

Participation-December 2018

December 1—World AIDS Day



December 1, 2018 marks the 30th global World AIDS Day, to raise awareness about the continued epidemic, to unite together against the virus, to commemorate those who have died and to show support for the over 34 million people currently living with HIV worldwide. The red ribbon is worn by people all over the world as a symbol of awareness and support of people living with HIV and AIDS. It was created when HIV was highly stigmatized, and the suffering of communities and individuals living with HIV remained largely hidden. This symbol helped bring HIV into the public consciousness and has led to better medical care, less discrimination against those living with the virus, increased support for those working to find a cure, widespread prevention education and voluntary testing programs, and a recognition that HIV ultimately affects us all. As we continue to support treatment, prevention and testing efforts, may all of us continue to reach out to those infected and affected, that they may experience with love, dignity and hope.

Holy One, bless all those who suffer due to HIV and AIDS. Help us to reach out to them and to show them that they are not alone. May we offer our love and support in whatever ways we can. Bless those who are working hard to find a means of prevention and cure. Bless those who dedicate themselves to education and HIV testing so that the spread of the virus can be stopped and early treatment can help people live healthy and productive lives. We pray for a world free from HIV/AIDS.

December 3—International Day of Persons with Disabilities



International
Day of
Persons with
Disabilities

3 DECEMBER

December 3 is a day for raising awareness of, and helping to create real opportunities for, people living with disabilities. This year's theme is: Empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring inclusiveness and equality. Unfortunately, in many places in the world people with disabilities are shunned and excluded from participating in civil society. Even when not overtly shunned, those who are physically limited often face barriers to their participation. Society limits itself whenever any member of society cannot participate to his or her fullest potential. This day calls all of us to listen to persons with disabilities, to see what limits them and how we can improve their participation. People with disabilities face negative stereotypes, difficulty communicating, and physical, social and other barriers that prevent them from learning, living, working, and playing in their communities. Together, we can create inclusive communities where people with disabilities can be healthy and lead full, active lives.

God, we thank you for health, life and love. We know that while each of us has limitations, some people with physical disabilities struggle daily to participate in even the ordinary activities of life. Help each of us to listen to our disabled brothers and sisters, so that we can all become more aware of their needs. Open our heart to respond generously so that we can remove barriers to participation whenever we become aware of them. Bless us with growth in awareness so that we can all work together for the common good.

December 9—International Anti-corruption Day



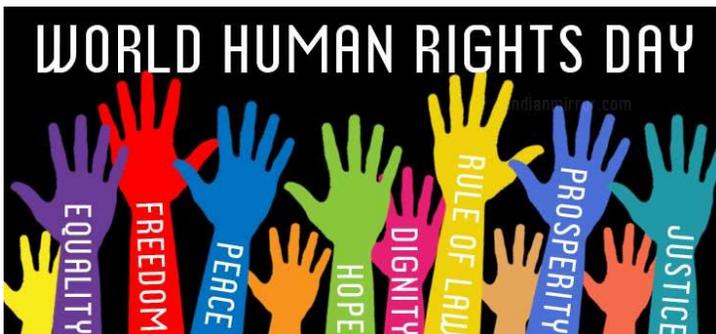
United against
corruption
for development, peace
and security

Corruption involves an abuse of entrusted power by dishonest or unethical conduct that leads to personal gain. It takes many forms: intimidation, especially of those without power, in order to hold onto power; bribery; corruption of the electoral systems; silencing of whistle blowers; lawbreaking without having to face consequences because of one's power position within the community; etc. It undermines social and economic development. Corruption affects all countries of the world, undermining moral integrity and destroying honesty and loyalty. This day calls people around the world to reject corruption wherever it is found in their communities. By making this way of acting unacceptable, and by refusing to cooperate with corruption, ordinary people can again begin to take control of their lives and to build a society of integrity and justice.

Lord, help us to create just societies where every person is equal under the law and where each person's dignity and safety is protected by just laws. Help us to confront

corruption and give us the courage to refuse to participate in it. Let us each work for the common good, so that all may be able to live in freedom.

December 10—Human Rights Day



we are still far from realizing the ideals set forth in this declaration, it still stands as a beacon guiding all nations towards peace with justice based on its principles. The very existence of this document calls all of us to strive for its fulfillment. It also demands that we constantly re-examine ourselves and our national and international structures and priorities to see how to move forward in a way that better embodies the hopes and aspirations expressed therein.

This day marks the culmination of a year-long celebration in the 70th anniversary of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948. This document powerfully declared that all persons, by virtue of their inherent human dignity, have certain rights and freedoms, including a right to education, a decent living, health care and a right to live free from any form of discrimination. This declaration of human rights was built on what were recognized as universal human values, to be honored by all nations. Although

We pray for all people of the world. May all of us respect and support one another, realizing that we are all brothers and sisters. Help us to honor and safeguard the dignity and freedom of every person. May we work every day to protect and cherish the rights and freedoms that we have and that all of us desire. Give us the insight and wisdom to move forward each day on the path of peace with justice.

December 18—International Migrants Day



On December 18, 1990, the General Assembly adopted the international convention on the protection of the rights of migrant workers and members of their families. Migrants often flee their own countries in a desperate search for safety and a way to feed their families. For the most part, they seek stability, safe from fear and intimidation, shelter, food, water and a future of hope. Although they frequently face many obstacles when they settle in a new country, they also contribute culturally, economically and socially to their host country. Globally, migration has become a growing problem, due to wars, drug and gang violence, political oppression, drought and flooding due to climate change, and religious persecution. Rather than

welcoming the stranger, many countries have retreated into a globally rising nationalism that demonizes migrants as “the other”, stoking fear, mistrust and hatred leading to violence. International Migrants Day serves to celebrate the movement of migrants and their contribution to world development. Globalization has made the world a much smaller place than it previously was. Humans have always migrated but now they do so much faster and much further, many of whom risk their lives trying to reach a safer land with more opportunities. On this day, we are called to join together to protect the rights of migrants, helping them in their journey and to settle in their new countries in order to find hope and peace.

Holy One, we pray for your protection and blessing on migrants throughout the world. Keep them safe from exploitation and abuse. Help them to find the work, housing, nutrition and healthcare that they need to support themselves and their families. Help us to open our hearts and our homes to welcome the stranger in our midst, in whatever ways we can. Give hope to those who feel lost and hopeless. Give joy to the sorrowing and security to the vulnerable. Most of all, make me a channel of your peace, understanding and love.

December 20—International Human Solidarity Day



International Human Solidarity Day is a day dedicated to celebrating unity in diversity. Solidarity is one of the fundamental human values and it is what underpins all international cooperation. At a time when climate change threatens to destroy our planet as a place suitable for human habitation, solidarity is essential, since we are all in this together. This example of climate change has opened our eyes in a new way to the power of solidarity. Solidarity among grassroots people also recently brought about the signing of the international agreement outlawing nuclear weapons. Even though no nuclear nations signed on to this agreement, it was supported by 191 other nations, showing that solidarity on this issue will eventually be successful at bringing about an end to nuclear weapons. When the people of the world stand united, we can accomplish great things.

International Human Solidarity Day is:

- a day to celebrate our unity in diversity
- a day to remind governments to respect their commitments to international agreements
- a day to raise public awareness of the importance of solidarity

God, we ask that you bless all your people throughout the world in their desire for justice, peace, freedom and protection of the environment. Inspire us as we listen deeply to one another and build solidarity among us so that together we can face the many challenges of our global community.

December 25

Merry Christmas!

In this Season of Peace, may we dedicate ourselves anew to peace, solidarity, justice, compassion and love.