of our pledge to keep the flame burning so that the beacon of welcome will never go out, and so that we will remember those who are listed as MIA's and POW's.

In the rising of the sun and in its going down,  
we will find strength, we will not forget, we will  
remember them.

In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter,  
we will find strength, we will not forget, we will  
remember them.

In the opening of buds and in the rebirth of spring,  
we will find strength, we will not forget, we will  
remember them.

In the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer,  
we will find strength, we will not forget, we will  
remember them.

In the rustling of leaves and in the beauty of autumn,

we will find strength, we will not forget, we will remember them.  
In the beginning of the year and when it ends,  
we will find strength, we will not forget, we will remember them.  
When we are weary and in need of strength  
we will find strength, we will not forget, we will remember them.  
When we are lost and sick at heart,  
we will find strength, we will not forget, we will remember them.  
When we have joys and special celebrations we yearn to share, we will find strength, we will not forget, we will remember them.  
When we see our nation's young marching behind our flag, or hear 'taps' played, we will find strength, we will not forget, we will remember them.  
So long as we live, they too shall live, for they are part of us, and the flame will continue to burn,  
Until we can say to each the words of compassion and friendship, peace and love:  
"Welcome home!"<sup>1</sup>

[This day, with a great mixture of emotions, we say to [NAME], "Welcome home!"]

Let us pray. (*Detail hold caps over heart with right hand. Chaplain may extemporize or repeat.*) God of all, at times and places American servicemen and servicewomen have given their lives. Many have been held under hostile circumstances against their will and are listed yet as Prisoners of War. Others have disappeared to be listed as Missing in Action. Either way they have not returned to those who love them. We plead for your continuing presence with them and with us. May we be constant in our efforts to determine their fate. Our hearts bleed for their families. May we never forget their sacrifices, and do our duty towards them by keeping the lamp burning brightly in the windows of our hearts until that day when they may find us watching and waiting, to greet them upon their return. Amen. (*All repeat Amen. Replace caps.*)

**Chapter President/Designee:** This concludes our service, yet we hope that you will [after the colors retire] take a moment and speak a word of encouragement, friendship, and comfort to those around you. *Chapter President then gives orders necessary for the members of the detail to retire.*

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from a traditional Jewish prayer.

**PART IV**  
**Prayers for Various Occasions**

**INVOCATIONS**

*In the midst of battle, or in a time of great frustration, or when setting out upon a new path, or during periods of boredom, or moments of great danger, people call upon a “higher power.” Invocations, or “calls” help focus a group not only upon their reasons for gathering, but also remind the group that they gather in the presence of a “higher power” which connects the group to many others. We are not alone!*

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Dear Lord, as we gather for this meeting, grant us your gift of peace and understanding that we may approach the matters we must handle with sincere and just hearts. May you watch over and guide our tongues that we might not hurt the friends with whom we work for the betterment of our communities and our country. Keep us always true to the principles on which Vietnam Veterans of America was founded. We ask this in your Name. Amen.

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Almighty God, creator of all that has been, that is, and is yet to come, be with us, we pray, as we meet as brothers and sisters of Vietnam Veterans of America. Be with us as we seek to fulfill our commitments as members of this great organization. Guide our hearts and minds as we work together for you, our God, and our country. Amen.

+++++

With hearts humble with the sense of our responsibility, yet proud of the confidence placed in us by Vietnam Veterans of America, with hearts grateful for the rich heritage bequeathed to us by our ancestors, yet determined to be over vigilant to preserve that heritage, we ask, O God, your blessing in this (meeting/conference) that our time may be fruitful in its accomplishments and permanent in the good it effects. Inspire us with Your wisdom, direct us in our thinking, and guide us for You, our country, and Vietnam

Veterans of America. Amen.

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Almighty and loving God, we bring hopeful hearts into this meeting as we seek to help each other and our fellow veterans in need. Direct our efforts to lift this community up towards God's kingdom in earth in spite of any personal differences. May the same dedication given to our country in war now be directed to lift the spirit and morale of our land so that we may truly be "under God" and undivided by any enemies. Amen.

+++++

O Eternal Light, shine into our hearts. O Eternal Goodness, deliver us from evil. O Eternal Power, be our support. Deepen and quicken within us, O God, the sense of your presence and refresh us with your power. Most Gracious God, who knows our needs before we ask, behold us here coming from our various homes and workplaces, asking in common prayer for light upon our way and peace within our hearts. We give ourselves to you this day, Rule and govern us so that all distrust and evil thoughts may be driven from our minds, that we may walk with joy in the light of your glory and in the way of your commandments. Amen.

+++++

As we recognize our unworthiness for your goodness, Creator God, we come not asking for your justice, but for your mercy. We realize our need for clear heads, retaining minds, and your wisdom and direction. Give us that which we need to do the work that is before us. As we invoke your blessing upon this day, O Lord, grant it that in all we do we may honor you and our country. Amen.

+++++



Great God, once again we meet as the Vietnam Veterans of America – veterans of the longest war in our nation’s history. Guide our deliberations during this meeting. Keep us alert to our opportunities and responsibilities as citizens. Make us deserving of the freedom handed down to our generation by those who sacrificed so much in the past. May all that is said and done in this time reflect credit upon us, our community, our organization, and our nation. Amen.

+++++

Our Father, who art in heaven, we hallow and praise your name. We praise you for the gift of your great love – for all your blessings – for this gathering in which we unite with other chapters to further our programs in Vietnam Veterans of America. Guide and direct us in our decisions, that in all things it may be pleasing in your sight. In your holy name we pray. Amen.

+++++

O God, as we begin our meeting we seek your counsel and guidance. Inspire us with your wisdom. Rule over our deliberations. Direct and sanctify us by your presence. Teach us to serve as you deserve, to give and not count the cost, to toil and not seek for rest, to labor and not ask for any reward save that of knowing that we do your will. Amen.

+++++

Rule over our deliberations, O God, we beseech you. Direct us by your Holy Spirit and sanctify us by your presence. Amen.

## TABLE GRACES

Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts which we receive through your goodness [through Christ our Lord]. Amen.

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For the joy of life, we are grateful to you, O God. For the fun we have as we jest with one another, we thank you. We pray that the food we are about to receive will be used for strength that we may better serve you and our community. Amen.

+++++

Our Heavenly Father,  
Grant us, we pray  
Wisdom and strength  
To serve day by day.

Bless this food to our use  
And make us quite strong,  
So we can continue  
To serve well and long.  
Amen.

+++++

Creator God, may this meal that we share be seasoned with your blessings and your grace, but, most of all, your love. Amen.

+++++

We cherish the memories of the past, great God, as with fondness and gratitude we recall our friends and associates. The joys of similar occasions such as the one in which we are presently involved cause us to anticipate your goodness to us over and over. Bless now this food to our physical bodies, so that our spirits will be lifted in praise and gratitude. Amen.

+++++

Lord, and God, how great thou art. You have blessed us in so many ways and we thank you for the opportunity we have to unite in this moment of prayer, this special privilege we have in America. We ask your blessing on this food. May our companionship and friendship as we partake together be an added blessing as we strive to maintain our nation as “one nation under God.” Amen.

+++++

We thank you, Creator, for this meal which reminds us of your great care for us. We ask that this food will strengthen us so that we may do good, and render better service to those around us. Amen.

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Grant, O Lord, that our fellowship here will draw us closer to you and to one another so that we will use the strength gained from the meal we now share to do the work of compassion, organization, justice, and peace. Let us serve you in this time not with the heavy spirit of bondage as slaves, but with the cheerfulness and joy of children, delighting in one another and in the work we do, so that truly peace and love may here abound. Amen.

+++++

O God, we thank you for your presence with us.  
We thank you for bringing us safely together.  
We thank you for our health, our homes, and our work.  
We thank you for the joyful moments we share as a Vietnam  
Veterans of America family.  
We thank you for the bounty of this land, and the many blessings  
we enjoy.  
We thank you for the little things that bring us happiness.  
We thank you for your goodness to us.  
We thank you for the food we are about to eat, and for those who  
labored to prepare it.  
We thank you that we may share this meal together. Amen.

## BENEDICTIONS/BLESSINGS

*A benediction is a blessing, or “speaking well” to one another. After a calm meeting or a heated debate, a long meeting or a brief one, there is always a need to close the encounter with the act of “speaking well.” This blessing indicates that we value each other as human beings and wish for each other good things. For people who were once sent forth to perhaps die, this is an act of being sent forth to live.*

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Unto God’s gracious mercy and protection we commit you. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you. The Lord lift his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

Aaronic blessing, Numbers 6:24-26

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May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,

I Thessalonians 5:23

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The God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, though the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight; through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever.

Hebrews 13:20,21

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May the Lord bless you with all good and keep you from all evil; may He give light to your heart with loving wisdom, and be gracious to you with eternal knowledge; may he lift up his loving countenance upon you for eternal peace.

Dead Sea Scrolls

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May God, the Lord, bless us with all heavenly benediction, and make us pure and holy in his sight. May the riches of his glory abound in us. May he instruct us with the word of truth, inform us with the Gospel of salvation, and enrich us with his love, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Gelasian Sacramentary

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May the eternal God bless and keep us, guard our bodies, save our souls, direct our thoughts, and bring us safe to the heavenly country, our eternal home, where Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ever reign, one God for ever and ever.

Sarum Breviary

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The Lord Jesus Christ be near thee to defend thee, within thee to refresh thee, around thee to preserve thee, before thee to guide thee, behind thee to justify thee, above thee to bless thee; who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Spirit, God for evermore.

Anonymous, 10<sup>th</sup> century

+++++

As we depart one from the other, may God bless us and keep us. Into his gracious protection we commit ourselves. May God be near to defend us, with us to refresh us, around us to preserve us, before us to guide us, behind us to justify us, and above us to keep us from all evil. Amen.

+++++

The peace of God which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and his Son Jesus Christ, and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you and remain with you always.

Book of Common Prayer, 1549

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May the right hand of the Lord keep us ever in old age, the grace of Christ continually defend us from the enemy. O Lord, direct our heart in the way of peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

from Book of Cerne, the prayer book of Bishop  
Aedelwald, 8<sup>th</sup> century

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May the road rise to meet you.  
May the wind be always at your back.  
May the sun shine warm upon your face.  
May the rains fall softly upon your fields until we meet again.  
May God hold you in the hollow of his hand.

Old Gaelic Blessing

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May God in the plenitude of his love pour upon you the torrents of his grace, bless you and keep you in his holy fear, prepare you for a happy eternity, and receive you at last into immortal glory.

Blessing at the consecration of Coventry Cathedral

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May the love of the Lord Jesus draw us to himself;  
May the power of the Lord Jesus strengthen us in his service;  
May the joy of the Lord Jesus fill our souls,  
May the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the  
Holy Ghost, be amongst you and remain with you always.

