

Name: ANDREW LENT

Title: Priest, Lodge Master

Affiliation: Ordo Templi Orientis

This reading is from: Liber Al vel Legis (The Book of The Law)

Text:

“Every man and every woman is a star.” "Fear not at all; fear neither men nor Fates, nor gods, nor anything. Money fear not, nor laughter of the folk folly, nor any other power in heaven or upon the earth or under the earth.

Name: Submitted by the Baha'i Community

Affiliation: Baha'í

This reading is from: A Prayer for Unity

Text:

O Thou kind Lord! O Thou Who art generous and merciful! We are servants of Thy threshold and are gathered beneath the sheltering shadow of Thy divine unity. The sun of Thy mercy is shining upon all, and the clouds of Thy bounty shower upon all. Thy gifts encompass all, Thy loving providence sustains all, Thy protection overshadows all, and the glances of Thy favor are cast upon all. O Lord! Grant Thine infinite bestowals, and let the light of Thy guidance shine. Illumine the eyes, gladden the hearts with abiding joy.

Confer a new spirit upon all people and bestow upon them eternal life. Unlock the gates of true understanding and let the light of faith shine resplendent. Gather all people beneath the shadow of Thy bounty and cause them to unite in harmony, so that they may become as the rays of one sun, as the waves of one ocean, and as the fruit of one tree.

May they drink from the same fountain. May they be refreshed by the same breeze. May they receive illumination from the same source of light. Thou art the Giver, the Merciful, the Omnipotent.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Name: CECILE BRENNAN

Affiliation: John Carroll University

This reading is from: Pope Francis Evangelii Gaudium

Text:

The dignity of the human person and the common good rank higher than the comfort of those who refuse to renounce their privileges. When these values are threatened, a prophetic voice must be raised.

Name: DR. GURDAS SINGH DASS

Title: President Interfaith Conference of Religions in Greater Cleveland

Affiliation: Sikh

This reading is from: Quotations from Guru Granth Sahib our holy book.

Text:

Guru Nanak our first guru founder of Sikh Faith preached the message of Universal brotherhood. He gave the equal status to women in 15th century. He declared how can you look down upon a woman who give birth to Kings. In Sikhism man and woman has equal rights.

Bhagat Kabir

Awal Allah Noor Opahya, Kudrat dey sub Bandey

Ek Noor tey Subjag opjiya, Koon bhalle Koon Mandey

Sbhey ghat Ram boley Ram bina na boley rey

In our daily prayer we always say Nanak nam Chardi Kala Tere
bhaney surbat da bhala meaning

We pray for the welfare of whole humanity.

Name: DR. MARIANNE REEVES

Title: Director of Practice and Education Shambhala Meditation Center of Cleveland

Affiliation: Buddhist/Shambhala

This reading is from: Waves of Compassion by Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, Lion's Roar 2005

Text:

"Sometimes we imagine compassion to be a noble and spiritual activity. According to the Buddhist teachings, concern and compassion for the welfare of others is the source of worldly satisfaction. When we try to distance ourselves from the pain or the joy of others, we are distancing ourselves from our own happiness. For genuine joy lies in caring for the welfare of others—having direct compassion when they have difficulty, as well as delight when they are doing well."

Name: DR. THOMAS UTHUP

Title: Founder and President, Friends of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations,

Affiliation: Christian

This reading is from: Bible 1. Matthew 25: 35-40 and 2. James 2: 8-11

Text:

1. Matthew 25: 35-40

35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in,

36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?

38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39

When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

40 "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

2. James 2: 8-11

8 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

9 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,

10 And one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?

11 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

Name: EMILY HALL

Affiliation: Hindu

Part of a local Satsang of devotees to spiritual teacher Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi. Member of the LGBTQ+ community

Text:

I offer the following quote from my spiritual teacher, Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi:
"Find your inner harmony, that beautiful song of life and love. Reach out and serve the suffering. Learn to place others before yourself. But in the name of serving others, do not fall in love with your own ego. Be a master of your mind and ego. Consider everyone, because they are each a doorway to your own Self."

Lokah samastah sukino bhavantu. May all the Beings in this world and in all the other worlds be peaceful and happy.

For the LGBTQ+ community I am willing to offer the following personal reflection:

I identify as queer, which to me means that my love is not limited by biology or gender. Who I fall in love with is a matter of my heart and my lover's heart. Although I identify as queer, I feel completely underqualified to represent the LGBTQ+ community today. I have not lived my life open about my sexuality. Now, I fiercely feel the need to. And, also, for the first time as an adult, I have felt that there might be a reason to fear to be myself. I am assailed by stories of people, young and old, who feel threatened and who have been harmed by violence because of their sexuality. At a time when we are empowered by owning who we are, I say that this is not acceptable.

I hope you will join me in praying: Dear Father, Mother, God, Creator of this Universe and Creator of us all: You created us in your image, perfect in every way. Although the ego has separated us from realizing you in every breath, draw us closer to you day by day. Surround us with your light and your protection, O God, that we may do your work here in the world through these Divine instruments that you have shaped. Guide us to be your loving servants, show us how to be servants to each other. Give us courage to walk in your way, O Lord, and may Your peace prevail in our minds, within our hearts, and throughout this Earth we walk upon. With you we pray, Amen.

