

Prayer Includes Reflection

We are all human, with all the blessings and flaws that come with it. Our minds are powerful tools that can help us create great things and solve big problems. When combined with our God given capacity for love, empathy and compassion, we can build thriving communities by working together in ways that can benefit everyone. Our creativity is amazing when we put our gifts to constructive use. However, we must also understand that our own thinking processes can hijack us into paths that lead to great harm and destruction. Our brain's tendency to make assumptions can skew our thinking because we tend to see what our brains expect to see. If what we see is an incomplete or inaccurate picture, our resulting actions may be inappropriate, or inflammatory. The way we filter the information we take in can make the situation worse. We tend to seek out only information that supports what we want to be true and consider people with differing views as the source of all problems. Though we have not thought about it this way, this reality of our humanity is another good reason for a key part of our Brethren Love Feast practice. We take seriously Jesus' call to examine *ourselves* before we come together around the Lord's table (Matthew 26:21-24). We are called to seek reconciliation with our brothers and sisters where there is brokenness so that we can come before God as a unified community. We are not called to assign blame, decide who is right or wrong, declare a winner, or judge anyone. Doing these things in fact condemns us. We are instead to seek reconciliation. This requires us to overcome our human tendency to let our assumptions rule us, and listen instead to what others have to say respectfully and with an open mind so that we can come together before the Lord. Do not forget self-examination in your prayer time.

Pray this week:

- for the **COVID-19 pandemic**. The number of cases continues to grow. In the U.S., more young people are getting sick now along with older people. As of this week, 10% of the cases in the U.S. are children. It also appears that a 'second wave' of the virus is beginning in Europe. There is the need for restrictions to be re-imposed in some places.
- Remember Iglesia de los Hermanos "Una Luz en las Naciones" (the **Church of the Brethren in Spain**, "A Light to the Nations"). There are some 70 members. Of them, 33 have tested positive for COVID-19 and 13 more have symptoms and are waiting for test results.
- for **those dealing with storms, fires, flooding, earthquakes, and other disasters**. The U.S. hurricane and fire seasons continue setting records. The **fires burning in South America** are causing major rain forest damage that will have devastating environmental affects locally and worldwide.
- for **all who suffer**; from the ugliness of racism and brutality; from the dehumanizing nature of fear; or from the consuming and destructive power of hate.
- for **everyone** caught up in the fear, frustration, anger, sense of helplessness, or destructive allure of the powers that are working to divide us into warring camps instead of seeking to bring us together so we can all use our varied gifts and thoughts to address the issues that confront us all for the good of everyone.



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