

Leader: We pray above all that the sacredness and wonder of all creation and life be rightly honored, so that all may walk lightly and justly upon the earth. We know from you, God, that death and suffering are not to triumph over life. Revenge and anger shall not triumph over forgiveness and love. **Amen.**

Be Not Afraid (all sing)

Chorus: Be not afraid. I go before you always.
Come follow me, and I will give you rest.

You shall cross the barren desert, but you shall not die of thirst.
You shall wander far in safety though you do not know the way.
You shall speak your words to foreign men and they will understand.
You shall see the face of God and live. **Chorus**

If you pass through raging waters, in the sea you shall not drown.
If you walk amid the burning flames, you shall not be harmed.
If you stand before the power of hell and death is at your side,
Know that I am with you through it all. **Chorus**

Blessed are your poor, for the Kingdom shall be theirs.
Blessed are you that weep and mourn, for one day you shall laugh.
And if wicked men insult and hate you all because of Me,
Blessed, blessed are you! **Chorus**

Light the remaining candles

One by one
In tiny increments
Candle by candle
Gesture by effort
Concern by care
We feed the life-fires of the soul and light the infinite universe
Little by little from within.

Donna Henes, 2002

Music this evening came from the following CDs:

- “Kyrie” from *Alleluia/Kyrie* by Robert Gass and On Wings of Song
- *Make Me an Instrument* by Kurt van Sickle
- “Balm in Gilead,” “Nothing Can Trouble,” and “Bambelela” from *Turn My Heart* by Marty Haugen

**An Evening of Prayer and Reflection
Prior to the Scheduled Execution of
Clarence Ray Allen
Dominican Sisters Center, San Rafael
January 16, 2006**



Evening Schedule

- 6pm Tolling of Bell in Sisters' Garden
7:45pm Meditative Music and Centering
8:10pm Welcome
Pre-Execution Prayer Vigil for Clarence Ray Allen
Music
8:40pm Prayers of Hope on the Eve of Clarence Ray Allen's Execution
Music
9:10pm "Be the change you want to see in the world"
Music
9:40pm Prayer for the Decade of Nonviolence
Music
10:10pm Closing Prayers
10:30pm Assemble for car-pooling to the East Gate of San Quentin Prison
11:00pm Join the execution vigil at San Quentin Prison

Refreshments are available in the dining area next to the Gathering Space.

Please feel free to visit the area for food, drink and conversation.

Rest rooms are available off the hall behind the stained glass window.

You are welcome to come and go as you wish during the course of the evening.

We do request that you respect the silence of the Gathering Space, designated this evening as a sacred place for prayer and reflection.

Thank you.

We will stay at the East Gate until the announcement from prison authorities that the execution has been carried out.

Leader: Let us pray. We pray tonight for strength and blessings from our faith traditions; that we might take in the wisdom of our ancestors and sages, our saints and holy ones, and be fed by the songs and prayers and silences we have shared here.

All: We give thanks for all those gathered here and at other services around our state and at San Quentin in Vigil tonight.

Leader: We give thanks for the blessings of family, friends, loved ones, and companions on the journey.

Leader: We pray now for those not with us tonight, those whom we wish to bring into this sacred space. (We invite you to name them now)

All: We bring into this sacred space and our prayers Clarence Ray Allen, scheduled to die tonight and all those who are close to him.

Leader: We hold in prayer, those who are prisoners on death row, and all who are in prison in this state and country and world, their families and loved ones.

All: We bring into this sacred space and our prayers people that have been murdered; we especially name Alvin Owen, Thsai-Shai Yang, Yen-I Yang and Yee Chen Lin.

Leader: We hold in prayer all victims of violent crimes in this country and in the world, their families and loved ones.

All: We pray for the victims of crimes of injustice and oppression, torture and neglect, especially those who are abused, refugees, homeless, unwanted, those struggling with addictions.

Leader: We pray for all who care for and struggle on behalf of justice and freedom; that they may be continually affirmed, renewed and uplifted by the grace of God and the prayers and support of others.

All: We pray for a spirit of repentance and redemption in the world, making us forgiving and forgiven people of God.

Leader: We remember our own acts of violence and hatred—as individuals, as part of our cultures, and as a nation. Forgive us, loving God.