William Temple, 1881-1944

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The blessing of the Lord rest and remain upon all his people, in every land, of every tongue; the Lord meet in mercy all that seek him; the Lord comfort all who suffer and mourn; the Lord hasten his coming, and give us, his people, the blessing of peace.

Bishop Handley Moule, 1841-1920

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O Lord, support us all the day long until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed; then in thy mercy grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at last.

Book of Common Prayer, 1928

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God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.

Reinhold Neibuhr

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Our heavenly Creator, bestow your gracious blessings upon these your people, and let your wisdom guide them as they leave this meeting place to go their respective ways. Give them, O Lord, an understanding of your divine plan with which they can meet the misunderstandings of a troubled world. Give them love for all men and women, and let this love be a blessing to them and lead to a deeper knowledge of the abundant love of the Creator. Teach these people, we pray, how to live so that by their living they may be a witness and example to others. Be with them in their sorrows and afflictions, their anxieties and defeats. Be with them always, now and forever. Amen.

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Be gracious unto us O God, and bless us. As we depart from this place, stretch forth your protection to us and guard our country, that we, being devoted to your service, may be defended by your power. Amen.

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O God, lead us forth in peace and with good courage, holding fast to that which is good, rendering to no one evil for evil, but strengthening the faint-hearted, supporting the weak, helping the afflicted, honoring all women and men, loving and serving you. Amen.

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Lord of hosts, be with us, lest we forget the noble efforts of the past, in times of war and peace, to preserve freedom and liberty, to guard democracy, and maintain order to sustain humanity in ways of understanding, respect and justice. We honor men and women who have, with courage, sacrificed themselves on all the battlefields of life, showing compassion and concern for all. May our memorial to those fallen be a living one of continued effort in the cause of freedom. Go with us as we depart and enable us with your help to maintain in word and deed the principles to which we have pledged ourselves as members of Vietnam Veterans of America. Amen.

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May the strength of God sustain us. May the power of God preserve us. May the hand of God protect us. May the way of God direct us and may the shield of God defend us. Amen.

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Lord God, we give you thanks for the opportunity we have had to meet together as fellow veterans who have served our beloved nation. We thank you for the times of fun and companionship we have enjoyed. Now, as we are about to leave one another, we would remember those who are not with us on this day. Be with those who are in despair and those who are lonely. Comfort and strengthen them with your presence. Inspire us, O Lord, to continue to seek peace in our world, peace with compassion and justice. And may we be ever ready to serve others and to serve you, even as we have served our nation. Amen.

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Our Creator, with heads uncovered and bowed in tribute to our fallen companions, we bring this meeting to a close. Before we part and go our separate ways, we pause to remember those of our members who are experiencing difficult times. For them and their families, we pray for courage and strength. In this moment of silence, we dedicate ourselves anew to the principles of the Vietnam Veterans of America, and ask your continued presence with us. Amen.

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And, now, Dear heavenly Father, as we go our separate ways,  
We ask You to help and guide us through all the coming days.

Be with us, and safely lead us down the service road.  
We thank you for your loving care.  
It will help lighten the load.

We thank You for Your blessings,  
Go with us as we part.  
See each one safely home.  
And lighten every heart.  
Amen.

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## PRAYERS FOR THE NATION

*The United States of America is an increasingly diverse nation, yet it still remains a nation "under God." It is only fitting that we ask the Creator's guidance and protection for those who lead, serve, and are the future of our country.*

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O God, guard our homes, churches and schools, our entire land and all therein from harm and destruction. Preserve the integrity of this Nation founded on religious principles by protecting it from all enemies within and without.

*AMEN!*

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We bow before You, our Heavenly Father, in humble prayer thanking You for the manifold blessings You have bestowed upon us, in this our beloved country. Our hearts are filled with gratitude for the sacred institutions of America. Preserve these inspired concepts.

Let not the adversary of Light and Truth destroy freedom, worship and divine faith.

Bless those who direct this Nation.

Remember, O God, those who bear arms. Bless the homes from which they come.

Forgive our errors and weakness turning from the wrong and unprofitable ways.

We pray for the early triumph of righteousness, truth and peace founded in divine revelation from God our Creator. For Your Name's sake.

*AMEN!*

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Almighty God, we pray You, keep these United States in Your holy protection. Cultivate in the hearts of all her citizens the spirit of devotion and obedience to government, of love toward her fellow-citizens and of dedication to the principles of our American Heritage.

Watch over our beloved country, O God. Preserve her integrity, guard her from all enemies that she may be guided ever onward by You in ways of peace – a happy, prosperous and divinely blessed nation.

*AMEN!*

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Bless our land with honorable industry, sound learning. Save us from violence, discord and confusion. Defend our liberties. Endow with the spirit of wisdom those to whom we entrust the authority of government that there may be peace and justice at home and that through obedience to Your law we may show forth Your praise among the nations of the earth. In time of prosperity fill our hearts with thankfulness and in days of trouble let not our trust in You fail.

*AMEN!*

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God of our fathers, who gives salvation to nations and strength to governments, bless and safeguard our country, the United States of America, and the people who dwell therein.

May brotherly and sisterly love ever be found among all the citizens of our land. Implant in the hearts of all the people a steadfast purpose to work as one for the safeguarding of freedom, justice and peace.

Supreme King of Kings, protect and help our President. Shield him against all sickness and injury. Grant to him and to all the constituted officers of our government such wisdom and understanding that they may lead our nation in justice and righteousness. In their days and ours may Judah be saved and Israel dwell in safety.

*(In Time of War, add:)*

*We beseech You, O God to shield and protect our armed forces, in the air, on sea, on land. Bless them with victory. May it be Your will that all the dominion of tyranny and*

*cruelty speedily be brought to an end and the kingdom of righteousness be established on earth with liberty and freedom for all mankind. Amen!*

-From the Prayer Book for Jewish Personnel  
in the Armed Forces of the United States.

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Almighty God, who hast given us this good land for our heritage;

We humbly beseech thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of thy favor and glad to do thy will.

Bless our land with honorable industry, sound leaning, and pure manners.

Save us from violence, discord and confusion; from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way.

Defend our liberties and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues.

Endow with the spirit of wisdom those to whom in thy Name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that, through the obedience to thy law, we may show forth thy praise among the nations of the earth.

In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust to thee to fail.

Amen!

Adopted from the Book of Common Prayer

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### **Prayers for Civil Authorities**

O God, from whom proceed all graces and blessings, grant to our country Your divine aid. In this land You have permitted men and women of all races to gather under one flag. Here they can work out their salvation according to the ideas of right government and right living. Banish from the hearts of men and women all rancor and ill feeling. Grant to us the serene vision of a new prosperity pleasing to all the world. Grant us a well-ordered, righteous and lasting peace so that humankind, joined once more in brotherhood, may go

forward through the ages one family in search of the noblest ends. Amen.

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Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, be with the President of these United States to guide him (her) with Your wisdom, to assist him (her) in the discharge of his (her) duties, and to bless him (her) in the administration of his (her) office, that under his (her) leadership we may preserve our Nation's integrity, guard her against all enemies, and keep her bulwark of freedom and justice and a beacon of love and hope to light the way to a world of peace. Amen.

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We pray You, O God, of might, wisdom and justice, You whom authority is rightly administered, laws are enacted, and judgment decreed, assist Your Holy Spirit of counsel and fortitude the President of these United States that his (her) administration may be conducted in righteousness and be eminently useful to the people over whom he (she) presides – by encouraging due respect for virtue and religion by a faithful execution of the laws in justice and mercy, and by restraining vice and immorality. Let the light of Your Divine wisdom direct the deliberations of Congress and shine forth in all the proceedings and laws framed for our rule and government, that they may tend to the preservation of peace, the promotion of national happiness, the increase of industry, sobriety and useful knowledge and may perpetrate to us the blessings of equal liberty. Amen.

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Our Heavenly Father: give us the understanding, the courage and the strength to carry out Your Commandments and to follow in all Your ways. Bless and guide our President and his (her) administration, that our country may ever be right in the power of Your Holy Might. Make us worthy of Your loving kindness. Receive our fallen comrades into Your

heavenly kingdom and let their sacrifice be not in vain.  
Amen.

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### **Prayers for Legislative Bodies**

Almighty God, we look to You for the guidance You gave the Founding Fathers of our blessed country as we open another session of the \_\_\_\_\_. Their genius in forming this Republic of ours has made it possible to govern well in spite of our varied backgrounds and political affiliation. Watch over us as we continue to grow in understanding. Purify our motives and purposes as we make our mark in this world so it may be a mark of excellence, not only another scar upon the face of this good earth. Let us reason together on the issues of Peace and Freedom in our world and arrive at decisions as Americans all by majority rule. And during our deliberations, let us never forget those who gave *that last full measure of devotion that Government of the people, by the people and for the people, shall not perish from this earth.*” Amen.

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Almighty God, we offer our gratitude this day for our continuing remembrance of Your place in our deliberations. From the days of the Continental Congress and the first Constitutional Convention, we have called on You for help and You have been most generous to this wonderful land. Once again, we come to You for guidance as we settle down to face the difficulties of government in this multi-faceted, free society. As we work toward the resolution of our day-by-day problems that effect our own constituencies, let us also look to the future of all humankind. WE have the task of offering the oppressed people of this world the torch of freedom. And in the process let us never forget those who paid that *“last full measure of devotion that Government of the people, by the people and for the people, shall not perish from this earth.”* Let us emulate their courage and faith. Amen.

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Almighty Father, we thank You for life, for truth and for love. For love, because it embraces all of us here in common fellowship and for the comforting assurance of Your guidance. We thank You for truth that makes us free and increases our knowledge of each other and this great nation of ours. We thank You for life as an opportunity for service. Strengthen us in the conviction that our service is a service to our country and to You. Help us to overcome every sin and temptation and give us the necessary strength for a Holy, Reverent and Honest life in word and deed. May You shower us with Your Grace which we don't deserve. Grant graciously that our whole world may be a service to You, our Heavenly Father. Amen.

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Almighty and eternal God who has created men and women in your own image, we stand in humble gratitude for all the mercies You have ordained to rest upon us. We thank You for these United States in which we live; for those ideals of freedom, justice and democracy that have made them a shining star in the galaxy of nations. Grant us fearlessly to contend against those things that would undermine the previous heritage of people called Americans. Grant us grace to make no peace with oppression, no compromise with evil, no yielding to the godless philosophies. May we reverently use our freedom and help us to employ it in the maintenance of justice among men and women and all nations, to the glory of Your Holy Name. Amen.

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Almighty Father, we thank You for so many things, above all our great United States and its many physical material, but above all spiritual blessings. Help us not to take them for granted. Many of our men and women have sacrificed their lives and their health to preserve the freedom that our nation stands for. May their efforts not have been in vain...Help us to daily reflect on all that we have to be thankful for and to praise You daily in our prayers for being so good to all of us. Amen.

