



## **Faith and Inter Faith Readings**

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) is a day for everyone. The Day offers us all the opportunity to remember those murdered in the Holocaust, as a result of Nazi persecution and victims of subsequent genocides. HMD acts as a call to action for us all to challenge prejudice, exclusion and hatred and work together to create a safer, better future.

HMD takes place on 27<sup>th</sup> January each year. This date is the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp. 2010 marks the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz and the end of the Holocaust.

People of all faiths can come together on HMD to remember those from their own and other traditions who have been victims of hatred and exclusion. The Day also encourages everyone to take the opportunity to learn about other faiths and cultures.

This document contains a number of liturgical passages and suggested prayers. Readings for faith and interfaith events do not have to take the form of prayers and we have included some readings which focus on individual experiences and beliefs.

You may also find it useful to include a reading from a different faith tradition to emphasise the shared experiences and the ability of faiths to come together and recognise the experiences of all fellow men.

### Introductory Sentences For HMD Commemorations

#### *The Shema*

Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and you shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

*(Deut.6:4-7)*

Thus says the Lord:  
'A voice is heard in Ramah,  
lamentation and bitter weeping.  
Rachel is weeping for her children;  
she refuses to be comforted for her children,  
because they are not.'

*(Jeremiah 31: 15)*

With the sanction of my eyes that have seen the mourning  
and burdened my heart which was bowed with wailing,  
with the sanction of my compassion which told me to pardon,  
so that days came threatening forgiveness,  
I vowed: I will remember it all,  
remember, and forget not a thing.

*(From a poem by Abraham Shlonsky now in the Yad  
Vashem Holocaust Memorial, Jerusalem)*

[Rabbi Hillel said] If I am not for myself, who is for me?  
If I am only for myself, what am I?  
If not now, when?

*(From the Mishnah: Tractate Avot, 1:14)*

### Prayers and Readings

#### *Prayer for Peace*

O God, you are the source of life and peace.  
Praised be your name forever.  
We know it is you who turn our minds to thoughts of peace.  
Hear our prayer in times of crisis.

Your power changes hearts.  
Muslims, Christians and Jews remember,  
And profoundly affirm,  
That they are followers of the one God,  
Children of Abraham, brothers and sisters;  
Enemies begin to speak to one another;  
Those who were estranged join hands in friendship;  
Nations seek the way of peace together.

Strengthen our resolve to give witness to these

Truths by the way we live.

Give to us:

**Understanding** that puts an end to strife;

**Mercy** that quenches hatred, and

**Forgiveness** that overcomes vengeance.

Empower all people to live in your law of love

Amen.

*Psalm 2*

- 1 Why are the nations in tumult,  
and why do the peoples devise a vain plot?
- 2 The kings of the earth rise up,  
and the rulers take counsel together,
- 3 'Let us break their bonds asunder  
and cast away their cords from us.'
- 4 He who dwells in heaven shall laugh them to scorn;  
the Lord shall have them in derision.
- 5 Then shall he speak to them in his wrath  
and terrify them in his fury;
- 6 'Yet have I set my king  
upon my holy hill of Zion.'
- 7 I will proclaim the decree of the Lord;  
he said to me: 'You are my Son; this day have I begotten you.
- 8 'Ask of me and I will give you the nations for your inheritance  
and the ends of the earth for your possession.
- 9 'You shall break them with a rod of iron  
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.'
- 10 Now therefore be wise, O kings;

be prudent, you judges of the earth.