All: We pray that all those who do not see the injustice and futility of the death penalty might be moved by the words and actions of this night; and by God's mercy come to a change of heart, turning vengeance into clear thinking and hardness of heart into compassion.

Meditative Music: “Bambelela/Never Give Up”

CLOSING PRAYERS

O God of many names
Lover of all,
We pray for peace
In our hearts,
In our homes,
In our nation,
In our world,
The peace of your will,
The peace of our need.

Amazing Grace (all sing)

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found. Was blind, but now I see.

‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come;
Tis grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

When we’ve been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise than when we first begun.

We praise and thank God for the great gift of Life and for God’s hope-filled promise of mercy, for we all stand in need of that mercy.

We ask God to lead our society from death to life, and from ways of violence to ways of peace.

May we humbly recognize the ways of violence which we carry within ourselves and ask God to transform those by God’s Love. Amen.

We Shall Overcome (all sing)

- 1 We shall overcome...
- 2 The state shall not take life...
- 3 We are not afraid...
- 4 We’ll walk hand in hand...
- 5 God will see us through...
- 6 We shall overcome...

AN EVENING OF PRAYER AND REFLECTION

Meditative Music: “Kyrie”

Welcome: Sister Marion Irvine, OP

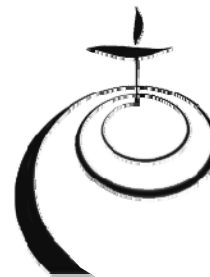
PRE-EXECUTION PRAYER VIGIL FOR CLARENCE RAY ALLEN

Call to Worship:

On the vigil of the execution of Clarence Ray Allen by the State of California, we gather to proclaim and affirm our belief in the sacredness of all human life and to pray for non-violence in ourselves, in our society, and in our world. We pray for Clarence Ray Allen who is scheduled to be put to death tonight. We pray for his eternal welfare and for the comfort and consolation of his family and friends. We pray for all who sit on death row both in California and across the country. We pray for Mary Sue Kitts, Bryan Schletewitz, Josephine Rocha and Douglas Scott, defenseless victims of violent crime. We pray for their families and friends and ask comfort and healing for all those whose loved ones have died through violence in our day. We pray for those who have authorized tonight's execution and for those who will perform it.

We pray that God will help our nation, our state, our families and each of us individually, to turn from outrage to forgiveness, from desires of revenge to an understanding of God’s justice which mysteriously leads to mercy. We pray for an end to the death penalty, that our state will cease to kill in our name, and rather actively seek alternatives to the use of death as a penalty for crime. Through this vigil may we humbly recognize the ways of violence which each of us carry within ourselves and ask God to transform those by God’s love.

Lighting of the Candle:



Let the light of this candle burn away our hurts and replace them with the healing touch of Jesus.

Reading: Ezekiel 33:10-11

As for you, speak to the house of Israel: You people say, “Our crimes and our sins weigh us down; we are rotting away because of them. How can we survive?” Answer them: As I live, says our God, I swear I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked one, but rather in the conversion of the wicked, that they may live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! Why should you die?

Silent Reflection

Reading: Jeremiah 8: 18-23

My grief is incurable,
My heart within me is faint.
Listen! The cry of the daughter of my people,
far and wide in the land!
Is God no longer in Zion,
is her Ruler no longer in her midst?
The harvest is passed, the summer is at an end,
and yet we are not safe!
I am broken by the ruin of the daughter of my people.
I am disconsolate; horror has seized me.
Is there no balm in Gilead,
no physician there?
Why grows not new flesh
over the wound of the daughter of my people?
Oh, that my head were a spring of water,
my eyes a fountain of tears,
That I might weep day and night
over the slain of the daughter of my people!

Response: (chorally)

There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole,
There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.

Sometimes I feel discouraged and think my work's in vain,
But then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again.

There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole,
There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.

If you cannot preach like Peter,
If you cannot pray like Paul,
You can tell the love of Jesus, and say, “He died for all.”

violence. Strengthen us so that we might walk your path of nonviolence.

Leader: Quotes from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., *Letters from a Birmingham Jail*:

“There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and people are no longer willing to be plunged into despair. I hope, sires, you can understand legitimate and unavoidable impatience.”

Leader: “I still have a dream today.”

All: “That one day justice will roll down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream.”

Leader: “I still have a dream today.”

All: “That in all of our state houses and city halls people will be elected to go there who will do justice and love mercy and walk humbly with their God.”