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Almighty and Heavenly Father in whom we live and move and have our being, without whom we do nothing, grant, we humbly pray Your blessings and protection upon our Nation.

Give unto us a realizing sense of Your presence that we may be guided by Your Wisdom and supported by Your strength.

O Lord, ruler of nations, protect this great nation upon which You have showered Your blessings without number. Do, Lord, set right that which is wrong and bring together what is divided that we may live in a spirit of unity and a bond of peace under one glorious flag with charity towards all and with malice towards none.

We are grateful for Your help in days past. We humbly ask You to be with us still as we face the problems of the present and the difficulties of the uncertain future. Amen.

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### **Prayer For Those In The Service**

O God, Who has said: "Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends,"

Bless with Your Divine and Almighty protection all who are in the Service of their country.

May their loyalty never waver, their bravery never falter, and their faith and trust in You never weaken.

Demand not of them the supreme sacrifice but bring them safely and quickly home to their loved ones.

And, O God, richly and eternally reward them for their unselfish willingness to serve their country in the preservation off freedom and peace. Amen!

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## **Prayers for Youth**

We invoke Your blessing, O God, on the children of America. Give joy to their hearts, understanding to their minds, courage and resoluteness to their wills that they may be guided throughout life's journey, be strong in the fight against evil and pursue that which is right and just.

May their faith never waver and may it make them ever true to themselves, true to others, to their heritage as Americans and true to you, O God. Amen.

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## PRAYERS THROUGH THE YEAR

*During the course of any year there are a number of days that are set aside for particular celebrations. Some of these “holidays” awaken a variety of memories. It may well be that the chapter chaplain will be asked to have a prayer relating to a certain day.*

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### **New Year’s Day**

As the old year comes to an end, let us ponder on what it has held for us. Let us be thankful for the rich experiences it gave to us – for every sympathetic smile, for every tear – for moments which brought laughter’s melody – for nature’s loveliness and friendship’s beauty. Let us also ask forgiveness for thoughts and deeds unwise. As we stand upon the threshold of a new year, let us be thankful for the opportunity to stand and peer intently, eagerly through the door to so many challenges that lay ahead. May we have the courage and faith to meet these challenges without flinching or fear. Amen.

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### **Martin Luther King Day**

Creator of all peoples, we your children humbly come before you to give to you all honor and praise as we commemorate the memory of one of your modern day prophets, Martin Luther King. You called him and set him apart to boldly proclaim a message of reconciliation, justice, and peace, to issue a loud call to unity among people of all races and creeds.

His mountain top dream has never ceased to ring in our ears, and in our consciences. The journey has been, and continues to be, long and hard. The path has had many unmarked forks, and we have taken twisted detours; we have stumbled into pot-holes and come upon roadblocks; and yet still we are compelled to plod onward towards that dream of peace, the day when the leopard will lie down with the young goat, and wolves will rest with lambs, when calves and lions will eat together and be cared for by little children, and nothing harmful will take place in all of God’s creation. Amen.

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## **President's Day**

Ruler of us all, we gather at this time to remember those who have served our country as President. We give thanks for this great country and the many freedoms we enjoy, especially the freedom to choose those who will lead us. We remember those who have been elected and served us as our president, and we pray especially upon this day for [name of current President] who now holds this office. May he lead us wisely so that we continue to live in a land which seeks liberty, justice, and peace. Amen.

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## **World War II Commemorations**

Almighty God, you are ever present in your wondrous creation. We give you praise and thanks for this day which you have made. We rejoice and are glad in it. We ask that the warm rays of your love shine upon all of the veterans who have served this nation of ours so well.

Most particularly we implore your blessing upon those men and women who wore the uniforms of our Armed Forces during World War II. We have set this day aside, O Lord, to commemorate [name of the event: e.g., D-Day, V-J Day, Four Chaplains Day, Pearl Harbor day, etc.]. That war will be forever remembered as a war of global conflict.

Remember our aging veterans of that war, especially those who find themselves in our medical centers, or in nursing homes, or homeless upon the streets. Console them in their pain and suffering. Remember the widows and orphans from that war, and those who were held captive in prisoner-of-war camps.

Finally, grant rest and peace to those thousands of soldiers who were killed during that war. May their contribution to freedom be their legacy to this great nation and to the children of this nation.  
Amen.

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## **Armed Forces Day**

Almighty God, sovereign Ruler of all nations, in whose hand is power and might, we bring before Your throne of grace the Armed Forces of our country. May they be a power for peace, defending the liberty which promotes peace so that the heritage received from our forebears may be preserved and transmitted, unimpaired, to future generations.

Inspire our whole nation with fervent zeal for the liberty of your children, and for good of humankind. Help us establish a land of continued freedom and true justice, and hasten the day when all nations will dwell together in peace. Guide, we implore, the President of the United States and all those in authority, especially those responsible for the direction of our Armed Forces. May they have the wisdom and strength that alone can come from you. Amen.

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## **Memorial Day**

Creator of all life, we are gathered here this day to honor our dead, those who fell during war, deprived of life by one of the many ways humankind has contrived to maim or kill their fellow inhabitants of this planet. Bombs and bullets, shells and mines, fire and water, torture and disease have all become weapons. Some of those we honor rest here; others rest upon the ocean floor; others are but the scattered ashes of plummeting human torches. We beseech You to care for all those who have thus closed their eyes upon the shadows and foggy twilight that make up this world, and in your mercy enable their eyes to be opened upon the warmth and glory of your Love. Amen.

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Creator of all humanity and judge of all nations, we pray that you would bless this time and look with favor and understanding upon those who are gathered here to pay tribute to [a name, or list of names, or generic word such as *those*] who has [or *have*] made the supreme sacrifice for the benefit of free men and women everywhere. Their lives are

precious in our sight; their deeds are a daily inspiration, for those who must continue to bear the torch of freedom in our communities. Truly may we place our trust in God, and may the faith of those who have gone before be in us so that we may guide, protect, and sustain our people. Amen.

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Almighty God, with reverence and love we pause to pay tribute to our honored and valiant departed brothers and sisters. Grant that we may be ever mindful of their service to our nation, and that we may be ever aware of our fellowship with those who served alongside us [in Vietnam, in Vietnam Veterans of America, or other organization]. Give also courage and comfort to those who have lost a cherished companion through war. Watch, we pray, over the graves of our sisters and brothers; grant eternal rest to them, and keep them until the hour when they with us are called to stand before you. May together we be accounted for. May their souls and the souls of all departed veterans rest in peace. Amen.

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O God, while we often think of our fallen brothers and sisters, whose names fill the Wall, we too often overlook those of our number whose departure from this life, while a result of their service to our nation, was delayed, whose suffering was painfully prolonged by lasting physical and emotional wounds. We pause now to remember [name] and those who cared for them, who loved them and called them friend. May you comfort and strengthen those left behind. We ask as well that you place your healing hand upon those who are still troubled in body and soul, that they may find wholeness and fullness of life. Amen.

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### **Flag Day**

O God, we thank you for the flag of our nation, for all that flag represents. We thank you for the brave and valiant men and women who gave of their strength so that this symbol may freely wave over our land. We thank you for the ideals of faith and liberty which this

flag represent; we thank you for the praises of freedom which are embodied in this flag. Conscious of our limitations and our failures, we pray that our flag may bind together the many elements of our nation in our life together, so that we may grow in justice, understanding and peace, and be encouraged in our duty to uphold our Constitution and our flag. Grant that this nation may continue to fly proudly a banner of freedom, liberty, and justice. Amen.

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#### **4<sup>th</sup> of July**

We lift up our hearts, O God, in gratitude for the gift of being Americans. We rejoice with all those who share in the great dream of freedom and dignity for all.

With flags and feasting, with family and friends, we salute those who have sacrificed that we might have the opportunity to bring to fulfillment our many God-given gifts.

As we deny all prejudice a place in our hearts, may we also declare our intention to work for the time when all people, regardless of race, religion, or sex, will be granted equal dignity and worth.

Come, O gracious God, who led your children Israel from slavery, keep us free from all that might hold us in bondage. Bless our country and join our simple celebration that we may praise You, our Source of freedom, the One in whom we place our trust. Amen.

from A Pilgrim's Almanac by Edward Hay

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#### **POW/MIA Recognition Day**

Lord, shelter the prisoners of war and those missing in action from the war in Southeast Asia and those of other wars in Korea, Europe, and the Far East. Open the hearts and minds of their captors that they may be restored to their homes and loved ones.

Each has carried the burden of battles.

Each has discharged the duties of the obligation to their country.

Each has been subjected to hazard, pain, and imprisonment beyond the lot of a soldier.

O Lord, these gallant men and women who bear so great a burden must not be forgotten or forsaken.

God of justice, to whom we pray, your compassion we beseech. Lift their burdens, give them strength, and strike the shackles that deny them freedom. Amen.

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### **Veterans' Day**

O God, Eternal Father and everlasting Ruler of heaven and earth, we gather to confess Your power over us and gratitude for Your watchful care. As we gather upon this Veterans day, we ask that through Your grace a new day of peace and tranquility will begin, clearing away our present world of doubt and confusion. Bless and protect our nation. Be merciful to those who served the country well, and are now held in your powerful arms. May the memory of those who gave their lives for freedom inspire us to noble action and eternal vigilance in preserving our priceless liberties. Guide our minds to a better understanding of the obligations we owe to our society and to one another. Awaken in our hearts the strong desire to accomplish the ideals for which our nation exists so that through our determination and work a better world may emerge – a world founded upon faith and understanding – a world dedicated to preserving individual rights and the dignity of all humankind – a world of tolerance and justice. Amen.

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God of hosts, we bow our heads in thankfulness for the enduring victory of hope over despair for which our nation stands. We give thanks for all those who have united with us to struggle against aggression, intolerance and greed. We beseech you to bring the blessings of understanding to the families and friends, in this and in other lands, of those who have given their lives that men and women may be free. Grant, O Lord, that those closest to the fallen may mingle the pain of their loss with the ennobling light of a sacrifice made for a better world for the future. Grant us all, O Lord, the courage to so

live with the family of nations around the world that the end of strife may be the beginning of enduring peace. Grant us patience in planning with our fellow men and women a world in which nations may resolve their differences by peaceful means. Touch the souls of all in every land with the enduring light of wisdom so that they may form a brotherhood and sisterhood of peoples which strive to further the arts of peace under laws and ethics guided by your great love. Grant us now your continued blessing upon the unity and strength which, having given to us victory in battle, may now give us victory of the struggle for peace. Amen.

