

A Prayer For America

(In Memory of Joseph Cardinal Bernardin)

Our Lord God,

You are not a Democrat or a Republican
Nor a liberal or a conservative
You are not American, Chinese or Russian
Nor Catholic, Jewish or Muslim
Nor Black, White or Latino
Nor are you poor or wealthy or gay or straight
You do not dictate a strategy to pursue an issue.
You do not champion an ideology or particular church above all others.
You are wider than all of our disputes and deeper than all of our meanness.
As you told Moses on Sinai, your name is "I will be as I will be."

We are done with claiming that you are on our side and not on theirs.
We are done pretending that you have told us that one form of protecting life is dear to you and not another is.
That one legislative or judicial strategy is yours and another is not.
You revealed your self and your will to all of us, not just to some of us.
We wrap ourselves in your seamless garment of life.

You told your disciples, "Whatever you do for the least of my brothers and sisters, you do for me."
You are the God of justice, compassion and life.
You ache at the disparities of our world and at our hatreds.
You are the prince of peace who does not tolerate war as a first resort.
We come to know you in another.
We pray for your return to our troubled world and our struggling country. As Rabbi Abraham Heschel said, "You are either the father of all men or no man, concerned about everything or nothing."
We see you in all men and women.
We see you in everything.

We thank you for our Church, which we love in her beauty and her humanness.
We thank you for the sacraments that bring you to us, that point to you, that transform us.
We thank you for the saints who intercede on our behalf.
We thank you for being the creator of this world which is precious beyond all words.
We thank you for becoming human and knowing what it is to be one of us.
We thank you for becoming spirit and coming to us when more than one of us is gathered in your name.
Along with Father Thomas Merton, we pray that our "desire to please you, does in fact please you, and that we hope...that we will never do anything apart from that desire."

Amen

- Gerald Kellman