- 11 Serve the Lord with fear, and with trembling kiss his feet,  
lest he be angry and you perish from the way,  
for his wrath is quickly kindled.
- 12 Happy are all they  
who take refuge in him

*Psalm 19*

To the leader, a Psalm of David

1. The heavens are telling the glory of God;  
and the firmament proclaims his  
handiwork.
2. Day to day pours forth speech,  
and night to night declares  
knowledge.
3. There is no speech, nor are there words;  
their voice is not heard;
4. yet their voice goes out through all the  
earth,  
and their words to the end of the  
world.  
In the heavens he has set a tent for the  
sun.
5. Which comes out like a bridegroom  
from his wedding canopy,  
and like a strong man runs its course  
with joy,
6. Its rising is from the end of the heavens  
and its circuit is to the end of them;  
and nothing is hid from its heart.
7. The law of the Lord is perfect,  
reviving the soul;  
The decrees of the Lord are sure,  
making wise the simple;
8. The precepts of the Lord are right,  
rejoicing the heart;  
The commandment of the Lord is clear,  
enlightening the eyes;
9. The fear of the Lord is pure,

- enduring forever  
The ordinances of the Lord are true  
and righteous altogether
10. More to be desired are they than gold,  
even much fine gold;  
Sweeter also than honey,  
and drippings of the honeycomb.
  11. Moreover by them is your servant  
warned;  
In keeping them there is great reward.
  12. But who can detect their errors?  
Clear me from hidden faults
  13. Keep back your servant also from the  
insolent  
Do let let them have dominion over  
me.  
Then I shall be blameless,  
and innocent of great transgression.
  14. Let the words of my mouth and the  
meditation of my heart.  
be acceptable to you,

*Psalm 56*

Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me.

Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou most High.

What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.

In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.

Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts are against me for evil.

They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.

Shall they escape by iniquity? in thine anger cast down the people, O God.

Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?

When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me.

In God will I praise his word: in the Lord will I praise his word.

In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.

Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee.

For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?

*From Taittiriya Upanishad:*

“Om Sham No Mitra Sham Varunah Sham No Bhavatvaryamaa,  
Sham Na Indro Brihaspatih Sham No Vishnururukramah,  
Namoh Brahmane Namaste Vaayo Tvameva Pratyaksham,  
Brahmaasi Tvaameva Pratyaksham Brahma Vadishyaami,  
Rtam Vadishyaami Satyam Vadishyaami,  
Tanmaamavatu Tadvaktaaramavatu Avatu Maam Avatu Vaktaaram,  
Om Shantih Shantih Shantih”

Meaning: This Mantra implies: "OM. May Mitra do good to us, may Varuna do good to us, may Aryama do good to us, may Indra do good to us, may Brihaspati do good to us, and may Vishnu who has vast coverage do good to us. We Salute Lord Brahma and Lord Vayu, the only visible Brahman. We say right, we say truth, may it protect us and may it protect teacher. OM Peace, Peace and Peace"

*From Taittiriya Upanishad, Katha Upanishad and Shvetashvatara Upanishad:*

"Om Sahanaa Vavatu Sahanau Bhunaktu  
Saha Veeryam Karavaavahai  
Tejasvi Naavadheetamastu Maa Vidvishaavahai  
Om Shantih Shantih Shantih"

Meaning: The literal meaning of this mantra is: "OM. Let all of us protect each other together, may all of us enjoy together, may all of us work together and let our study become radiant. Let there be no hatred between us, OM Peace, Peace, Peace"

*From Kena Upanishad and Chandogya Upanishad:*

"Om Aapyaayantu Mamaangaani Vaak  
Praanashchakshuh Shrotramatho  
Balamindriyaani Cha Sarvaani Sarvam Brahmopanishadam  
Maaham Brahma Niraakuryaam Maa Maa Brahma Niraakarod  
Niraakaranamastva Niraakaranam Me Astu  
Tadaatmani Nirate Ya Upanishatsu Dharmaaste  
Mayi Santu Te Mayi Santu  
Om Shantih, Shantih, Shantih"

Meaning: The Mantra implies: "OM. May our organs, speech, Prana, eyes and ears be nourished. May all our senses become strong. Upanishad says all that the World is Brahman. We don't reject Brahman, may Brahma not reject me. Let there be no rejection, let there be no rejection at all in us, let us concentrate on ourselves, all those ways of righteous living told in Upanishads be in us! Be in us, OM Peace, Peace and Peace".