Leader: “I still have a dream today.”

All: “That one day war will come to an end; that people will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, that nations will no longer rise up against nations, neither will they study war any more.”

Leader: “I still have a dream today.”

All: “That one day the lamb and the lion will lie down together and everyone will sit under their own fig tree and none shall be afraid.”

Leader: We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history there is such a thing as being too late. Procrastination is still the thief of time. We must move past indecision to action. Now let us begin. Now let us rededicate ourselves to the long and bitter -- but beautiful -- struggle for a new world. This is the calling of the children of God, and our sisters and brothers wait eagerly for our response. Shall we say the odds are too great? Shall we tell them the struggle is too hard? Or will there be another message, of longing, of hope, of solidarity with their yearnings, of commitment to their cause, whatever the cost? The choice is ours, and though we might prefer it otherwise we must choose in this crucial moment of human history.

All: And God, give us the grace to say “Yes” and the faith to know that you are ever at our side. **Amen.**

All: We believe that there are women and men who when elected will act justly and love mercy, and walk humbly with their God.

Leader: We can see the vision of the lion and lamb together and of human beings living in peace with one another without fear.

All: We believe the tough places will be made smooth and the crooked places will be made straight.

Leader: We believe truly that the glory of God will be revealed, and that all flesh shall recognize it.

Reader 5: Proclamation of the Gospel according to Matthew (5:38-48)

Reader 6: Some further inspirational words from Martin Luther King, Jr.

"In spite of this prevailing tendency to conform, we as Christians have a mandate to be nonconformist. There are some things in our world to which [people] of goodwill must be maladjusted. I confess that I never intend to be adjusted to the evils of discrimination, to the moral degeneracy of religious bigotry and the corroding effects of narrow sectarianism, to economic conditions that deprive people of work and food and to the insanity of militarism and the self-defeating effects of physical violence. Human solution lies in the hands of the creatively maladjusted.

I call upon you to be maladjusted as Jesus of Nazareth who dreamed a dream of God and of all of us as sisters and brothers. God grant that we will be so maladjusted that we will be able to go out and change our world and our civilization. And then we will be able to move from the bleak and desolate midnight of men and women's inhumanity to others. Then we will be able to move to the bright and glittering daybreak of freedom and justice.

The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state. It must be guide and critic of the state and never its tool. If the church doesn't recapture its prophetic zeal, it will become an irrelevant social club without moral or spiritual authority."

Silent Reflection

Leader: Let us pray for those who struggle to walk the path of nonviolence. (We invite you to name some who walk this path.) Keep us, O God, creatively maladjusted to the evil that has taken root in our world.

All: Help us strive to be nonconformists in a society that encourages us to get our pound of flesh by striking back when struck.

Leader: We call to mind all those who have been brutalized by violence as well as those of us who have committed violent crimes. Have mercy on them.

All: Help us, O God, to be your people. Clear our minds and hearts of

All: Lead me, Forgiving God, to the graces of healing and the power of forgiveness, so that though I now feel grief and death within my soul, I may one day be resurrected to a fuller life.

Silent Reflection

Reading from Death as a Penalty by Howard Zehr, Mennonite Central Committee

Christ's death on the cross, itself an application of capital punishment, wiped away the Old Testament ceremonial and moral basis for the death penalty. No more blood needs to be shed to testify to the sacredness of life. Christ died that others might live. By trading places with the guilty and the enemy, by dying in the place of the murderer Barrabas, Christ closed off the Old Testament reason for the death penalty. Christ did not simply eliminate the rationale for the death penalty. He constantly reiterated our responsibility to see Christ in our needy neighbor, even in our enemies.

When Christ himself was executed, he gave a model response to his enemies in his dying words: "Father, forgive them." Jesus teaches that we are to love those who harm us and he sees no way to love a person without caring for life. If we love God, Jesus says we are obligated to show that love in our actions toward others. Christ moves us from the Old Testament perspective of limited retaliation to non-retaliation and active love. We also have to repudiate capital punishment because it is incompatible with the basic focus of the gospel—reconciliation and redemption.

Christ's concern is redemptive, and he provided us a model by giving himself for his enemies. We must give the opportunity for redemption to every sinner, without exception—even for a murderer who did not do that for his victim. Jesus did not die for some sinners. He died for all. Unless we believe that every person, whether murderer or not, is redeemable and must have the chance to be redeemed there is no real gospel. To deprive a person the possibility of reconciliation to God and humanity—or to end the life of someone who has received that possibility—is the real tragedy of capital punishment.

