

Universal Prayer for the 8th Annual National Call of Unity

Written and delivered by Rev. Dr. Sally N. MacNichol on October 3rd, 2017
in honor and recognition of 2017 Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Sisters and Brothers, Let us gather our spirits, and enter into a moment of silence for all those whose lives have been extinguished by violence. Let us hold their families and communities in our hearts.

Holy One of Life and Love ~ Source of all that is and will be --

We give heartfelt thanks for this precious time together today. We are grateful for the chance to inspire and strengthen one another as we struggle to stay steady and whole in the face all that stands in the way of justice and love. Be with us now and in the year to come as we work to create a safe, just and peaceful world.

Hear us and help us as we pray for the liberation and healing of all people who are struggling with the fear, confusion and sorrow of intimate violence and abuse; we pray for all those who have been driven from their homes ... who are in prison for defending their own lives ...or who are bound to their oppressors because their suffering has been denied by family, friends and community. Comfort and strengthen those who feel they are alone and have no one to turn to. May they find healing and compassion. Mend their hearts with radical hope and the vision of a brighter day.

Hear us and help as we pray for the advocates everywhere who give so much... who open themselves to the suffering of others, who listen "with the ear of their hearts" and offer their presence with warmth, sensitivity and nonjudgmental embrace day after day.

Refresh our spirits O Holy One. Help us to be in our joy, to take care of ourselves and encourage those we work alongside of to do the same. We all know there are days when the stories are too much, and the resources are too little, when we are ambushed by grief and our hearts are stretched beyond their limits. On those days, *remind us* that we are part of an indestructible web of compassion and caring. *Renew* our minds with the knowledge that our work makes a difference, that we are part of a powerful movement that seeks liberation and healing for all.

We especially pray for those survivors and advocates who are in midst of tragedies and disasters, in Puerto Rico, in Mexico, in Us Virgin Islands, in Florida, Texas and Nevada. Be with them now. May they find safety and support and may the resources they desperately need be mobilized swiftly.

Spirit of all that is Sacred, Bless our movement and provide us with the fortitude and the wisdom we need for the journey ahead. Illuminate our blind spots. Help us to hear one another, to know that every voice counts and that it is in the embrace of our differences that we will find Unity and power. Help us to discard false notions of superiority and privilege and open our eyes to the Divinity that dwells within each one of us as we strive to make mutuality, respect, compassion and nonviolence a reality in our practices and policies and in our daily lives.

Finally, we ask for an infusion of hope and faith and the sure knowledge that we have everything we need right now to make our communities, our country and this world a place where our children and our children's children can flourish in safety, justice, and peace.

We ask these things in the name of the power that is LOVE

Amen, Amin, Ashe.

About the author:

Dr. Sally N. MacNichol, representing FaithTrust Institute for the 8th Annual National Call of Unity, is Co-Executive Director of CONNECT, a New York City nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing interpersonal violence and promoting gender justice. Dr. MacNichol created and leads CONNECT Faith, a decade-long interfaith movement in New York City to build the capacity of religious leaders and communities of faith to work to end intimate partner abuse and co-occurring forms of family violence. She earned her Masters of Divinity and Ph.D. from Union Theological Seminary in New York City.