*From the Upanishads – the ancient Hindu texts*

"Om bhadram karnebhih shrunuyaama devaah  
Bhadram pashyemaakshabhiryajatraah  
Sthirairangaistushtuvaamsastanoobhih  
Vyashema devahitam yadaayuh  
Swasti na indro vridhashravaah  
Swasti nah pooshaa vishwavedaah  
Swasti nastaarkshyo arishtanemih  
Swasti no brihaspatir dadhaatu.  
Om shantih, shantih, shantih!"

Meaning: "OM, O worshipful ones, may our ears hear what is good and auspicious! May we see what is auspicious! May we sing your praise, live our allotted span of life in perfect health and strength! May Indra (who is) extolled in the scriptures, Pushan, the all-knowing Trakshya, who saves from all harm, and Brihaspati who protects our spiritual lustre, vouchsafe prosperity in our study of the scriptures and the practice of the truths contained therein! Om peace, peace, peace!"

"Om dyauh shaantih Antariksham shaantih  
Prithivee shaantih Aapah shaantih  
Oshadhayah shaantih Vanaspatayah shaantih  
Vishvedevaah shaantih Brahma shaantih

Sarvam shaantih Shaantireva shaantih  
Saamaa shaantiredhih Om shantih, shantih, shantih!”

Meaning: “O Supreme Lord, Thy celestial regions are full of peace and harmony; peace reigns on Thy earth and Thy waters. Thy herbs and trees are full of peace. All Thy forces of nature are full of peace and harmony. There is peace and perfection in Thy eternal knowledge; everything in the universe is peaceful, and peace pervades everywhere. O Lord, may that peace come to me!”

“Om agne naya supathaa raaye asmaan  
Vishwaani deva vayunaani vidvaan;  
Yuyodhyas majjuhu raanmeno  
Bhooyishthaam te nama-uktim vidhema.”

Meaning: “O Supreme Lord, who art light and wisdom, Thou knowest all our thoughts and deeds. Lead us by the right path to the fulfilment of life, and keep us away from all sin and evil. We offer unto Thee, O Lord, our praise and salutation.”

“Om Sam-gacchadhvam sam-vadadhvam, Sam vō  
manāmsi jānatām;  
Dēvā bhāgam yathā pūrvē Sam-jānānā upāsātē.  
Samānō mantrah samitih samānī, samānam manah  
saha-cittamēṣām; Samānah mantram abhi-  
mantrayē vah, samānēna vō haviṣā juhōmi.  
Samānīva ākūtih samānā hṛdayāni vah;  
Samānamastu vō manō yathā vah su-sahāsati.”

Meaning: “O Lord, may we move forward in harmony, in harmony shall we speak, in harmony shall our minds apprehend; so the shining ones of ancient times with united minds achieved their noble goals. We pray, that united be your deliberations, united be your assembly, united be your minds in harmonious understanding; united be your resolutions through friendly deliberations, make your offerings in perfect harmony, and united be your wills, united be your hearts, united be your thoughts, so that you may all be perfectly united for the well being of all and everything concerned for the progress in this planet.”

### *Kaddish*

Glorified and sanctified be God's great name throughout the world which He has created according to His will. May He establish His kingdom in your lifetime and during your days, and within the life of the entire House of Israel, speedily and soon; and say,



Amen.

May His great name be blessed forever and to all eternity.

Blessed and praised, glorified and exalted, extolled and honored, adored and lauded be the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, beyond all the blessings and hymns, praises and consolations that are ever spoken in the world; and say, Amen.

May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life, for us and for all Israel; and say, Amen.

He who creates peace in His celestial heights, may He create peace for us and for all Israel; and say, Amen.

*El Male Rachamim*

O God, full of mercy, who dwells on high,  
Grant proper rest on the wings of the Divine Presence  
In the lofty levels of the holy and pure,  
Who shine like the glow of the firmament -  
For the souls of the

Six Million Jews, victims of the European Holocaust

Who were killed, slaughtered, burned and wiped out  
For the Sanctification of the Name  
By the murderous Germans and their allies,  
Because, without making a vow,  
All the community will pray  
For the uplifting of their souls.

