

LITANY FOR THE SUFFERING

Litany authored by Rev. Dr. Susan K. Smith

Leader: God, we know that You can do all things and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

People: You created us all; we are precious in Your sight.

Leader: And yet, God, there is great pain and suffering in the land. Some of Your children are crying out to you; others are so filled with pain and suffering that they cannot call on Your name.

People: We do not understand why there is so much suffering; we do not understand why so often, it is the poorest who suffer most.

Leader: There was a hurricane named Harvey and then a flood that violated the state of Texas and threw her people into suffering. There was a mudslide in Sierra Leone that left too many of Your children dead, buried in the mud.

People: Your people are suffering because too many of them have lost everything and don't have anywhere to go. Lord, in Your mercy, hear us.

Leader: There is a hurricane named Irma which is devastating some islands in the Caribbean and is headed toward Miami.

People: There will be more suffering.

Leader: There was an major earthquake in Mexico and a Tsunami may come.

People: There will be more suffering.

Leader: The leader of the free world rescinded an act of compassion that helped children of undocumented parents.

People: There will be more suffering.

Leader: Job suffered, and toward the end of his suffering he called out to you and asked You to hear him.

People: The people are crying to You, asking You to hear them.

Leader: God, how can we represent You in this time of great suffering? What would You have us say and do to show people that You are with them, no matter how alone they feel?

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People: God, hear us! Guide us! We need Your direction.

Leader: Some of those who are suffering have turned away from You. They do not understand why You have allowed them to suffer. They know You are present, but they have rejected you because of their pain.

People: God, hear us! Guide us! We need your direction!

Leader: Your people are suffering. Some of them believe in You; others don't, but they are all Your children, and they are all suffering.

People: Help us be the vessels You created so that we can show them that in the time of trouble, as in the time of peace, You are there. Help us to show that in times of great suffering, You hide us in Your tabernacle.

Leader: We will never understand why the heathen rage against us. We will never understand why You allow suffering, but help us to understand that in suffering, You are there.

People: Help us to believe and to proclaim that you are with those who suffer, always. Help us to find truth in that promise and to work to help others who are suffering because that promise gives us strength.

Leader: One day we shall behold You, but until then, all we can do is show people that in their pain and suffering, You are there.

People: Those who suffer must understand, God, that in the time of trouble, you hide us all in Your tabernacle.

Leader: In the tabernacle there are those who are suffering now: people who have lost everything. People whose families have rejected them. Children of undocumented workers. Little girls and young women who are victims of sex trafficking. The hungry. The naked. The homeless.

People: And the people who have lost everything, or something which was important to them, because life produced a storm, either physical or spiritual or emotional. Lord, hear us! **Leader:** The psalmist in Psalm 17 asks You to "rise up" and confront his enemies.

People: Lord, we ask the same – that You confront our enemies and at the same time, strengthen those who are hurting because of their enemies.

Leader: Lord, help us to have compassion for those who are suffering, in this land, in India, in Africa ...all over the world.

ALL: Help us to hear those who suffer. Help us to care about those who suffer. Help us to serve those who suffer, not because we are asked to, but because we must.

Rev. Dr. Susan K. Smith

Writer, author, musician, pastor, preacher and social justice advocate. She is a graduate of Yale Divinity School and author of "Crazy Faith: Ordinary People; Extraordinary Lives," which won the 2009 National Best Books Award. Follow Rev. Dr. Susan K. Smith on Twitter:www.twitter.com/cassad