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All powerful God, your eternal promise of never forgetting one of your children has generated countless miracles of healing. Some of these healing have taken place at various memorials to men and women who have given their lives while in the service of their country. When we gather at [name of a particular memorial, such as the *Wall*, or some generic phrase such as *these places*] we come together on sacred ground, consecrated by both the lives of those who have served and by the hearts and souls of those who come seeking reconciliation, forgiveness, and resolution in their lives. Remember then, O Lord, the gift of life and sacrifice these men and women [*of Vietnam or some other conflict*] have offered. For them, we give you thanks! Remember also, O Lord, those whose fate is known to you alone. Bless them and us who long for the mystery to be revealed. Remember finally, Lord, the holy remnant of war – those who wear their scars visibly or secretly. Grant them and us freedom from enslavement and freedom for life. For your solemn blessing, O Lord, we humbly pray. Amen.

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### **Thanksgiving Day**

Keep us, Lord, grateful as a nation for the blessings that are ours. Preserve in our hearts the appreciation of your gifts that inspired our forebears to set aside a special day of thanksgiving so that all generations may be mindful of your goodness and kindness. Amen.

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Most Gracious God, by whose appointment the seasons come and go, and who makes the fruits of earth for our human need, we offer you our thanksgiving that according to your promise, seed time and harvest have not failed. We give you most humble and heartfelt thanks for your servants who came across the seas at peril of life in order to establish a nation with fidelity to freedom, justice, and liberty. We pray that we have entered into the heritage of their heroism and sacrifice and may so honor their memory that your blessing may continue to fall upon our beloved land. Protect us from outward dangers and deliver us from inward strife. Keep our country in your care and guide us according to your will. May yours be the glory and the praise and the thanksgiving from generation to generation. Amen.

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Our Father, we come to you as your children, to offer our adoration and thanksgiving. We ask your blessing upon our nation and upon all our fellow citizens. In particular we beg your blessing for Vietnam Veterans of America; may we serve you and our fellow veterans in faith and charity. Amen.

**PRAYERS ABOUT  
THE REALITY OF SUFFERING**

*War causes suffering, immediate and long-term, quick and lingering. While veterans of Viet Nam out of their own experiences, can be a strong voice asserting this truth, we also need to work to reduce suffering. These prayers are a challenge to us.*

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**Christian Prayers:**

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of Your great mercy has promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto you, have mercy upon us. Pardon and deliver us from all our sins; confirm and strengthen us in all goodness; and bring us to everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Blessed Lord Jesus, who knows the depths of loneliness and the dark hours of the absence of human sympathy and friendliness: help us to pass the weary hours of the night and the heavy hours of the day as You did, knowing of your father's presence. Lift up our heart to full communion with You, strengthen us to do our duty, keep us constant to our trust, and let us know that however dark or desolate the hour, we are not alone, for you are with us, your rod and your staff to give us comfort. Amen.

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The hatred that divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class,

**Father, forgive.**

The covetous desires of men and nations to possess what is not their own,

**Father, forgive.**

The greed which exploits the labors of men and lays waste the earth,

**Father, forgive.**

Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others,

**Father, forgive.**

Our indifference to the plight of the homeless and the refugee,

**Father, forgive.**

The lust which uses for ignoble ends the bodies of men and women,

**Father, forgive.**

The pride which leads us to trust in our selves and not in God,

**Father, forgive.**

Coventry Cathedral prayer

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Almighty and most merciful God, who has appointed us to endure sufferings and death with our Lord Jesus Christ, before we enter with him into eternal glory: grant us at all times to subject ourselves to Your holy will, and to continue steadfast in true faith unto the end of life, at all times finding peace and joy in the blessed hope of the resurrection of the dead, and of the glory of the world to come. Amen.

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Lord, open our eyes that we may see you in our brothers and sisters. Lord, open our ears that we may hear the cries of the hungry, the cold, the frightened, the oppressed. Lord, open our hearts, that we may love each other as you love us. Renew in us your spirit, Lord; free us and make us one. Amen.

Mother Teresa

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**Indian (Hindu) Prayers:**

From the unreal, lead me to the real;  
From the darkness, lead me to the light;  
From death, lead me to deathlessness.

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**Muslim Prayers:**

O Allah, the petitioners stand before Thy gate, and the needy seek refuge in Thy courts.  
The ship of the wretched stands on the shore of the ocean of Thy grace and goodness,

seeking passage into the presence of Thy mercy and compassion. O Allah, if in this blessed month thou forgivest only those whose fasting performance is tight, who will take the part of the transgressor who defaults, when he perishes in the sea of his sins and transgression? O Allah, if thou art merciful only towards the obedient, who will taketh the part of the rebellious? If Thou receivest only those who have done well, then what of those who have fallen short?

O Allah, those who have fast have surely gained, the faithful doers have victory and the sincere are delivered. But we, Thy guilty servants, have mercy on upon us out of Thy compassion. Liberate us from damnation by Thy pardon; forgive us our trespasses with the rest of the believers, men and women, show thy mercy, O Thou most faithful.

Whatever share of this world You bestow on me, bestow it on Your enemies and whatever share of the next world You give me, give it to Your friends. You are enough for me.

Prayer during the Days of the feast of Ramadan,  
Rabi'ah of Basra

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All that we ought to have thought and have not thought,  
All that we ought to have said and have not said,  
All that we ought to have done and have not done;  
All that we ought not to have thought and yet have thoughts.  
All that we ought not to have said and yet have said,  
All that we ought not to have done and yet have done;  
For thoughts, words, and works, we pray, O God, for forgiveness.  
from an ancient Persian prayer

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O Allah! There is nothing easy except what You make easy, and You make the difficult easy if it be Your will.

O Allah! Remove the hardship, O Lord, of mankind. Grant cure for You are the Healer. There is no cure but from You, cure which leaves no illness behind.

**Jewish Prayers:**

Heal us, Lord, and we shall be healed; save us and we shall be saved, for it You we praise. Send relief and healing for our diseases, our sufferings, and our wounds; for you are a merciful and faithful healer. Blessed are You, Lord, who heals the sick.

Prayer from the Jewish Daily Service

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O Merciful God, who answers the poor,

**Answer us.**

O Merciful God, who answers the lowly in spirit,

**Answer us.**

O Merciful God, who answers the broken-hearted,

**Answer us.**

O Merciful God,

**Answer us.**

O Merciful God,

**Have compassion.**

O Merciful God,

**Redeem.**

O Merciful God,

**Save.**

O Merciful God, have pity on us,

**Now,**

**Speedily,**

**And at a near time.**

Prayer for Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)

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Our God and God of our father, let our prayer reach You – do not turn away from our pleading. For we are not so arrogant and obstinate to claim that we are indeed righteous people and have never sinned. But we know both we and our father have sinned.

We have abused and betrayed. We are cruel.

We have destroyed and embittered other people's lives.

We were false to ourselves.

We have gossiped about others and have hated them.

We have insulted and jeered. We have killed. We have lied.  
We have misled others and neglected them.  
We were obstinate. We have perverted and quarreled.  
We have robbed and stolen.  
We have transgressed through unkindness.  
We have been both violent and weak.  
We have practiced extortion.  
We have yielded to wrong desires. Our zeal was misplaced

We turn away from Your commandments and good judgment but it does not help us. Your justice exists whatever happens to us, for You work for truth, but we bring about evil. What can we say before You – so distant is the place where You are found? And what can we tell You – Your being is remote as the heavens? Yet You know everything, hidden and revealed. You know the mysteries of the universe and mind. Nothing escapes You, nothing is hidden from Your gaze. Our God and God of our fathers, have mercy on us and pardon our sins; grant atonement for all our iniquities, forgiveness for all our transgressions.

Prayer for Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)

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Lord, my God, God of my fathers, before You I confess that in Your hand alone rests my healing or my death. If it be Your will, grant me a perfect healing. Yet if my death be determined by You, I will in love accept it at Your hand. Then may my death be an atonement for all sins and transgressions, and for all the wrong I have committed before You. Grant me the abounding happiness that is the destiny of the righteous. Make me to know the path of life, the fullness of joy in Your presence, at Your right hand bless ever more.

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You who are the Father of the fatherless and judge of the widow protect my beloved family whose souls are bound with mine. Into Your hand I commend my spirit. You have redeemed, O Lord, God of truth. Amen, and Amen!

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O God full of compassion, grant perfect rest beneath the cover of Your Presence to all who have bravely laid down their lives for our country. Shelter them among the holy and pure, who are as radiant as the luminous firmament. O source of compassion, bring them ever near to You that their souls be bound up in the bond of eternal life, as are the souls of the righteous. And the work of the righteous shall be peace and the effect of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war anymore. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. Amen.

memorial prayer for servicemen from the Prayer Book for Jewish Personnel in the Armed Forces of the United States

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### **Prayer for the land and People of Viet Nam**

O God, Creator and Author of all that is living, forgive us for the despoliation of a once beautiful land called Viet Nam. May your all-powerful hand restore it to its original garden of Eden beauty. May it never again suffer at the hands of humanity. O Lord, the People! The People! A people we never knew became our enemy. We were so young and so scared – and so were they! For us, they all looked alike. We couldn't distinguish the NVA and the VC from an ARVN from a civilian. Our paranoia caused tremendous pain, torture, mutilation, and death. Forgive us, Lord, and heal those upon whom we have afflicted such suffering. We have welcomed refugees to our land. Heal us, so that we may live side by side with them in peace and harmony. May we as concerned citizens of this great land we call America move beyond the past legacy of war to encourage this process of change, to recognize signs of increasing openness and to begin to respond to the genuine humanitarian needs of the Vietnamese people. Amen.

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## **A prayer for People with PTSD**

Higher Power, I know it's not within the harmony of the universe that I be healed from the trauma of remembering \_\_\_\_\_ without pain.

Help me through the pain

Surround me with the golden light of healing, fill me with the white light of peace and love.

Help me to bear the pain as I go through these memories.

Help me to cry.

Help me to remember.

Help me to love myself no matter what happened to me or what I did to survive.

Help me to release and let go of my survival skills, the things such as anger and numbness that helped keep me alive, as I become aware of how ineffective they can be in getting me what I want today.

Fill me with light and love until I am green and growing again in the harmony of the universe, if it be thy will. Amen.

Patience Mason

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## **A Memorial Prayer**

We pray, O Lord, for the eternal welfare of our fellow soldiers  
who died for our country and its ideals.

We honor them for their friendship, their bravery,  
and their faithfulness to duty.

May they enjoy Your everlasting peace and love.

Comfort, too, their beloved ones and renew in them  
the courage which comes from faith in You.

Amen.