Therefore, may the Master of mercy  
Shelter them in the shelter of His wings for eternity;  
And may He bind their souls in the Bond of Life.

The Lord is their heritage.  
And may their resting-place be in the Garden of Eden,  
And may they reach their destiny at the end of days.

And let us say Amen.

*You can download a podcast of El Male Rachamim – as recited by Rabbi Barry Marcus at Auschwitz-Birkenau – from the HMD website:*

<http://www.hmd.org.uk/resources/item/325/>

*Qur'an 5:2*

Believers, stand out firmly for God, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others toward you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fear God. For God is well-acquainted with all that you do

*Quran 57:25*

We sent Our Messengers with clear signs and sent down with them the Book and the Measure in order to establish justice among the people...

*Quran 4:135*

O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even if it be against yourselves, your parents, and your relatives, or whether it is against the rich or the poor...

*1 Corinthians 12. 12-31a*

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less part of the body. And if the ear would say "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable

members do not need this. But God has arranged the body giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

Note for Preachers:

*Paul writes to the Corinthian slave society, describing the Christian communion as being like a human body. Such equation of the human social organism with the body was Hellenistic commonplace. However, Paul imports a Jewish concern for its holiness as reflecting the entire person, inward and outward. The body was not merely embodied spirit but a description of the living person. Christians derive their personhood from a particular Jew. Jesus, the image of God, born of a woman, Mary. This is far from idolatry. Recognising the authenticity of the body is to love the Creator, whose icon it is, and the self as neighbour, the them of chapter 13. It follows that any act of cruelty to the body of oneself or of another is an act of blasphemy.*

*Nehemiah 8 1-3; 5-6; 8-10*

All the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had given to Israel. Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday; in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law ... and Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people, and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen", lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground ... So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions

of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of our Lord is your strength.”

Note for Preachers:

*If the greatest of the God-given institutions is the Sabbath rest (Genesis 2.2), the most adequate reflection and gift of Israel to the whole of humanity is the way to respond to Torah, the matrix of all creation, reflecting the mind of God. At a time of reformation and rebuilding in Israel, Ezra gathers the people in one place and reads and explains the Law of Moses. This is the incipient synagogue, prototype also of the Christian congregation. The people hear the Word clearly and respond with understanding. God moves towards us in his one eternal Covenant and we reply by hallowing his name in specific ways; caring for other humans. Our rejoicing in the Torah (God’s creative Word) is the foundation for the wellbeing, and opposition to the destruction, of any part of the human race.*

*Micah 4. 1-5*

But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.

And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.

For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever.

### *Revelation 12: 1-5a*

#### The Woman and the Dragon

A great portent appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and crying out in birth pangs, in the agony of giving birth. Then another portent appeared in heaven: a great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven diadems on his heads. His tail swept down a third of the stars of the heaven and threw them to earth. Then the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child so that he might devour her child as soon as it was born. And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. But her child was snatched away and taken to God and his throne;

#### Note for Preachers:

*In traditional thought, this female figure is often identified with the Virgin Mary, the son being Jesus. This can therefore be interpreted as an eternal prophecy both fulfilled already and still be fully realised. Alternatively, the woman may represent Israel, with the twelve tribe as the jewels in her crown; it is Israel's sufferings which bring forth the Messiah. The elements in the passage call upon a range of influences including Jewish, Greek and Persian, and the subsequent verses, which are not included in this reading, introduce other elements.*

*Whatever the method of interpretation, the presence of the 'great red dragon' or 'serpent' signifies an evil force, in Jewish tradition and in both Greek and near eastern mythology. In apocalyptic style, this passage is about temporal suffering and ultimate victory, and stresses that the fight will be hard and vicious. It has much to say today, first in terms of sustaining those Christians in situations where the beast is as identifiable and terrible as in this picture. But mostly it challenges a complacency which celebrates a victory already won, without the need to address the issues of evil which beset us.*

### *Luke 4. 14 – 21*

#### The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

#### The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and scroll of the prophet

Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to  
the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind  
to let the oppressed go free.  
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Note for Preachers:

