

Worship resources

The Lord's Prayer

(Central American)

The following is a re-working of the Lord's Prayer, a contemporary, contextual paraphrase, from Central America. It is included in the 1992 compilation, *Bread of Tomorrow*, edited by Janet Morley and published by SPCK and Christian Aid. There is no copyright listed for the prayer itself, but the compilation and editorial matter is © Christian Aid. The prayer below is found on page 63.

Our Father,
who is in us here on earth,
holy is your name
in the hungry
who share their bread and their song.
Your kingdom come,
which is a generous land
which flows with milk and honey.
Let us do your will,
standing up when all are sitting down,
and raising our voice
when all are silent.
You are giving us our daily bread
in the song of the bird and the miracle of the corn.
Forgive us
for keeping silent in the face of injustice,
and for burying our dreams,
for not sharing bread and wine,
love and the land,
among us, now.
Don't let us fall into the temptation
of shutting the door through fear;
of resigning ourselves to hunger and injustice;
of taking up the same arms as the enemy.
But deliver us from evil.
Give us the perseverance and the solidarity

to look for love,
even if the path has not yet been trodden,
even if we fall;
so we shall have known your kingdom
which is being built for ever and ever.
Amen.

The Salvadoran Cross

Many people will be familiar with the colourful wooden crosses of El Salvador, unfinished wood on one side, and brightly painted scenes from village life on the other. The risen Christ often appears as the central figure, present and known in the midst of everyday life.

It is said that the crosses had their origin in the brutal persecutions which led up to the civil war and continued during the conflict. Many people fled their homes during this time, and took refuge in neighbouring countries. Living in refugee camps, they struggled with the painful memories of what they had seen, and wrestled with the uncertainty of the future. And yet they struggled, too, with how to express and to live their deeply held Christian faith in such traumatic circumstances.

One of the responses they made was a very practical, and in the end, a very beautiful one. Just as the apostle Paul urged the Philippians to take account of and pay attention to the things in their lives that were honourable, just, pleasing, and worthy of praise (Philippians 4.8-9), so too the Salvadoran refugees named for themselves all the things that still, in spite of everything, brought hope and meaning to their lives: the beauty of the sunrise, their children, the stories of the gospels, the life of their village, and so on. And then they painted them in thanksgiving and praise onto wooden crosses.

The crosses are beautiful; they are also a witness to the resurrection, and to the work of God in bringing hope out of darkness, a light and a way in the midst of despair, and life from the seed that falls into the ground and dies, and only thus bears much fruit.

As part of your All-Age worship, therefore, the story of the crosses can be told, and plain cardboard crosses (or a single large cross) can be decorated or painted by the congregation in a similar way. This can be done during the service, or beforehand, and when the crosses are displayed, those who painted or decorated them will have before them a way of speaking about the reality of resurrection hope in their own communities, and in their own lives.