Silent Reflection

Reading: Matthew 7: 1-5

If you want to avoid judgment, stop passing judgment. Your verdict on others will be the verdict passed on you. The measure with which you measure will be used to measure you. Why look at the speck in your brother or sister's eye when you miss the plank in your own? How can you say to another, 'Let me take that speck out of your eye,' while all the time the plank remains in your own? You hypocrite! Remove the plank from your own eye first; then you will see clearly to take the speck from another's eye.

Silent Reflection

Reading from Restorative Justice Liturgy Resource, Mennonite Central Committee

God I am in pain; a wound in my heart caused by another is the source of this suffering. That heart of mine, God of Hearts, is filled with anger so that I am unable to be loving and caring. I want to return injury for injury, pain for pain, and so can not desire to forgive the other. You and I both know that such an attitude is wrong; yet it is very real and its pain overflows into my whole life. Before I can come to the point of wanting to forgive I must find an antidote for the poison of this attitude. I need Your help for my feelings are confused, and so I need to find some order among them. Lead me, Forgiving God, to the graces of healing and the power of forgiveness, so that though I now feel grief and death within my soul, I may one day be resurrected to a fuller life.

Silent Reflection

Intercessions: (The response is: **God, hear our prayer**)

For the victims of crime and their families, especially Mary Sue Kitts, Bryan Schletewitz, Josephine Rocha and Douglas Scott. For victims of capital punishment and their families, especially for Clarence Ray Allen, who is to be executed tonight. For those participating in his execution done in our name...we pray to our God. **R....**

For the poor and powerless of our society, the vanishing middle class, and the rich and the powerful...we pray to our God. **R....**

For the leaders of our government and its citizens...we pray to our God. **R....**

For the countries of the Third World and the countries of the First World...we pray to our God. **R....**

For all who are separated or made enemies by their religious beliefs...we pray to our God. **R....**

For people just beginning their lives and people who have lived a long life, may they show each other respect and understanding...we pray to our God. **R....**

For women who struggle for equality and respect in the workplace and/or in the home...we pray to our God. **R....**

For all those whose faith is threatened by tensions in our Church...we pray to our God. **R....**

For a just resolution to all the issues which deprive us of our humanity...we pray to our God. **R....**

Reader 3 continues: Another Voice of Nonviolence: Mohandas K. Gandhi from *My Faith in Nonviolence*

“Fear and love are contradictory. Love is reckless in giving away, oblivious as to what it gets in return. Love wrestles with the world as with the self and ultimately lends itself to solution if we are determined to make the law of truth and nonviolence the law of life.

For truth and nonviolence are, to me, faces of the same coin. The law of love will work, just as the law of gravitation will work, whether we accept it or not. The more I work at this law (of love) the more I feel the delight in life, the delight in the scheme of this universe. It gives me a peace and a meaning of the mysteries of nature that I have no power to describe.”

Silent Reflection

Reader 4: The following are the words of Mother Teresa:

People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered;

Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives;

Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies;

Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you;

Be honest and frank anyway.

What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight;

Build anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous;

Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow;

Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have and it may just never be enough;

Give the world the best you have anyway.

You see, in the final analysis, it's all between you and God;

It was *never* between you and them anyway.

Silent Reflection

Leader: We believe, O God, that one day justice will roll down like water and righteousness like a might stream.

Reader 1 A Reading from the Letter to the Thessalonians

Dearly Beloved: We are not living in the dark, and so the day will never take us by surprise, like a thief sneaking into our lives unnoticed. We are children of the light; we are friends of the day. The darkness does not feel at home with us. Therefore, do not continue to sleep as those who have no vision, but wake up and rise with the new day.

Silent Reflection

Reader 2: Please reflect with me on the following words of Martin Luther King, Jr. on violence and nonviolence.

"The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral, begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it. Through violence you may murder the liar, but you cannot murder the lie, nor establish truth. Through violence you murder the hater but you do not murder hate. In fact, violence merely increases hate...hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

Silent Reflection

Reader 2 continues: In another speech Martin Luther King, Jr. continued this line of thinking and expanded upon it.