*Jesus’s cradle of ethical life was the synagogue: congregation of prayer and hearing and interpreting the marvellous Torah, definition of God-given freedom. Here he is unrolling the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and taking to himself the One Covenant, proclaiming the eternal ‘now’, the year of the Lord’s favour: ‘the release of captives, the recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free’. Every recital of the unique Covenant is a new (renewed) testament, when it is understood and written on the fleshy tablets of the heart. Jesus speaks to the entire human person, who is part of a reforming communion. The perpetually renewed Covenant of justice and mercy affirms all life and opposes the destruction of life.*

*We Remember Them*

At the rising of the sun and at its going down  
We remember them.  
At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter  
We remember them.  
At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring  
We remember them.  
At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer  
We remember them.  
At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn  
We remember them.  
At the beginning of the year and when it ends  
We remember them.  
As long as we live, they too will live;  
for they are now a part of us  
as 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 joy we crave to share  
We remember them.  
When we have decisions that are difficult to make  
We remember them.  
When we have achievements that are based on theirs  
We remember them.  
As long as we live, they too will live;  
for they are now a part of us  
as we remember them.

*(Sylvan Kamens and Rabbi Jack Riemer – from the Jewish Prayer Book)*

### Prayers of Penitence

God spoke through the prophet Amos:  
Take away from me the noise of your songs;  
to the melody of your harps I will not listen.  
But let justice roll down like waters,  
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

*(Amos 5:23,24)*

For sins which we ourselves have committed and for sins of omission,  
for sins of our hands and sins of our hearts,  
for the hurt we have caused you and our neighbours through ignorance or indifference  
*(Pause briefly for silent reflection)* O God of Abraham,  
We ask your forgiveness

For failure to see your image in someone who is different  
*(Pause briefly for silent reflection)* O God of Sarah,  
We ask your forgiveness

For putting our own welfare and social comfort above the basic needs of others  
*(Pause briefly for silent reflection)* O God of Jacob,  
We ask your forgiveness

For our reluctance to get involved  
*(Pause briefly for silent reflection)* O God of Rachel,

We ask your forgiveness

For being grateful that we are in some way superior to another  
*(Pause briefly for silent reflection)* O God of Leah,  
We ask your forgiveness

For teaching that it is better to receive than to give  
*(Pause briefly for silent reflection)* O God of Sinai,  
We ask your forgiveness

For the failure of your Church to be light in the darkness  
*(Pause briefly for silent reflection)* O God of Calvary,  
We ask your forgiveness

Let us pray for God's ancient people, the Jews, the first to hear his word -  
for greater understanding between Christian and Jew  
for the removal of our blindness and bitterness of heart  
that God will grant us grace to be faithful to his covenant and to grow in the love of his  
name.

Lord, remember not only the men and women of goodwill, but also those of ill will. Do  
not remember all the sufferings they have inflicted upon us; remember the fruits we  
bear, thanks to this suffering - our comradeship, our loyalty, our humanity, courage,  
generosity, the greatness of heart which has grown out of all this. And when they come  
to judgement, let all the fruits that we have borne be their forgiveness.

*(A prayer found on a scrap of paper beside the body of a girl who died at Ravensbruck)*

*I believe*

'I believe in the sun though it is late in rising  
I believe in love though it is absent  
I believe in God though he is silent.'

*(From the wall of a Cologne cellar where Jews hid from the Gestapo)*

1<sup>ST</sup> READER:

As we commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day, we are invited to consider what it means  
to be part of humanity.



2nd READER:

'Christ Jesus, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.'

1<sup>ST</sup> READER:

We reflect upon the depths to which humanity can fall, and weep for the pain and despair that human actions can bring. We acknowledge our place within that humanity, and pray for the strength to reflect the love of God in the world.

2ND READER:

'Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you should wash another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth. No servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blest if you do them.'

1st READER:

'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?'

2<sup>nd</sup> READER:

'And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.'

1<sup>st</sup> READER:

'Who is my neighbour?'

