

## ■ A Litany of Social Penance

### *Gathering Prayer*

O God, our Creator, who has made us your human children as one family in you, so that what concerns any, must concern all; we confess the evils we have done and the good we have left undone. We have spent our strength too often upon the town of Babel of our own pride. We have forgotten that the city's foundations, builder and maker is You. We have been content that we ourselves should prosper though many might be poor; that a few should feast while multitudes were famished both in body and in soul. O You, who has taught us that whatsoever we sow, that we shall also reap; help us to repent before your judgment comes.

[Silence for individual contemplation]

For the clouded eyes that see no further than our own advantage,  
*We confess our sin, O God*

For the dulled imagination that does not know what others suffer,  
*We confess our sin, O God*

For willingness to profit by injustice which we have not striven to prevent,  
*We confess our sin, O God*

For the selfishness that is quick to gain and slow to give,  
*We confess our sin, O God*

For the unconcern that makes us cry, "Am I my brother's keeper?";  
*We confess our sin, O God*

O You, who are ever merciful, take away the evil of our conscious and unconscious wrongs. Forgive us for our unfaithfulness to the vision of your Kingdom, and grant to us a better purpose for the days to come.

From acquiescence in old iniquities,  
Save us, O God

From indifference to the human cost of anything we covet,  
Save us, O God

## PRAYERS

From the greed that wastes the lives of men and women through unemployment, poverty, and deprivation,  
*Save us, O God*

From the cruelty that exploits the needy and defenseless,  
*Save us, O God*

From the blasphemy against the Spirit that sells the bodies and souls of children to the golden idol of success,  
*Save us, O God*

From false leadership in business and in government, and above all from feebleness in the people that lets  
false leaders rise to power,  
*Save us, O God*

Unless the Lord builds the house,  
*Their labor is but vain who builds it.*

But the One who sits upon the throne said,  
*Behold, I make all things new.*

Even so, O God, let your redemptive purposes work through us to build a new and better order on this earth,  
for the blessing of your people and the glory of your name, through Jesus Christ.  
*Amen.*

Adapted, Walter Russell Bowie in *The Wideness of God's Mercy: Litanies to Enlarge our Prayer*, compiled by Jeffrey Rowthorn.  
Reprinted with permission.