

A Prayer for Acceptance and Inclusion

God, we thank you for the model of Pope Francis:
For the image of his hand holding the hand
Of a prisoner, of this gesture of inclusion,
This visual message of acceptance.

May we strive to follow this model;
May we open our hands to the outcast,
The ones on the margin,
The “throw-away” people in our society.

God, we thank you for the model of Pope Francis:
For the photograph of him at the 9/11 memorial,
Surrounded by those of other faiths,
Your Jewish children, your Muslim children,
Your Orthodox children, your Buddhist children.

May we commit to follow this model:
May we stand and walk with our brothers and sisters
From other faiths, with respect and tolerance,
Joining with all people of good will to create a common good.

God, we thank you for the model of Pope Francis
embracing a boy in a wheelchair,
embracing imperfection in so many who are not
“The Beautiful People” in society’s eyes.

May we have the humility to follow this model,
May we accept our own imperfections
So we can embrace the imperfections of others,
And see the beauty of possibility,
as Francis sees in every human person.

We pray we may follow Pope Francis,
And walk with him to accept, to include everyone;
To pray, and to dream, and to hope together.

- Jane Deren



Pope Francis shakes hands with an inmate as he meets with prisoners at the Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility in Philadelphia. *Photo credit: Jonathan Ernst/Reuters.*