2<sup>nd</sup> READER:

The one who shows mercy.

'Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you did it to me.'

Let us pray

Lord, when we see you hungry,  
May we give you food.  
When we see you thirsty,  
May we give you drink.  
When you are a stranger,  
May we welcome you,  
When naked, may we clothe you,  
When sick, may we sit with you,  
When in prison, may we come to you.

God, you created us all in your own likeness.  
We thank you for the wonderful diversity of races and cultures in your world.  
Enrich our lives by ever-widening circles of fellow feeling and understanding;  
show us your presence in those most different from us, so that in all our relationships,  
both by what we have in common and by things in which we differ,  
we may come to know you more fully in your creation;  
for you are Father, Son and Holy Spirit for ever.

### General Readings

*Prayer for the day from BBC RADIO 4 28<sup>th</sup> April 2007 by Nick James.*

*Father Nicholas James, a Catholic priest from Cardiff has given permission to use this and it can be amended for your own use.*

“The most powerful exhibition I’ve ever seen is house on the outskirts of Jerusalem, at the Holocaust memorial, Yad Vashem. It’s a kind of historical journey, through anti-semitism and Nazi violence towards the uneasy accommodations of our modern world.

The images have unbearable poignancy. We begin with a grey montage of film and photographs taken before the war - an endless loop of images from ordinary life of people just like you and me, who happened to be Jewish and who lived in Europe. That fact strikes you with full force - this was a tragedy enacted in our own so civilised continent.

And the story builds, driven by hatred, complicity - and cowardice - to the monstrous climax that we know so well. It’s impossible to see and hear again without asking - If I had been there, what would I have done?

Ninety-nine years ago today, Oskar Schindler was born, the Austrian immortalised by Spielberg’s film, “Schindler’s List”, the one who saved large numbers of his Jewish work force. Schindler was all too human in his weaknesses. Yet humanity was at the heart of his story, enabling him to empathise with others.

Problems of human empathy will always be with us and at some point we must we must all come to see that a love of human beings is our true way of showing the love of God. It was a deficiency of love that destroyed the fabric of our continent.

But we emerge from this exhibition of Europe’s failure to a view of freedom that has never been fully achieved because Jews and Arabs still suffer in the land that we call ‘holy’.

Let us pray for all who live there, that together they may yet show the world a way of true humanity.

Lord give us love for others - the stranger, the outcast, the bereaved... May we listen to your Word, and together with those who are different from us, become a people who are worthy of you. Amen."

### *The Angels Have Left Us*

The church in Rwanda is in an agony at least as painful as the nation's.

'Why did the message of the gospel not reach the people who were baptised? What did we lose? We lost our lives. We lost our credibility. We are ashamed. We are weak. But, most of all, we lost our prophetic mission. We could not go to the President and tell him the truth because we became sycophants to the authorities.

'We have had killings here since 1959. No one condemned them. During the First Republic, they killed slowly, slowly, but no one from the churches spoke out. No one spoke on behalf of those killed. During the Second Republic there were more killings and more people were tortured and raped and disappeared; and we did not speak out because we were afraid, and because we were comfortable.

'Now there has to be a new start, a new way. We must accept that Jesus' mission to us to preach the gospel means that we must be ready to protect the sheep, the flock - even if it means we must risk our lives - to lay down our lives for our sisters and brothers. The Bible does not know Hutu and Tutsi, neither should we.'

(Pastor Mugumera, whose family was murdered by members of his congregation, quoted in *The Angels Have Left Us*, by Hugh McCullum, pub. by the World Council of Churches, Geneva)

### *The Hiding Place*

*(Corrie Ten Boom's true story of a Christian family who hid Jews during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands)*

[One evening an intern from the hospital brought us a Jewish mother with her newly born baby. The baby's crying presented an extra risk.] And the very next morning into the shop walked the perfect solution. He was a clergyman friend of ours, Pastor in a small town outside of Haarlem, and his home was set back from the street in a large wooded park.

“Good morning, Pastor,” I said, the pieces of the puzzle falling together in my mind.  
“Can we help you?”

