



**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
PEACE AND SECURITY IN
THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)**
Ecumenical Centre, Geneva/Switzerland, 27-29 May 2015

Morning Prayer – Thursday, 28 May 2015

(Please rise.)¹

Opening

L: Behold the generosity of God's indiscriminate care
for all peoples and nations.
We pray for the healing of the Democratic Republic of Congo and beyond.

C: We pray for your healing, O God.

L: Listen to the heartbeat of the people;
listen to the heartbeat of the earth.
We pray for justice for all God's creature;
we yearn for the reign of God on earth.

C: We pray for your justice, O God.

L: Hear the cries of those crushed by division and war;
hear the petitions of the violated and oppressed.
We pray that hardened hearts might soften to beat again;
and clenched fists might open to love again.

C: We pray for your peace, O God.

♪ **Kyrie eleison**

L: God of mercy,
you created women in your image,
and declared your creation very good.
We thank you for the presence of women,
whom you entrust to give birth to new lives on earth.
Yet, we witness women's bodies threatened and misused,
violated and disgraced by people of power.

C: Lord, have mercy.

L: We thank you for the presence of women,
whose loves direct them to work hard to feed their families,
Yet, we witness many women ignoring their own hunger and thirst,
as long as their children sleep without empty stomach.

C: Christ, have mercy.

L: We thank you for the presence of women,
whose compassions are beyond measure, sacrificing their selves and welfare,
striving for justice and peace for the well-being of their loved ones.
Yet, we witness many women tortured, raped, kidnapped, and murdered;

¹ If you are able.

they are traumatized, silenced and live in fear.

C: Lord, have mercy.

♪ **Kyrie eleison**

(Please be seated.)

Scripture reading – Judges 19 and Psalm 143

(Scripture text adapted by Miriam Therese Winter in Woman prayer, woman song.)

In those days,
when there was no king in Israel,
a Levite who lived in Ephraim
took his concubine
a woman from Bethlehem.
One day, in anger,
she left him
and returned to her father's house.

Psalm 143 *(People sing the text in bold.)*



Hear my prayer, O Lord;
give ear to my supplications in your faithfulness;
answer me in your right – eous - ness.

Do not enter into judgement with your servant,
for no one living is righteous before you.

**For the enemy has pursued me,
crushing my life to the ground,**

making me sit in darkness like those long dead.
Therefore my spirit faints within me;
my heart within me is ap - palled.

Judges 19 *(continued)*

After four months had passed,
her husband set out
to fetch her
and bring her back.
His father-in-law greeted him joyfully
and invited him to stay awhile.
He ate and drank
and spent the night
and after three days
prepared to leave,
but his father-in-law insisted
he stay a little longer.
The fourth day passed,

and the fifth day;
 then finally,
 toward evening,
 determined to delay no longer,
 he set out with his donkeys
 and his concubine
 and his servant.
 As they drew near to Jerusalem,
 his servant said,
 “Master, let us spend the night.”
 “Not here, in a town of foreigners,” he replied.
 “Let us continue to Gibeah
 and tarry among Israelites.”
 They reached Gibeah
 as the sun was setting,
 but no one offered hospitality,
 so they sat down in the public square.

Psalm 143



I remember the days of old,
 I think about all your deeds,
I meditate on the works of your hands.

I stretch out my hands to you;
 my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.
Answer me quickly, O Lord; my spir - it fails.

Do not hide your face from me,
 or I shall be like those who go down to the Pit.
**Let me hear of your steadfast love in the morning,
 for in you I put my trust.**

Judges 19 (*continued*)

An old man,
 returning from the fields,
 not a native of Gibeah
 but a sojourner from Ephraim
 who had settled in the town,
 saw the travelers
 and stopped to inquire:
 “Where have you come from?
 Where are you going?”
 “We are on our way
 from Bethlehem in Judah
 to Ephraim, my home,
 but no one has offered us shelter for the night.

We have enough provisions,
straw for the donkeys, and bread and wine.”
The old man answered,
“Shalom! Come with me.
I will see to all your needs.
You cannot spend the night
out here in the public square.”
So he took them home,
where they washed their feet
and were made comfortable.
As they were at table,
men from the town,
abusive and drunk,
surrounded the house
and beat on the door,
demanding that the guest
be sent out to them
that they might have sex with him.
The old man pleaded,
“My brothers, no,
this man is my guest,
do not commit this crime.
Here is my daughter,
a virgin, a child;
I will give her over to you.
Enjoy her,
do what you please with her,
but do not violate the man.”
The men would not listen,
they were out of control;
so the Levite, the guest
took his concubine
and brought her out to them.
They raped her,
savagely,
again and again,
abusing her

Psalm 143



Teach me the way I should go,
for to you I lift up my soul.
Save me, O Lord, from my enemies;
I have fled to you for refuge.

Teach me to do your will,
for you are my God.
Let your good spirit lead me
on a lev - el path.

For your name's sake,
O Lord, preserve my life.
In your righteousness bring me out of trouble.

In your steadfast love cut off my enemies,
and destroy all my adversaries,
for I am your servant.

Judges 19 *(continued)*

At daybreak,
they let her go,
and she fell at the threshold
of the old man's house
and lay there
without moving.
When the sun was up,
her husband arose,
and opened the door,
prepared to continue his journey.
Seeing her, he said,
"Get up! We must go."
She was silent.
She was dead.
He laid her across his donkey
and journeyed to his home.
When he reached his house,
he took a knife
and dissected his concubine,
limb by limb,
cut her up into twelve pieces,
and sent her mutilated body
throughout all of Israel.
He instructed his messengers
to say to the people:

“Has any one
seen such a thing
from the time of the Exodus until now?
Reflect on this,
discuss it,
then tell me what you decide.”
All who saw it said,
“Never!
Never has such a thing been done,
never has such a thing been seen
since the time of the Exodus.”

♪ **Senzenina** (*What have we done?*)

Lighting the candle*

L: God bringing light and banishing fear,
we light this candle as a sign of our hope in you.
We light this candle as a sign of support for women and girls,
who are abused, kidnapped, raped, murdered, mutilated;
for girls who are forced into marriage at young age,
for those who have to sell their bodies and those in poverty.
We light this candle as a sign of our willingness to be your light in the world,
to speak out for those women and to care for their well-being.
We light this candle to remember before you
the peoples of the Democratic Republic of Congo,
their abundant land, their painful and war-torn history.
We bring before you the people whose story we have witnessed.

Spirit of compassion,
who hears the cries of all those who suffer from war, famine, and violence,
**C: be with the women of the Congo whose bodies, lives,
and families are torn apart by sexual violence.**

L: Spirit of love, who sees the brutality and mutilation
that have become daily realities for the Congolese women,

C: bring healing to their bodies, their minds, and their spirits.

L: Spirit of justice, who calls us to see, hear,
and respond to the injustice and suffering caused by sexual violence,

**C: embolden us to speak out against those
who use rape as a weapon of war.**

L: Spirit of oneness, who seeks to reconcile all that is broken in this world,

**C: unify us as we work to bring an end to violence
against women and girls around the globe.
Amen.**

(Please rise.)

Lord's prayer (*in our many languages*)

♪ **Healing river**

Blessing*

**C: May God the creator, who danced creation into being, dance with us.
May God the redeemer, who lived for justice, live in us.
May God the sustainer, who offers hope, offer hope through us.
Amen.**

* Adapted from Prayers for the Democratic Republic of Congo, *A 2010 Lenten Study compiled by the World Council of Churches, the World Student Christian Federation and the World YWCA* <http://women.overcomingviolence.org>.