*(This prayer was submitted by Raymond S. Freiling, Chaplain of VVA Chapter #210 in Bucks County, PA. It was first offered in June of 1968 in Lai Ke, Viet Nam – 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry, 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, in honor of 26 of our brothers killed in action. It is specially dedicated here to SP4 Gary Becker, killed May 26, 1968.)*



**PRAYERS ABOUT  
THE HOPE FOR TRUE FRIENDSHIP**

*Strong bonds are formed among those involved in a war, and all too easily shattered by the inherent violence. For these reasons warriors are reluctant to form or encourage deep friendship. Yet it is the greatest gift anyone can give. These prayers and meditations encourage us to enter into relationships both with the Creator and creation, and with those around us.*

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**Christian Prayers:**

Sustain in us, O God, a continued awareness of your presence, of your great care for our lives. Renew in us the joy which comes from the knowledge of your closeness, and grant us steadfast hearts that we may meet the anxieties and trials of our days. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Teach us, O God, to serve you, to give and not count the cost, to toil and not seek for rest, to labor and not ask for reward save that of knowing that we do Your will. Amen.

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O God of Heaven and Earth, our Creator, grant to us, the living, a sense of our responsibility for carrying on the great work of those who have given their lives for freedom's sake. Grant that their deeds and sacrifices may bring us closer as we seek peace and mutual understanding, that by our work and witness, nations, remembering the price already paid in blood, may turn from war and consecrate all efforts to sustain humanity. Grant to those who, having paid the greatest price, continue in union with you that through your eyes they may see with you a world of peace. Amen.

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Divine Creator, Source of all wisdom, look upon us with compassion, with mercy, with understanding. Give us the light of wisdom that we may see the pitfalls and errors that lie in our paths. Give us, we pray, a portion of your higher knowledge that we may be able to

discriminate between that which is evil and that which is good. And, O Creator, give us courage to ever do and champion that which is right, and fight always against wrong, even if our stand meets with ridicule and contempt. Make us true champions of truth, wherever we go, and against any foe we meet, that the world may be brought closer to your truth and to your peace. Amen.

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Help me, O Lord, to refuse to give up my faith in You when I encounter life's difficult problems. Make me realize that just as the darkness of the night gives way to a bright sunny morning, I may continue the struggle of living until the joy of victory dawns in my heart. Amen.

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Almighty Creator, who has made us in Your own image: grant us grace to fearlessly contend against evil, and to make no peace with oppression; and give to us courage that we may reverently use our freedoms, employing them to further the work of and dream of justice among all your peoples and nations, and thus glorify You. Amen.

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**Indian (Hindu) Prayers:**

O thou shining one,  
Thou knowest all our ways.  
We utter praise of Thee!  
Thou art woman; Thou art man;  
Thou art youth; Thou art maiden...  
Thou art the dark blue bee,  
Thou art the green parrot with red eyes,  
Thou art the thunder cloud, the seasons, the seas.  
Thou art our Father.  
Thou art our Mother.  
Thou art our Beloved Friend.

## **Buddhist Prayers and Meditations:**

The practice of the nine prayers:

1. May I be peaceful, happy, and light in body and spirit.
2. May I be free from injury. May I live in safety.
3. May I be free from disturbance, fear, anxiety, and worry.
4. May I learn to look at myself with eyes of understanding and love.
5. May I be able to recognize and touch the seeds of joy and happiness in myself.
6. May I learn to identify and see the sources of anger, craving, and delusion in myself.
7. May I know how to nourish the seeds of joy in myself every day.
8. May I be able to live fresh, solid, and free.
9. May I be free from attachment and aversion but not be indifferent.

*NOTE: After practicing “May I be...” one can practice, “May he or she be...” while visualizing first someone you like, then the one you love the most, then someone who is neutral to you, and finally the person whom thinking of makes you suffer the most. Then one can practice, “May they be...” beginning with the group, the people, the nation or species you like, and progressing as before.*

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Great becomes the fruit,  
Great the advantage of earnest contemplation,  
When it is set round with upright conduct.  
Great becomes the fruit,  
Great the advantage of intellect,  
When it is set round with earnest contemplation.  
The mind set round with intelligence is set quite free  
From the intoxications:  
From the intoxication of sensuality,  
From the intoxication of becoming,  
From the intoxication of delusion,  
From the intoxication of ignorance.  
Buddha’s Song

### **Muslim Prayers:**

O God, grant us to love You; grant that we may love those who love You; grant that we may do deeds that win Your love. Amen.

Mohammed

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O God, I ask of You a perfect faith, a sincere assurance, a reverent heart, a remembering tongue, a good conduct of commendation and a true repentance before death, rest at death, and forgiveness and mercy after death, clemency at the reckoning, victory in paradise and escape from the fire, by Your mercy, O Mighty One, O Forgiver, Lord increase me in knowledge and join me unto good.

prayer used in the 7<sup>th</sup> circuit of Mecca

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Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds! The Compassionate, the Merciful! King of the Day of Judgment! Thee only do we worship, and to thee do we cry for help. Guide Thou us on the right path, the path of those to whom Thou are gracious; not of those with whom thou art angered, nor those who go astray.

The Koran: Islamic Lord's Prayer

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### **Native America Prayers:**

Grandfather, look at our brokenness. We know that in all creation only the human family has strayed from the Sacred Way. We know that we are the ones who are divided and we are the ones who must come back together to walk in the Sacred Way. Grandfather, Sacred One, teach us love, compassion, and honor that we may heal the earth and heal each other.

Ojibway people of Canada

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Ho! Great Spirit, Grandfather, you made everything and are in everything. You sustain everything, guide everything, provide everything, and protect everything because

everything belongs to you. I am weak and lowly, nevertheless help me to care in appreciation and gratitude to you and for everything. I love the stars, the sun, and the moon and I thank you for our beautiful mother the earth whose many breasts nourish the fish, the fowls, and the animals too. May I never deceive mother earth, may I never deceive other people, may I never deceive myself, and above all may I never deceive you.

Bishop Vine Deloria, a Sioux prayer

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Great Spirit! You did reveal your loving concern to our forefathers so that they called you the great, Holy, and Mysterious One – Wakantanka, the Creator and Sustainer of all. In your Love, you gave us Mother Earth; the wonders of Heaven and the beauty of Nature for our enjoyment, where all men could live in Peace, as brother of your creation! For centuries our people walked in beauty before you! For this rich Heritage, help us to be externally grateful! Because you are a great, Eternal, and Living Spirit, in due time, you chose to send your son among us that all people might know your continued love and concern. Guide us in our days, help each of us as your Children to be proud of our great heritage, to know and to be who we are, and to share with others, becoming one humanity within your Everlasting Love, as the many colors come together to form the rainbow in the sky. Finally, gracious Father, give us new visions of your Will and help each one of us to have a share in each others' accomplishments. All this, we ask through Him who came not to destroy, but to make all things new, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

Bishop Harold Stephen Jones, a Sioux prayer

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O Great Spirit, whose breath gives life to the world and whose voice is in the soft breeze, we need your strength and wisdom. Cause us to walk in beauty. Give us eyes to behold the red and purple sunset. Make us wise so that we may understand what you have taught us. Help us to learn the lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock. Make us always ready to come to you with clean hands and steady eyes, so when life fades, like the fading

sunset, our spirits may come to you without shame. Amen!

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**Jewish Prayers:**

May you behold the world during your lifetime – your end be an eternal life – and your hope endure through the generations. May your heart mediate understanding, your mouth speak wisdom, and your tongue sing joyously. May your eyelids look straight before you, your eyes themselves be enlightened by the Torah, and your face shine like the brightness of the firmament. May your lips utter knowledge, your reins rejoice in righteousness and your steps run to here and to understand the message of the Ancient Days.

Berakoth

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Cause us, Father, to lie down in peace and rise again to enjoy life. Spread over us the covering of Your peace, guide us with Your good counsel and save us for the sake of Your name. Be a shield about us, turning away every enemy, disease, violence, hunger, and sorrow. Shelter us in the shadow of Your wings, for You are a God who guards and protects us, a ruler of mercy and compassion. Guard us when we go out and when we come in, to enjoy life and peace both now and forever and spread over us the shelter of your peace. Blessed are You, Lord, who spreads the shelter of peace over us, over His people Israel and over all the world.

prayer for the Jewish Daily Service

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Our God and God of our fathers, rein over us in Your glory, and in your splendor be exalted over all the earth. Shine forth in the majesty of Your triumphant strength, over all the inhabitants of Your world, that every form may know that You have formed it: and every creature understand that You have created it, and that all that has breath in its nostrils may say: “The Lord God of Israel is King and His dominion rules over all.”

prayer from the Jewish Liturgy (Rosh Hashanna)

Blessed are You, our God and the God of our ancestors, who has enabled us to further the generations of life with courage, and blessed us with new life. Blessed are You, the God of Life, who has given me strength in this difficult hour, and blessed me with the joy of taking part in the act of creation. Blessed are You, our God and the God of our mothers and fathers, for the miracle of birth and the joy of Parenthood, for the beauty and harmony of the life cycle. Blessed are You, the God of Life, who protects Your creatures and gives them wondrous cycles of rebirth.

Rabbi Elyse Goldstein

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Here, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou rises up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be frontlets between thin eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the doorpost of thy house, and upon thy gates.

*Shema Israel: Deuteronomy 6:4-9*

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**Confucian Meditations:**

To be able to practice  
Five things everywhere under heaven  
Constitutes perfect virtue.  
They are gravity, generosity of soul,  
Sincerity, earnestness, and kindness.  
Confucius

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The highest good is like water.  
Water gives life to ten thousand things and does not strive.

It flows in places men reject and so is like the Tao.  
In dwelling, be close to the land.  
In meditation, be close to the heart.  
In dealing with others, be gentle and kind.  
In speech, be true.  
In ruling, be just.  
In business, be competent.  
In action, watch the timing.  
No fight, no blame.  
Lao Tse

**Shinto Prayers:**

Our eyes may see some uncleanness,  
But let not our mind see things that are not clean.  
Our ears may hear some uncleanness,  
But let not our mind hear things that are not clean.

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## PRAYERS ABOUT THE QUEST FOR PEACE

*We went to war to bring "peace" to a land; it didn't work. Many returned from the venture exhausted, worn, and discouraged, wounded in body and soul; others did not return at all. This does not mean that the goal is not important, only that "war" is not a real good methodology for the quest. We owe it to ourselves, and to our brothers and sisters who did not return, and to our children, to continue the quest for peace.*

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### **Christian Prayers:**

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, and no strength known but the strength of love, we pray Thee so mightily to shed and spread abroad Thy Spirit, that all peoples and ranks may be gathered under one banner, of the Prince of Peace; as one children of one God and Father of all; to whom be dominion and glory now and forever. Amen.

Eric Milner-White, 1884-1964

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Lord, make this world to last as long as possible.

Prayer of an 11 year old child on hearing of Sino-Indian border fighting.

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Lord, we pray for the power to be gentle; the strength to be forgiving; the patience to be understanding; and the endurance to accept the consequences of holding to what we believe is right.

May we put our trust in the power of good to overcome evil and the power of love to overcome hatred. We pray for the vision to see and the faith to believe in a world emancipated from violence, a new world where fear shall no longer lead men to commit injustice, nor selfishness make them bring suffering to others.