I looked at the watch he had brought in for repair. It required a very hard-to-find part.  
“But for you, Pastor, we will do our very best. And now I have something I want to confess.”

The Pastor’s eyes clouded. “Confess?”

I drew him out the back door of the shop and up the stairs to the dining room.

“I confess that I too am searching for something.” The Pastor’s face was now wrinkled with a frown. “Would you be willing to take a Jewish mother and baby into your home? They will almost certainly be arrested otherwise.”

Colour drained from the man’s face. He took a step back from me. “Miss ten Boom! I do hope you’re not involved with any of this illegal concealment and undercover business. It’s just not safe! Think of your father! And your sister – she’s never been strong!”

On impulse I told the Pastor to wait and ran upstairs. [I] asked the mother’s permission to borrow the infant: the little thing weighed hardly anything in my arms.

Back in the dining room I pulled back the coverlet from the baby’s face.

There was a long silence. The man bent forward, his hand in spite of himself reaching for the tiny fist curled round the blanket. For a moment I saw compassion and fear struggle in his face. The he straightened. “No. Definitely not. We could lose our lives for that Jewish child!”

Unseen by either of us, Father had appeared in the doorway. “Give the child to me, Corrie,” he said.

Father held the baby close, his white beard brushing its cheek, looking into its little face with eyes as innocent as the baby’s own. At last he looked up at the Pastor. “You say we could lose our lives for this child. I would consider that the greatest honour that could come to my family.”

The Pastor turned sharply on his heels and walked out of the room.

### Act of Commemoration

The most appropriate focus of this part of the service would be the lighting of candles. Six is the more usual number at such services, one for each of the million or so individuals who perished in the Holocaust. Some congregations may wish to light a seventh, commemorating all others who perished under Nazi rule or in remembrance of another event which has specific relevance to the congregation. Others may wish to light one in memory of all victims of genocide. If more than one candle is lit, ideally, each should be lit by a different member of the congregation.

We light these candles in memory of the six million people, each known to you by name, who perished as a result of human action. We light them as a sign of our determination to dispel darkness wherever we may find it and of our commitment to live for the establishment of the kingdom of heaven on earth.

We light *this candle* in memory of all people, each known to you by name, who perished as a result of human action. We light *it* as a sign of our determination to dispel darkness wherever we may find it and of our commitment to live for the establishment of the kingdom of heaven on earth.

We light this candle for your covenant people  
We light this candle for the Roma people  
We light this candle for the people of Cambodia  
We light this candle for the people of Rwanda  
We light this candle .....

We light this candle in memory of all splintered families and lost communities  
We light this candle in memory of smashed lives and destroyed ambitions  
We light this candle in memory of bewildered, frightened and orphaned children  
We light this candle in memory of those whose last act was a selfless one  
We light this candle in memory of those who lived and died in the service of you and of their neighbour  
We light this candle in recognition of our commitment to work for peace and seek the common good

### Concluding prayer

Lord, you instill in us  
the desire to put our own welfare and social comfort above the basic needs of others,  
The opportunities to become involved in the lives of those we encounter,

The knowledge that it is better to give than to receive,  
The vision to see your image in someone who is different,  
The ability to welcome the stranger and live in harmony with our neighbour,  
The power to be a light in the darkness.  
Inspire us with your Holy Spirit, we pray,  
To live this life to which you have called us;  
That your Way may be known through the wilderness  
And your Kingdom established throughout the earth.

Further liturgical materials and suitable readings including poetry and survivor testimony are available on the HMD website [www.hmd.org.uk](http://www.hmd.org.uk).

Christian texts and readings provided by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, Council of Christians and Jews and Rev. Ray Trudgian.

Hindu prayers provided by Hindu Forum of Britain

Jewish prayers provided by Council of Christians and Jews, Rabbi Aaron Goldstein, Northwood & Pinner Liberal Synagogue and Rabbi Tony Bayfield, Reform Judaism

Muslim readings provided by Anjum Anwar, Dialogue Development Officer, Blackburn Cathedral.