"Violence begets violence; hate begets hate; and toughness begets a greater toughness. It is all a descending spiral, and the end is destruction — for everybody. Along the way of life, someone must have enough sense and morality to cut off the chain of hate by projecting the ethics of love into the center of our lives. To meet hate with retaliatory hate would do nothing but intensify the existence of evil in the universe. We must meet the forces of hate with the power of love; we must meet physical force with soul force. If I respond to hate with reciprocal hate, I do nothing but intensify the cleavage in the broken community. I can only close the gap by meeting hate with love.

Civilization and violence are antithetical concepts. Nonviolence is not sterile passivity, but a powerful moral force which makes for social transformation. Sooner or later, all the people of the world will have to discover a way to live together in peace, and thereby transform the pending cosmic elegy into a creative psalm of brother and sisterhood.

Silent Reflection

Reader 3: Let us pray now for those who are on death row throughout the U.S. Let us pray for their families and friends. Let us pray for prisoners throughout the world.

Silent Reflection

For all who call us enemy...we pray to our God. **R....**

For opposing factions, both within the political arena and within the Church... we pray to our God. **R....**

For people of every religious thought, especially where differences in doctrine lead to hatred and separation...we pray to our God. **R....**

For a spirit of hope among people of good will, which is based on Gospel values and the desire to further your kingdom...we pray to our God. **R....**

Response: (pray together)

God of grace and God of glory, you have called us to choose life in the world you call good. Yet we have missed our high calling and have not chosen to know the things that bring peace and wholeness to your creation. We pray that it is not too late for us to build a society on justice and fairness, to remove the things that put people in jail and on death row, to reform the prison system, to stand silent before the reality of human folly. We confess our complacency that allows evil to be unchecked. God have mercy on us, free us from apathy, and give us your strength and your vision of a whole world. By your power, may we go forth with strong resolve to do what we must to build a community that affirms life and wholeness and justice for all your children. **Amen**

(From Hafiz, Persian poet mystic)

Don't surrender your loneliness
So quickly.
Let it cut more deep.
Let it ferment and season
As few human
Or even divine ingredients can.

Something missing in my heart tonight
Has made my eyes so soft,
My voice
So tender.

My need of God
Absolutely
Clear.

Closing Prayer by Sr. Helen Prejean (pray together)

God of Compassion,
You that let the rain fall on the just and the unjust.
Expand and deepen our hearts

so that we may love as you love,
even those among us
who have caused the greatest pain by taking life.

For there is in our land a greater cry for vengeance
as we fill up death rows and kill the killers
in the name of justice, in the name of peace.

Jesus, our brother,
You suffered execution at the hands of the state
but you did not let hatred overcome you.
Help us to reach out to victims of violence
so that our enduring love may help heal them.

Holy Spirit of God,
You strengthen us in the struggle for justice.
Help us to work tirelessly
for the abolition of state-sanctioned death
and to renew our society in its very heart
so that violence will be no more.

We make this prayer to you,
the Creator and Lover of life,
asking all in the name of Christ Our Lord
and in the power of His Holy Spirit. Amen!

Meditative Music: “Balm in Gilead” (instrumental)

PRAYERS OF HOPE ON THE EVE OF EXECUTION

Light a candle from the central flame of peace. (After lighting the candle, all say:)

Let the light of this candle burn away resentment and enable us to
willingly accept the invitation to walk in the light.

Let us pray. Loving God, be with us tonight as we gather to pray for all those
affected by violence. **Response: God, hear our prayer.**

We pray for Alvin Owen, Thsai-Shai Yang, Yen-I Yang and Yee Chen Lin, vic-
tims of violent death in 1979. **Response:**

We pray for healing for their families and friends. Comfort and heal all those
whose loved ones have died through violence in California. **Response:**

We pray for Clarence Ray Allen scheduled to die a violent death tonight. We
pray for his family and friends—for their comfort and consolation. We pray for

May my love for friend, enemy and outcast be without measure.
May my needs be few and my living simple.
May my actions bear witness to the suffering of others.
May my hands never harm a living being.
May my steps stay on the journey of justice.
May my tongue speak for those who are poor without fear of the powerful.
May my prayers rise with patient discontent until no child is hungry.
May my life's work be a passion for peace and nonviolence.
May my soul rejoice in the present moment.
May my imagination overcome death and despair with new possibility.
And may I risk reputation, comfort and security to bring this hope to children.