Help us to devote our whole life and thought and energy to the task of making peace, praying always for the inspiration the power to fulfill the destiny for which we and all men were created.

Week of Prayer for World Peace, 1978

God send that there may be an end at last; God send that there may be peace again. God in heaven send us peace.

Diary of Hartich Sierk, a peasant, 1628

Almighty God, in whose hands lies the destiny of men and nations: let not the hopes of men perish, not the sacrifices of men be in vain.

O holy and life-giving Spirit: enable us by thy grace to root out from our common life the bitterness of ancient wrongs and the thirst to avenge the betrayals of long ago. Save us from the tyranny of history and set us free in a new obedience to serve each other in the present hour.

Accepting the redemption wrought for us, we believe that all our sins of yesterday are covered by thy mercy. Grant us therefore grace and courage to give and to receive the forgiveness which alone can heal today's wounds. Draw us, O Lord, towards loving kindness and guide us into the way of peace.

Anonymous

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O Lord, calm the waves of this heart; calm its tempests. Calm thyself, O my soul, so that the divine can act in thee. Calm thyself, O my soul, so that God is able to repose in thee, so that his peace may cover thee. Yes, Father in heaven, often have we found that the world around us cannot give us peace, O but make us feel that thou are able to give us peace; let us know the truth of thy promise; that the whole world may not take away thy peace.

Soren Kierkegaard, 1813-55

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Drop thy still dews of quietness till all our strivings cease; take from our souls the strain and stress, and let our ordered lives confess the beauty of thy peace.

John Greenleaf Whittier, 1807-92

Set free, O Lord, the souls of thy servants from all restlessness and anxiety. Grant us that peace and power which flow from thee. Keep us in all perplexity and distress, that upheld by thy strength and stayed on the rock of thy faithfulness we may abide in thee now and forevermore.

Francis Paget, Bishop of Oxford, 1851-1911

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Almighty God, from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed, kindle, we pray thee, in the hearts of all men the true love of peace, and guide with thy pure and peaceable wisdom those who take counsel for the nations of the earth; that is tranquility thy kingdom may go forward, till the earth be filled with the knowledge of thy love, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Francis Paget, Bishop of Oxford, 1851-1911

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Cure thy children's warring madness, bend our pride to thy control; shame our wanton selfish gladness, rich in goods and poor in soul. Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, lest we miss thy Kingdom's goal, lest we miss thy Kingdom's goal.

Harry Emerson Fosdick, 1878-1969

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O Lord, God of peace, you have created us and shown us your love so that we may share in your glory. We bless you and give thanks because you have sent us Jesus, your well-beloved Son. Through the mystery of His resurrection, you made Him the worker of salvation, the source of peace, the bond of the human family. We give thanks for the desires, efforts, and achievements stirred up by the Spirit of peace in our time, to replace hate by love, mistrust by understanding, indifference by interdependence. Open our minds and hearts to the real demand of love, so that we may become more completely peacemakers. Remember, God of mercy, all who struggle suffer and die to bring forth a world of closer relationship. May your kingdom of justice, peace, and love come to people of every race and tongue. May the earth be filled with your glory. Amen.

Pope Paul VI

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Lord, make me an instrument of Thy Peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.  
Where there is injury, pardon.  
Where there is doubt, faith.  
Where there is despair, hope.  
Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,  
Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;  
To be understood, as to understand;  
To be loved, as to love;  
For it is in the giving that we receive,  
It is in the pardoning, that we are pardoned,  
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.  
St. Francis of Assisi

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Lord, make me a channel of Thy peace –  
That where there is hatred, I may bring love –  
That where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness –  
That where there is discord, I may bring harmony –  
That where there is error, I may bring truth –  
That where there is doubt, I may bring faith –  
That where there is despair, I may bring hope –  
That where there are shadows, I may bring light –  
That where there is sadness, I may bring joy.  
Lord, grant that I seek rather to comfort than to be comforted –  
To understand rather than to be understood –  
To love, than to be loved.  
For it is by self-forgetting that one finds.  
It is by forgiving that one is forgiven.  
It is by dying that one awakens to eternal life.  
Prayer of St. Francis Assisi adapted

Almighty God, we pray that You speak to the hearts and minds of men and women. You have words which search and shake the heart, enlighten the mind, soften anger and drive our hatred and revenge. Say the word that can still the storms and grant us a just and lasting peace. Amen.

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Eternal and Almighty God, source of every good gift, whose love motivates us to love and serve and hope, to You we give our heartfelt thanks. Forgive our sins, our failures, both as individuals and as a nation. By Your grace make us Your agents to proclaim Your love, Your peace, and Your salvation. Amen.

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God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;  
    Courage to change the things I can; and  
    Wisdom to know the difference.  
Living one day at a time; Enjoying one moment at a time;  
    Accepting hardship as the pathway to peace.  
Taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it.  
    Trusting that he will make all things right if I surrender to  
    His will.  
That I may be reasonably happy in this life, and supremely  
    happy with Him forever in the next.  
    The Serenity Prayer, by Reinhold Neibuhr

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God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;  
    Courage to change the things I can; and  
    Wisdom to know the difference.  
Grant me patience with the things that take time;  
    Tolerance of the struggles of others that may be different  
    from my own;  
    Appreciation for all I have; and the  
    Willingness to get up and try again one day at a time.  
    The Serenity Prayer adapted

May we see the day when war and bloodshed cease,  
when a great peace will embrace the whole world.

**Then nation will not threaten nation,  
and mankind will never again know war.**

For all who live on earth shalt realize  
we have not come into being to hate or destroy.

**We have come into being  
to praise, to labor, to love.**

Compassionate God, bless the leaders of all nations  
with the power of compassion.

**Fulfill the promise conveyed in scripture:**

I will bring peace to the land,  
and you shall lie down and no one shall terrify you.

**I will rid the land of vicious beasts  
and it shall not be ravaged by war.**

Let love and justice flow like a mighty stream,

**Let peace fill the earth as the waters fill the sea.**

And let us say:

**Amen!**

A responsive prayer for peace

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### **Indian (Hindu) Prayers**

May there be peace in the higher regions; may there be peace in the firmament; may there be peace on earth. May the waters flow peacefully; may the herbs and plants grow peacefully; may all the divine powers bring us peace. The supreme Lord is peace. May we all be in peace, peace, and only peace; and pray that peace come into each of us.

*Shanti* [peace] - - - *Shanti* - - - *Shanti*!

The Vedas

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May the heads of all countries and races be guided to understand that men of all nations are physically and spiritually one; physically one, because we are the descendents of common parents – the symbolic Adam and Eve; and spiritually one because we are the immortal children of our Father, bound by external links of brotherhood.

Let us pray in our hearts for a league of souls and a united world. Though we may seem divided by race, creed, color, class, and political prejudices, still as children of the One God we are able in our souls to feel brotherhood and world unity. May we work for the creation of a united world in which every nation will be a useful part, guided by God through man's enlightened conscience.

In our hearts we can all learn to be free from hate and selfishness. Let us pray for harmony among the nations, that they march hand in hand through the gate of a fair new civilization. Amen!

Hindu Prayer: Paramathansa Yogananda

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### **A Buddhist Litany**

As we are together, praying for Peace, let us truly be with each other.

*Silence*

Let us pay attention to our breathing.

*Silence*

Let us be relaxed in our bodies and our minds.

*Silence*

Let us be at peace with our bodies and our minds.

*Silence*

Let us return to ourselves and become wholly ourselves. Let us maintain a half-smile on our faces.

*Silence*

Let us be aware of the source of being common to us all and to all living beings.

*Silence*

Evoking the presence of the great Compassion, let us fill our hearts with our own compassion – towards ourselves and towards all living beings.

*Silence*

Let us pray that we ourselves cease to be the cause of suffering to each other.

*Silence*

Let us plead with ourselves to live in a way which will not deprive other living beings of air, water, food, shelter, or the chance to live.

*Silence*

With humility, with awareness of the existence of life, and of the sufferings that are going on around us, let us pray for the establishment of peace in our hearts and on earth.

Amen.

The Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh in 1976

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**Muslim Prayer**

God is greater, Glory be to thee, O God, and praise. Blessed is thy name and transcendent thy majesty. There is no God but thee. I turn my face to Him who gave being to the heavens and the earth in true devotion. Not for me the fellowship of false worship. Truly my worship and obligation, my living and my dying, are God's alone, the Lord of all being. For there is no God beside Him. So it is laid upon me as one who is surrendered. Amen!

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**Native American Prayers**

Weave for us a garment of brightness;  
May the warp be the white light of morning,  
May the weft be the red light of evening,  
May the fringes be the falling rain,  
May the border be the standing rainbow,  
Thus weave for us a garment of brightness,  
That we may walk fittingly where the birds sing,  
That we may walk fittingly where the grass is green,  
O our Mother the Earth, O our Father the Sky.

anonymous



May Grandmother East bring the sun to warm you and give you life.  
May Grandfather South bring the rains to nourish you.  
May Grandmother West bring darkness without the nightmares.  
May the songs and winds and clouds of Grandfather Sky sweep the  
    pain and sadness out of your heart so the weight you carry  
    in it will be gone and you will walk softly on Grandmother  
    Earth, for it was from her womb all spirits come.  
And may Grandfather North, the warrior, ride along side of you in  
    this, the hardest battle of your life.  
May the Great Spirit watch over you, and you be at peace.  
    Doc Thompson's Medicine Prayer

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### **Jewish Prayers**

Grant us peace, goodness and blessings; life, grace and kindness, justice and mercy. Our Father, bless us all together with the light of Your presence You give us. Lord our God, law and life, love and kindness, justice and mercy, blessing and peace. And in your eyes it is good to bless Your people Israel with great strength and peace. Blessed are You, who blesses His people Israel with peace.

Prayer from the Jewish Daily Service

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Let us magnify and let us sanctify the great name of God in the world which He created according to His will. May His kingdom come in your lifetime and in your days and in the lifetime of the family of Israel – quickly and speedily may it come. Amen.

May the greatness of His being be blessed from eternity to eternity.

Let us bless and let us extol, let us tell aloud and let us raise aloft, let us set on high and let us honor, let us exalt and let us praise the Holy One – blessed be He! – though He is far beyond any blessing or song, any honor or consolation that can be spoken of in this world. Amen.

May the great peace from heaven and the gift of life be granted to us and to all the family of Israel. Amen.

May he who makes peace in the highest bring this peace upon us and upon Israel. Amen.  
The Kaddish

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## READINGS

*Throughout history talented women and men have reflected upon the experience of life and death, and then written down these reflections. We have collected some of these thoughts and assembled them in this section. We hope that you will add to this section as the years go by, and that you will share with the Editors readings which you find helpful.*

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This we know, all things are connected, like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.  
Chief Seattle of the Dwamish Tribe

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### I KNOW GOD GOES TO WAR

I can't tell you of ever finding God in church and I can't remember feeling He was near me when I went there.

