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## PRAYERS

### **Sisters of Mercy's Critical Concerns Through the Lens of Nonviolence**

The Sisters of Mercy were founded out of a deep concern for persons who are poor. Today, that commitment is focused in five “critical concerns” that we address through prayer; attention to personal, communal and institutional choices; education; advocacy with legislators and other government leaders; and corporate engagement.

These Critical Concerns are focused on nonviolence, immigration, women, care of earth, and racism.

We believe these areas of critical concern are all interconnected and what affects one also affects the others as part of the web of life's connections. At one time we may have a more concentrated focus on one but a closer look allows us to see how each hinges on the other and forms a whole.

The prayers and reflection pieces to follow view Mercy's Critical Concerns using the lens of nonviolence.

We invite everyone to use these resources and to share with others.



## Nonviolence and Earth



### **Opening Prayer**

**Leader:** O God of Compassion and Peace bless us with an awareness of your presence with us as we gather together in this space.

**All:** O Compassionate, peaceful God, we are grateful for your presence and ask to be open and receptive to your call to be nonviolent.

**Reading:** What Must We Do?

Our situation as humans on planet Earth presents us with both crisis and opportunity. Awareness of our planetary crisis can spur us to do the kind of rethinking that can open new vistas in our minds and hearts. And those new vistas will, hopefully, inspire in us a renewed sense of commitment to place our individual and group energies at the service of the forward movement of life on planet Earth. How might we summarize what we know? Here are some of the factors...

We know that our planet is ailing because of our human lack of care and that the human species is collectively engaging in behaviors that risk not only our own self-destruction but the destruction of millions (even billions) of years of Earth's life-giving creativity.

We know that we are in a transitional time, in terms of both psychological and cultural development. We have a new global awareness of the interdependence of the whole community of life on planet Earth which will require changes in both our thinking and behaviors.

We know that as we begin to integrate a new cosmological and evolutionary perspective into our spirituality, we must rethink who we are and who God is. We must find new language, new ways of conceptualizing and imaging, new "fingers to point to the moon."

Knowing the vast, fathomless reaches of outer space, we also know the real impossibility of *containing* God in human thought or language and of accurately naming God. But we also know the importance of the revelation of our Christian tradition which centers upon the truth of God's incarnation and points us toward human participation in God's creative dynamic of dying and rising with and in the whole creation. We can experience, speak of, celebrate and participate in God's presence in human flesh and in the future life of our planet.

This revelation can inspire us and guide us with the wisdom we need to address the urgency of our planetary crisis.

We know that, while understanding and relating differently to the world and our own human existence is urgently *required of us*, making these changes has far-reaching implications, is difficult and may contain risks.

*'Making the Shift' by Elaine M. Prevallet, SL (used with permission)*

**Reflection:**

What are the opportunities presented to me by this new consciousness?

How have I responded to this new planetary awareness?

What are the risks inherent in responding to this new revelation of the cosmos?

What personal changes am I willing to make in order to preserve Earth?

**Sharing:**

Each one is invited to share his/her reflections about responding to the new understanding of the cosmos.

Consider what may be being asked of you at this time in history in order to preserve Earth for future generations.

What responsibilities are you feeling?

**Possible Actions:**

Read additional materials about the emerging cosmos.

Assess personal use of Earth's resources and consider ways of being a good steward of creation.

Choose to engage in an action (letter writing, lobby visit, demonstration, workshop, presentation) related to some aspect of caring for Earth. Some examples include: fracking, climate change, genetically modified organisms (GMO), privatization of water, organic foods, etc. The list is unlimited so choose something that you are passionate about and make a difference!

**Closing Prayer:**

O God, of Mercy and Compassion, open our heart to your grace. We ask You to:

Bless us with courage to embrace nonviolence in our everyday lives

Bless us with vision to seek alternatives when violence appears as the only solution

Encourage us to look deeply at our own complicity that allows violence to continue in our own hearts and in our world

Bless us with insight to see the roots of violence inherent in our Critical Concerns

Bless us with the tenacity to stay committed to the struggle to shape a more peaceful, nonviolent world for all your people

O good and gracious God, source of all life,  
All creation is charged with your Divine Energy.  
Grant us the strength and courage, we pray,  
for a radical transformation of own lives and a  
deeper realization of your Kin-dom among us. Amen