

PASTORAL PRAYER AFTER PACIFIC EARTHQUAKE & TSUNAMI

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(Composed immediately following initial news of the quake on Mar. 11)

Psalm 46:1-3

*God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.*

*Therefore, we will not fear,
though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake
in the heart of the sea;
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.*

Holy God of Earth, and Sea, and Sky,

of all that was and all that shall be —

It all seems to happen so quickly:

a rumble, a buckle in the earth, a swell.

And then, catching us unawares,

all that surrounds us is reduced to rubble.

Stone upon stone. Ash thickening the air.

Silence. Tears. Even nature laments.

And in the aftermath, the ocean travels

to foreign shores bringing ominous waves,

water that will obliterate, not baptize.

(Then, as if quake and wave were not enough,

radioactive fallout threatens thousands,

and has already killed brave souls

who manned their posts faithfully.)

*[Lines within parentheses added to original
by Pastor K.]*

This is where the world stands at the

start of this somber, Lenten season.

Earthquakes thunder, tsunamis inundate,

(and human technology, frail against great Nature,

fails, all) with little warning and even less prejudice.

We lift up our prayers and our hearts for

the people of Japan and Hawaii, indeed all,

who lie in the wake of such callous catastrophes. As death tolls rise, and warnings increase as far afield as Canada and South America, our feelings of helplessness intensify. Our intercessions are with those who border the Pacific, which is anything but placid now.

We turn our despondency over to you, O God. We know, at the core of our being, that you are not the cause of such travesty. We also confess that we do not understand why evil, be it by nature or human wrought, exists in this world you created and blessed. For you are a God of minimum protection, yet you are also a God of maximum support. For this we offer you our prayers of gratitude and we ask that your sacred presence surround the victims of such devastation and that you give them the strength and courage they need as they gather with family and friends, with relief workers and missionaries, to rebuild their homes and communities. Bless them, we pray.

Offer solace to the loved ones of those whose lives were lost and to those who desperately search for bodies that may never be found. Indeed, we are dust and to dust we shall return. The finitude of our earthly sojourn hits hard during this penitential season of prayer and fasting. Be with us through these forty days, O Holy One, as we try to make sense of it all. Help us be still.

We ask this, and all things, in the name of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ — the One in whose name we forever rejoice to pray.

Amen.