-Mary Lou Kownacki, OSB

Lighting of candle

Let the lighting of this candle symbolize the change in our hearts from anger to
peace, from violent actions and thoughts to justice tempered with mercy.

Let us pray that we might have the mind and heart of God. (pause)

O God, open our eyes so that we might see like you and having heard, speak
prophetic words of peace and nonviolence.

Open our hearts, our souls, the entirety of our being so that we might love like
you, and having loved, be transformed more and more into your people. Give us
the faith to bring your justice and your nonviolent love into our lives. **Amen.**

Prayer of St. Francis (pray chorally)

Make us a channel of your peace;
Where there is hatred, let us sow your love;
When there is injury, O God, your pardon;
Where there is doubt, let us sow true faith in you.

Make us a channel of your peace;
Where there is despair in life, let us sow hope;
Where there is darkness let us bring your light;
And where there is sadness, help us be your joy.

Make us a channel of your peace;
Grant that we 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 giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
It is in dying [to ourselves] that we are born to eternal life.

Silent Reflection

my legs as thin as bamboo sticks,
and I am the arms merchant,
selling deadly weapons to Uganda.

I am the twelve-year-old girl, refugee on a small boat,
who throws herself into the ocean after being raped by a sea pirate,
and I am the pirate, my heart not yet capable of seeing and living.
I am a member of the politburo, with plenty of power in my hands,
and I am the man who has to pay his 'debt of blood' to my people,
dying slowly in a forced labor camp.
My joy is like spring, so warm it makes flowers bloom in all walks of life.
My pain is like a river of tears, so full it fills the four oceans.

Please call me by my true names,
so I can hear all my cries and laughs at once,
so I can see that my joy and pain are one.
Please call me by my true names,
so I can wake up,
and so the door of my heart can be left open,
the door of compassion.

-Thich Nhat Hanh

CLOSING PRAYER:

All powerful God, you have the power to set creation in motion, to sustain and restore it. You have the power to raise life where there was none, to animate people for love and justice. You have the power to transform people into agents for peace and reconciliation.

We ask for the grace to cooperate with your Spirit, to prepare ourselves to receive you by dropping our stones, to desire peace in our hearts and allow you to enter. May we always know our need for you. We ask for the grace to let go of our resentments, our hurts, our judgment, our bias, our revenge – whatever might block us from your forgiveness working through us. We also ask for the grace of acceptance of ourselves and others as being on the way as we never arrive...as long as we are human beings. May we have the wisdom to not judge people by standards we do not live by ourselves. May we regularly examine our own lives instead. With Bishop Desmond Tutu may we remember “There is no future without forgiveness.” **Amen.**

Meditative Music: “Nothing Can Trouble/Nada Te Turbe”

PRAYER FOR THE DECADE OF NONVIOLENCE

I bow to the sacred in all creation.
May my spirit fill the world with beauty and wonder.
May my mind seek truth with humility and openness.
May my heart forgive without limit.

all others on death row in California, especially Michael Morales, James Heard, Lanell Harris, Robert Cowan, Watson Allison, LeRoy Wheeler, Donald Smith, David Ghent, Dennis Ervine, Richard Parsons, Bryan Jones, Ted Wrest, Jeff Shelton, Richard Moon, Ignacio Tafoya, William Payton, Blufford Hayes, Steve Livaditis, Michael Hill and Scott Peterson. **Response:**

Help our nation, the State of California, and each of us to turn from revenge to forgiveness and unconditional love. Bring an end to the death penalty in this country. **Response:**

Leader: We live in a time of darkness. Many lives have been snuffed out senselessly. Tonight we remember the victims and those, over 1,000, who have been executed in the United States in retaliation for their deaths, since the reinstatement of the death penalty. **Amen.**

Meditative Music: “Make Me an Instrument”

“BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE IN THE WORLD”

-Mohandas Gandhi

Opening Prayer:

God of love and life, we come this evening holding before you the lives of Alvin Owen, Thsai-Shai Yang, Yen-I Yang and Yee Chen Lin. May they know your love and peace. We also carry in our hearts their neighbors and many friends. We bring before you all the people wounded by this tragedy—including the police and personnel who witnessed, handled and investigated this case. We hold before you Clarence Ray Allen. We ask that all involved might be comforted by your presence, your grace, and your love. **Amen.**