I do remember seeing a lot of friendly smiling faces and people dressed in all of their nice clothes. Somehow I always felt uneasy – too many people and too close.

No, I don't remember seeing God in church, but I heard his name there constantly. Some ask, "Have you been born again? If so, when?", and I didn't understand.

I did feel God in Vietnam, almost every day. I felt Him when, after all the night fire fights were over and He sent the sun to chase away the rain, and the rain would return with majesty the very next day.

He was there when I collected LCPL Page's body parts to put in a body bag. He was there when I wrote a letter to his widow explaining how he died.

He was behind me when I heard PFC Peterson's last dying rasp. He helped me carry SGT Davidson down a hill in Loe Valley.

I caught a glimpse of God when I felt the heat of napalm called on our position, June 20, 1968.

I felt Him around me when the Chaplain would hold field services for our dead. I saw His reflection in the faces of my men when I told them to save one round for themselves as we were about to be overrun one hot, steamy night in a Nam far away.

He led me in the Lord's Prayer on every assault as stood on the kids coming in the treetop level. When we set up our night ambushes and I couldn't see my own hands because of the darkness, I would feel His hands.

He sent loneliness to guarantee the fond memories that always appear later in life. I'll always remember that God gave to the orphans, the children of the war. He made them strong, but they didn't understand.

I know after 26 years, we sleep under the same stars. He sent boys to war and they returned as young men, their lives forever changed – proud to protect the land of the free. I don't know for sure if God goes to church, but I know for sure – HE GOES TO WAR.

--MGY SGT Bill Hendley  
2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, 1<sup>st</sup> BN  
3<sup>rd</sup> Marines, 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division

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*A Prayer for the New Year*

God of the years that lie behind us,  
Lord of the years that stretch before  
Weaver of all the lies that bind us,  
Keeper and King of the open door.

Grant us hope and courage blowing

White and pure as the stars above;  
Grant us faith in a full stream flowing,  
From the heights of Your eternal love.

Out of the ruins of doubt and sorrow,  
Out of the aches and pain and tears,  
Help us to fashion a new tomorrow,  
Free from the anguish of blighting fears.

All through the seasons of sowing and reaping,  
All through the harvest of song and tears,  
Hold us close in Your tender keeping,  
O Maker of All New Years!

Author Unknown

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*He's A Veteran*  
(from the Navy Times)

He's a man who looks the world in the eye. He's a man who feels an extra heart-tug  
when a flag goes by.  
He's a man who steps a little faster when he hears the beat of a military band.  
He's a Veteran.  
He comes in all assorted sizes and shapes. He's a big man, he's a small man...he's a  
short man...he's a tall man.  
He is the "Doughboy" of World War I...the "G.I." of world War II...  
He's the man who's seen Korean skies, fought the cold and uneasy battle of Berlin...and  
braved the uneasy booby traps and ambushes in the Ia Drang Valley in Vietnam.  
He's a Veteran.  
He is a Sailor...Soldier...Marine.  
He is a Flyer...Seabee...Coast Guard.  
He is Artillery...Infantry...Medic...Aviation Machinist Mate...Armored and Ordnance.  
He's a Veteran.  
He has the quiet dignity of a man who knows the pride of freedom...

He has the clear eyes of a man who respects himself.  
He is courage living on Main Street.  
He is patriotism mowing the lawn on Saturday afternoon.  
He is good citizenship with a smile on his face.  
He's a Veteran.  
He is Republican, Democratic, Independent...He is mechanic, farmer, banker...He is  
Catholic, Protestant, Jew.  
He is rich and poor and in-between.  
He's a Veteran.  
He's a man who loves peace because he knows the price tag of war.  
He's a member of history's most exclusive fraternity.  
He's a Veteran.  
He likes the majesty of America's mountains...the tranquility of America's valleys. He  
likes the bustle of America's cities and the friendliness of America's Main  
Streets. He likes the sound of America's children playing on the American  
playground.  
He likes to see the flag go by...  
He feels a bit sad when he hears the sound of America's bugler playing "Taps."  
He is a citizen soldier...Peacetime leader...He is the first to volunteer in time of  
trouble...And the last to come home.  
He's a Veteran.  
He is proud of his American past...alert to his American present...confident of his  
American future.  
He likes the legends of America's great...the Washingtons...the Jeffersons...the  
Abraham Lincolns...  
The Roosevelts...the Robert E. Lees...the Stonewall Jacksons...the Pattons...the  
Eisenhowers...  
The MacArthurs...the Nimitz...the Pullers...the Dalys and all the proud patriots who  
have marched through America's history books.  
He has bivouacked at Valley Forge...charged the hill at Gettysburg...stormed the sands  
of Guadalcanal...swarmed ashore at Omaha Beach...advanced on Pork Chop  
Hull and fought in the bunker complex in War Zone "C" in Southeast Asia, Khe  
Sanh, Da Nang, Pleiku, Con Tien, Quang Tri, Ashau Valley and the Mekong.  
He parachuted into Granada.  
He stood watch in Beirut.

**PART V**  
**Services for Various Faiths**

**BRIEF SERVICES FOR**  
**VARIOUS FAITHS**

**Service for a person of the Protestant faith**

*During the service, the Chaplain or other person appointed by him (her) shall stand near the head of the casket or urn and face in such a way that he (she) will be heard by all present and may read all or part of the following.*

**The Call to Worship:**

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth does change, and though the mountains be shaken into the heart of the seas. For this God is our God forever and ever. He will be our guide even unto death.

**The Scripture lesson:**

If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for all of us, will He not give us all things with Him? It is God who justifies; who is to condemn? It is Jesus Christ, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, life nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, not things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**The Prayers:**

O God, whose days are without end, and whose mercies can be numbered, make us, we beseech You, deeply sensible of the shortness and uncertainty of human life; and let your Holy Spirit lead us in holiness and righteousness all of our days; that, when we have served You in our generation, we may be gathered unto our fathers, having the testimony of a good conscience; in the communion of the Christian Church; in the confidence of a certain faith; in the comfort of a reasonable, religious, and holy hope; in favor with You our God, and in perfect charity with the world; all which we ask through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

O God, we pray to You that the memory of our comrade, (name), may be ever sacred in our hearts; that the sacrifice which he (she) has offered for our country's cause may be acceptable in Your site; and that an entrance into Your eternal peace may, by Your pardoning grace, be open unto him (her) through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Conclude with the Lord's Prayer by all attending.*

*If the ceremony is being conducted at the grace site and the family has approved, the following may be read.*

**The Committal:**

Unto Almighty God, we commend the soul of our brother (sister) departed, and we commit his (her) body to this sacred ground; in sure and certain hope of the resurrection unto eternal life, through our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

**The Benediction:**

The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you, the Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.

**Service for a Person of the Roman Catholic Faith:**

*During the service, the Chaplain or other person appointed by him (her) shall stand near the head of the casket or urn and face in such a way that he (she) will be heard by all present and may read all or part of the following.*

**Scriptures:**

Out of the depths I cry to You, O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to my voice in supplication. If You, O Lord, do mark iniquities, Lord, who can stand? But with You is forgiveness, that You may be revered. I trust in the Lord, my soul trusts in His word. My soul waits for the Lord. More than sentinels wait for the dawn, Let Israel wait for the Lord, for with the Lord is kindness and with Him is plenteous redemption; and He will redeem Israel from their iniquities.

Psalm 129, 130

Martha therefore said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You shall ask of God, God will give it to You." Jesus said to her, "Your brother shall rise." Martha said to Him, "I know he will rise at the resurrection, on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me, even if he die, shall live; and whoever lives and believes in



Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who has come into the world."

St. John 11

**Prayers:**

O God, the Creator and Redeemer of the faithful, hear our supplication and through Your infinite love and mercy graciously grant to the soul of Your departed servant the remission of his (her) sins, by which he (she) may have deserved the severity of Your justice and punishments in the world to come. Vouchsafe to him (her) everlasting life and happiness through the infinite merits of Jesus Christ. Amen.

*The following shall always be read:*

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

*If the ceremony is being conducted at the grace site and the family has approved, the following may be read.*

**The Committal:**

O Lord, we commend to You the soul of Your servant (first name only), that, having departed from this world, he (she) may live with You. And by the grace of Your merciful life, wash the sins that in human frailty he (she) committed in the conduct of his (her) life, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Come to his (her) aid, O Saints of God; hasten to meet him (her) angels of the Lord; Taking up his (her) soul, presenting it in the sight of the Most high. May you be received by Christ, Who has called you; may the angels bring you into the bosom of Abraham.

**The Benediction:**

Eternal rest grant unto him (her), O Lord. And let perpetual life shine upon him (her). May he (she) rest in peace. Amen. May his (her) soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

## Service for a Person of the Jewish Faith

*During the service, the Chaplain or other person appointed by him (her) shall stand near the head of the casket or urn and face in such a way that he (she) will be heard by all present and may read all or part of the following.*

### **The Scriptures:**

I will lift up my eyes unto the mountains, from whence shall my help come? My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; He that keeps Israel does not slumber, not sleep. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade upon your right hand. The sun shall not smite the day, or the moon the night. The Lord shall keep you from all evil; He shall keep your soul. The Lord shall guard your going out and your coming in, from this time forth and forever.

O Lord, what is man that you are mindful of him and the son of man that You take account of him? What are we? Do we not all seem as vanity, as a shadow that passes away? In the morning we flourish and grow up, in the evening we are cut down and withered. You turn all humankind to contrition and say unto us: Return you children of the earth!

O, that we had wisdom and understanding and realized that when we die we take nothing with us; we do leave much behind. Mark the perfect and behold the upright for theirs is the way of peace. You, O Lord, redeem the souls of Your children and those who serve You and love their fellow men and women will never be forsaken.

### **The Prayers:**

O Lord, help us to find in these ancient yet ever new sentiments the realization that through our tears we can teach the truth, through the darkness of our sorrow venture toward the light of hope, and through our anguish attain to the great adventure of perfect faith in You and Your wisdom. Love is stronger than death.

Though we surrender dust unto dust, through the majesty and might of your love, life will abide with life. Take unto Yourself our comrade who has given his (her) life to our great country. And let the words of our mouths express the meditations of our hearts.

O God, full of compassion, You dwell on high! Beneath the sheltering wing of Your presence, among the holy and pure who shine as the brightness of the firmament, grant perfect peace unto the soul of (name) who has gone unto eternity. Lord of mercy, bring him (her) under the cover of Your wings, and let his (her) soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life. May you be his (her) inheritance, and may he (she) repose in peace. Amen.

*If the ceremony is being conducted at the grace site and the family has approved, the following may be read.*

**The Committal:**

Into your hands, O Lord, we commend the soul of Your servant departed, now called into eternal rest.