Name: JAMES JORAH

Title: Dharma Instructor at Jewel Heart Cleveland

Affiliation: Tibetan Buddhist, Gelukpa

This reading is from: The Way of the Bodhisattva by Shantideva

Text:

Thus by the virtue collected through all that I have done, may the pain of every living creature be completely cleared away.

May I be the doctor and the medicine, and may I be the nurse for all sick beings in the world until everyone is healed.

May I become an inexhaustible treasure for those who are poor and destitute; may I turn into all things they could need. And may these be placed close beside them.

May I be a protector for those without one, a guide for all travelers on the way; May I be a bridge, a boat and a ship for all who wish to cross (the water)

First of all I should make an effort to meditate on the equality between self and others. I should protect all beings as I do myself. Because we are all equal in wanting pleasure and not wanting pain.

May the frightened cease to be afraid, and those bound be freed. May the powerless find power and may people think of benefiting one another.

For as long as space endures, for as long as living beings remain, until then may I too remain, to dispel the misery of the world.

Affiliation: Buddhist, Vietnamese Zen

This reading is from: Please Call Me by My True Names by Vietnamese Buddhist Master, Thich Naht Hanh

Text:

Thich Naht Hanh introduces this poem by saying--I have a poem for you. This poem is about three of us. The first is a twelve-year-old girl, one of the boat people crossing the Gulf of Siam. She was raped by a sea pirate, and after that she threw herself into the sea. The second person is the sea pirate, who was born in a remote village in Thailand. And the third person is me. I was very angry, of course. But I could not take sides against the sea pirate. If I could have, it would have been easier, but I couldn't. I realized that if I had been born in his village and had lived a similar life- economic, educational, and so on- it is likely that I would now be that sea pirate. So it is not easy to take sides. Out of suffering, I wrote this poem. It is called "Please Call Me by My True Names," because I have many names, and when you call me by any of them, I have to say, "Yes."

Don't say that I will depart tomorrow--even today I am still arriving.

Look deeply: every second I am arriving to be a bud on a Spring branch, to be a tiny bird, with still-fragile wings, learning to sing in my new nest, to be a caterpillar in the heart of a flower, to be a jewel hiding itself in a stone.

I still arrive, in order to laugh and to cry, to fear and to hope. The rhythm of my heart is the birth and death of all that is alive.

I am a mayfly metamorphosing on the surface of the river. And I am the bird that swoops down to swallow the mayfly.

I am a frog swimming happily in the clear water of a pond. And I am the grass-snake that silently feeds itself on the frog.

I am the child in Uganda, all skin and bones, my legs as thin as bamboo sticks. And I am the arms merchant, selling deadly weapons to Uganda.

I am the twelve-year-old girl, refugee on a small boat, who throws herself into the ocean after being raped by a sea pirate. And I am the pirate, my heart not yet capable of seeing and loving.

I am a member of the politburo, with plenty of power in my hands. And I am the man who has to pay his "debt of blood" to my people dying slowly in a forced-labor camp.

My joy is like Spring, so warm it makes flowers bloom all over the Earth. My pain is like a river of tears, so vast it fills the four oceans.

Please call me by my true names, so I can hear all my cries and laughter at once, so I can see that my joy and pain are one.

Please call me by my true names, so I can wake up and the door of my heart could be left open, the door of compassion.

Name: RABBI ENID C. LADER

Affiliation: Jewish | Beth Israel - The West Temple

This reading is from: G'vurot prayer (Jewish prayer service) | Sages and Dreamers by Elie Wiesel

Text: Based on texts from the Religious Action Center of the Union for Reform Judaism

In the Jewish prayer service, the G'vurot prayer speaks of God's limitless power. God has the ability to lift up the fallen, heal the sick, and free the captive. Our very lives and deaths are in God's hands. In the face of such power, we ask, "Though our power is an infinitesimal fraction of Yours, what can we do, in partnership with You, to lift up, to heal, to free?" How do we use our power, minute in comparison to God's but nevertheless significant in our world, for good?

Elie Wiesel, in his book Sages and Dreamers, helps us to answer these questions:

True, we are often too weak to stop injustices; but the least we can do is protest against them.

True, we are too poor to eliminate hunger; but in feeding one child, we protest against hunger.

True, we are too timid and powerless to take on all the guards of all the political prisons in the world; but in offering our solidarity to one prisoner, we denounce all the tormentors.

True, we are powerless against death; but as long as we help one man, one woman, one child live one hour longer in safety and dignity, we affirm a human's right to live.

Name: SISTER JUANITA

Affiliation: Sisters of St. Joseph, Catholic

This reading is from: Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

Text:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love; Where
there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith; Where
there is despair, hope; Where there
is darkness, light; And where there
is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be
understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in
pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen