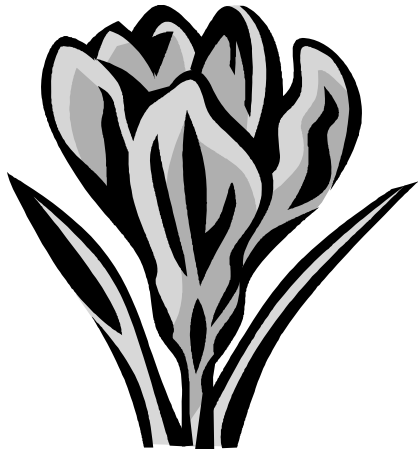
John 8:2-11

Early in the morning he came again to the temple; all the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in their midst they said to him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such as these. What do you say about her?” This they said to test him, that they might have some charges to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground and as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, “Let the one who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” And once more he bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. But when they heard this, they went away, one by one, beginning with the eldest, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus looked up and said to her, “Woman, where

are they? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again.”

Silent Reflection

How Often Must I Forgive? Patricia Schnapp. RSM



The first crocuses of spring
forgive your indifference,
your neglect at alleluias at sunrise
and the reassuring spill of birdsong
from still-bare maples.
March forgives your detraction
and contempt for its necessary gusts
and its mud
like that made by Jesus with spittle
and now rubbed on the face of your
year to cure it of winter.

Prayers of Gratitude

God of all creation, we thank you for you. As Creator God, you set in motion this amazing universe and world, the earth and all that is within it. We thank you for creating us and thank you for the wonder of each person. We thank you for sending us your prophets to show us the way.

We thank you for the gift of Jesus who has shown us that forgiveness is a miracle far greater than raising a paralytic, and that with faith the impossible is most possible and that love always does prevail.

We thank you for the gift of Buddha who has shown us the path to loving kindness, to compassion, and to respect for all of life.

We thank you for sending us examples of how to love and to live, how to let go, how to let your forgiveness work through us. Tonight we hold up in prayer the victims of murder and their families, their friends, neighbors, associates. Our desire is for their healing, but also for our own. It is not our place to judge those who seemingly cannot forgive, and who may want the death penalty. We cannot ‘throw stones’ at them either. We truly do not know what motivates them and we honor their pain. We cannot judge that you are not working with them and in them in where they are. **Amen.**

Silent Reflection

TEACHING: Kerry Kennedy

“I was eight years old when my father was murdered. It is almost impossible to describe the pain of losing a parent to a senseless murder. And in the aftermath, it is similarly impossible to quiet the confusion: “Why him? Why this? Why me? But even as a child one thing was clear to me: I didn’t want the killer, in turn, to be killed. I remember lying in bed and praying, ‘Please God. Please don’t take his life too.’ I saw nothing that could be accomplished in the loss of one life being answered with the loss of another. And I knew, far too vividly, the anguish that would spread through another family – another set of parents, children, brothers, and sisters thrown into grief.

PRAYERS OF PETITION

Loving and gracious God, we remember the many, many victims of murder throughout the United States. We remember the wives left widows, husbands left widowers. We remember the siblings who have lost their earliest playmates and companions through the years. We remember the children who have lost parents and the parents who have lost children – the inexplicable agony that never ends. We remember friends who have lost soul mates, buddies, and cherished times. We remember neighbors who lost not only their neighbors, but also the safety and freedom of neighborhoods. We ask for your consolation, for your blessing, for your healing and freeing touch of forgiveness – for them and for us.

Amen

Please Call Me By My True Names (Read Chorally)

Do not say that I’ll depart tomorrow
because even today I still arrive.
Look deeply: I arrive in every second
to be a bud on a spring branch,
to be a tiny bird, with wings still fragile,
learning to sing in my new nest,
to be a caterpillar in the heart of a flower,
to be a jewel hiding itself in a stone.
I still arrive, in order to laugh and to cry,
in order to fear and to hope,
the rhythm of my heart is the birth and
death of all that are alive.

I am the mayfly metamorphosing on the surface of the river,
and I am the bird which, when spring comes, arrives in time
to eat the mayfly.

I am the frog swimming happily in the clear pond,
and I am also the grass-snake who, approaching in silence,
feeds itself on the frog.

I am the child in Uganda, all skin and bones,