**The Benedictions:**

The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you, the Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon you, and give you peace. Amen.

**Service for a Person of the Eastern Orthodox Faith**

*During the service, the Chaplain or other person appointed by him (her) shall stand near the head of the casket or urn and face in such a way that he (she) will be heard by all present and may read all or part of the following.*

*The Scripture:*

Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord. How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to Your word. Do good to Your servant, and I will live; I will obey Your word. I am laid low in the dust; renew my life according to Your word. Teach me, O Lord, to follow Your decrees; then I will keep them in the end. May Your unfailing love come to me, O Lord; Your salvation according to Your promise. Remember Your word to Your servant, for You have given me hope. You are my portion, O Lord; I have promised to obey Your words. Do good to Your servant according to Your word, O Lord. Your hands have made and fashioned me; give me understanding to learn Your commands. My soul faints with longing for Your salvation, but I have put my hope in Your word. Your word, O Lord, is eternal, it stands firm in the heavens. Save me, for I am Yours; I have sought out Your precepts. Oh, how I love Your law! I meditate on it all day long. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. My flesh trembles in fear of You; I stand in awe of Your laws. I have done what's righteous and just, do not leave me to my oppressors. Your statues are wonderful; therefore, I obey them. Righteous are You, O Lord, and Your laws are right. I call out with all my heart; answer me, O Lord, and I will obey Your decrees. Look upon my suffering and deliver me, for I have not forgotten Your law. I wait for Your salvation, O Lord, and I follow Your commands. May my cry come before You, O Lord; give me understanding according to Your word. Let me live that I may praise You, and may Your

laws sustain me. I have strayed like a lost sheep. Seek You servant, for I have not forgotten Your commandments.

Psalm 119

*The Gospel Lesson:*

I tell you the truth, whoever hears My words and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the father had life in himself so he has granted the Son to have life in Himself. And he has given His authority to judge because He is the son of Man. Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice and come out – those who have done good will rise and live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. By Myself I can do nothing: I judge only as I hear, and My judgment is just, for I seek not to please Myself but Him who sent me.

John 5:24-30

*The Prayers:*

O God of spirits, and of all flesh, who has trampled down death and overthrown the devil, and given life to the world: we ask you, the same Lord, to give rest to the soul of Your departed servant (name) in a place of repose where all sickness, sorrow, and sighing have fled away. Pardon every transgression which he (she) has committed, whether by word, or deed, or thought. For You are a God who loves and sins not; for You alone are without sin, and Your righteousness is all eternity, and Your word is true. For You are the resurrection, and the life, and the repose of your servant (name) who is fallen asleep, O Christ our God, and unto You do we ascribe glory, together with your father, who is from everlasting, and Your all holy and good, and Life-creating Spirit. Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*Conclude with the Lord's Prayer by all attending.*

*If the ceremony is being conducted at the grace site and the family has approved, the following may be read.*

**The Committal:**

Eternal be your memory, O our brother (sister), who is worthy to be deemed happy and ever-memorable. (three times)

**The Dismissal:**

May He who arose from the dead, Christ our true God, through the prayers of His all-pure Mother, of the holy, glorious, and all laudable apostles, of our holy God-bearing fathers; and all of the saints, establish the soul of Your servant (name) who has been taken from us, in the mansions of the righteous, give him (her) rest in Abraham's bosom, and number him (her) among the just, and have mercy on us forasmuch as You are good and love humankind. Amen.

The earth is the lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.  
Psalm 24

### **Service for a Person of the Muslim Faith**

*During the service the Chaplain or other person appointed by him (her) shall ensure that the service is set up as follows:*

- It is not recommended to use a casket unless there is a need for it. The body must have been washed and wrapped as required for the bodies of Muslims.
- Plan the setting so that those who have gathered to pray will be facing toward Mecca, with the appointed leader in front facing them.
- Place the body in between the congregation and the appointed leader in such a way that the body is parallel to the congregation and so that, from the point of view of the congregation, the body's head is to the right.
- The appointed leader should face the congregation and stand by the middle of the body if the deceased is a man and by the shoulder if the deceased is a woman.

If Muslims are present, permit them to come forward and perform the formal funeral prayer (Allahu Akbar) while others stand and pray silently.

#### **Al-Faatihah:**

In the name of God, Most gracious, Most merciful. Praise be to God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds; Most Gracious, Most Merciful; Master of the Day of Judgment. You do we worship, and Your aide we seek. Show us the straight way, and way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, those whose portion is not wrath, and who go not astray.

#### **Supplication of Funeral Prayer:**

O Allah, forgive our people who are still alive and all who have passed away. Forgive those who are present here and those who are absent, forgive our young and our elderly, forgive our males and females. O Allah, the one whom you wish to keep alive

from among us make him alive according to Islam, and anyone whom You wish to die among us, let him die in belief and faith. O Allah, do not deprive us from his (her) reward and do not put us in hardship or any type of trial after his (her) death.

O Allah, forgive him (her), have mercy on him (her), pardon him (her), grant his (her) security, provide him (her) a nice place and spacious lodgings, wash him (her) of his (her) sins with water, snow, and ice, purify him (her) from his (her) sins as a white garment is cleansed from dirt, replace his (her) present abode with a better one, replace his (her) present family with a better one, replace his (her) present partner with a better one, make him (her) enter paradise and save him (her) from the trails of grace and punishment of hell.

O Allah, You are its Lord, you have created it, and you have guided it towards Islam, and You have taken out his (her) soul and You know best about its secret and open deeds. We have come as intercessors, so forgive him (her).

O Allah, grant us good in this life and good in the life to come, and save us from the torment of hell.

*If the ceremony is being conducted at the grace site and the family has approved, the following may be read.*

O Allah, this is Your servant who is now Your guest, and You are the best of hosts. Forgive him (her) and expand his (her) entrance.

### **Service for a Person of the Buddhist Faith**

*During the service, the Chaplain or other person appointed by him (her) shall stand near the head of the casket or urn and face in such a way that he (she) will be heard by all present and may read all or part of the following.*

#### **Homage to the Three Treasures:**

Buddham Saranam Gacchami. I go to the Buddha for guidance.

Dhamman Saranam Gacchami. I go to the Dharma for guidance.

Sangham Saranam Gacchami. I go to the Sangha for guidance.

Homage to Him, the Exalted One, the Enlightened One, the Supremely Awakened One.

**Opening Address:**

On this day, we commemorate the passing of (name) who departed from this world on (date of death).

**A Reading from the Buddhist Sutras:**

The Sutras tell us that “Beneath the sala trees at Kusinagara, in His last words to His disciples, the Buddha said:

“My disciples, my last moment has come, but do not forget that death is only the end of the physical body. The body was born from parents and was nourished by food; just as inevitable are sickness and death.

But the true Buddha is not a human body; it is Enlightenment. A human body must die, but the Wisdoms of Enlightenment will exist forever in the truth of the Dharma, and I the practice of the Dharma. He who sees merely my body does not truly see Me. Only he who accepts my teaching truly sees me.”

*Incense burning by relatives and friends is optional at this time.*

**Closing Meditation:**

The Buddha surrounds all men and women and all forms of life with Infinite Love and compassion. Particularly does he send forth loving thoughts to those in suffering and sorrow; to those in doubt and ignorance; to all who are striving to attain truth; and to those whose feet are standing close to the great change men and women call death, He sends forth oceans of Mercy, Wisdom, and Love.

## **PART VI**

### **Spanish Prayers and Services**

#### **Padre Nuestro**

Padre nuestro, que estás en el cielo, santificado sea tu Nombre; venga a nosotros tu reino, hágase tu voluntad en la tierra como en el cielo. Danos hoy nuestro pan de cada día; perdona nuestras ofensas, como también nosotros perdonamos a los que nos ofenden; no nos dejes caer en la tentación, y líbranos del mal. Amén.

#### **Ave Maria**

Dios te salve, María, llena eres de gracia, el Señor es contigo, bendita tú eres entre todas las mujeres, y bendito es el fruto de tu vientre, Jesús.

Santa María, Madre de Dios, ruega por nosotros, pecadores, ahora y en la hora de nuestra muerte. Amén.

#### **Gloria**

Gloria al Padre, y al Hijo, y al Espíritu Santo. Como era en el principio, ahora y siempre, por los siglos de los siglos. Amén.

#### **Acto de Fe**

Dios mío, porque eres verdad infalible, creo firmemente todo aquello que has revelado y la santa Iglesia nos propone para creer. Creo en ti, único Dios verdadero en tres personas iguales y distintas, Padre, Hijo y Espíritu Santo.

Creo en Jesucristo, Hijo de Dios, que se encarnó y murió por nosotros, el cual nos dará a cada uno, según los méritos, el premio o el castigo eterno.

Conforme a esta fe quiero vivir siempre, Señor, aumenta mi fe. Amén.

#### **Acto de Esperanza**

Dios mío, espero de tu bondad, por tus promesas y por los méritos de Jesucristo, nuestro Salvador, la vida eterna y la gracia necesaria para merecerla con las buenas obras que quiero y debo hacer.

Señor, que pueda gozar de ti para siempre. Amén.

#### **Acto de Caridad**

Dios mío, te amo con todo el corazón y sobre todas las cosas, porque eres infinitamente bueno y nuestra eterna felicidad; y por amor a ti amo a mi prójimo como a mi mismo, y perdono las ofensas recibidas. Señor, haz que te ame cada vez más. Amén.



### **Angel de Dios**

Angel de mi guarda, mi dulce compañía, no me desampares ni de noche ni de día; hasta que me pongas en paz y alegría, con todos los santos, Jesús y María. Amén.

### **Para Pasar Bien El Día**

Querida y tierna madre mía, María, ampárame; cuida de mi inteligencia de mi corazón, de mis sentidos, para que nunca cometa el pecado. Santifica mis pensamientos, afectos, palabras y acciones, para que pueda agradar a ti y a tu Jesús y Dios mío, y contigo llegue al paraíso, Jesús y María, denme su santa bendición: En el nombre del Padre, y del Hijo, y del Espíritu Santo. Amén.

### **Angelus**

El angel del Señor anunció a María  
Y ella concibió por obra del Espíritu Santo.  
Dios te salve, María...  
He aquí la esclava del Señor.  
Hágase en mí según tu palabra.  
Dios te salve, María...  
Y el Verbo se hizo carne.  
Y habitó entre nosotros.  
Dios te salve, María...

### **Comunion Espiritual**

Jesús mío, creo que estás presente en el Santísimo Sacramento. Te amo sobre todas las cosas y deseo recibirte en mi alma. Pero no pudiendo hacerlo sacramentalmente ahora, ven, al menos, espiritualmente a mi corazón. (breve pausa)

Como si ya te hubiese recibido, te abrazo y me uno a ti: no penitas que jamás me separe de ti. Amén.