

## **Claiming the right to life and health in a region of death**

*Identify Colombia in the atlas or on the globe. Put out products from Colombia – maybe coffee, or (in the USA) cut flowers. You may also want to download one of the pictures of the young people from Colombia from the study site.*

### **Gathering Prayer**

God bringing light and banishing fear,

We light this candle as a sign of our willingness to be your light in the world. We remember before you the peoples of Colombia, their abundant land, their struggles for peace and justice. We bring before you the people whose story we have witnessed.

In Jesus, you teach us that death is overcome by love and courage. Give courage to those who seek to rebuild communities shattered by violence and terror; give hope to those whose everyday life is beset by poverty and threats; give justice to those who ache for freedom and life.

We ask it in the name of Jesus, our brother and our friend,  
Amen

### **Reading: Psalm 91**

You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the LORD,

**‘My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust.’**

For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence;

**He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.**

You will not fear the terror of the night, or the arrow that flies by day, or the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or the destruction that wastes at noonday.

**A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.**

You will only look with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.

**Because you have made the LORD your refuge, the Most High your dwelling-place, no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent.**

For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.

**On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.**

You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot.

**Those who love me, I will deliver; I will protect those who know my name. When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them and honour them. With long life I will satisfy them, and show them my salvation.**

### **Prayers for Colombia**

God of hope – who consoles our pain, we have seen and heard the testimony of millions of displaced and refugee people – women, children men, indigenous, and afro-descendants whose bodies carry the marks of death and terror.

God of justice – who walks with us, our faith and our commitment to Jesus has led us to solidarity and exile. Our bodies carry the scars of fear, violence, poverty and rejection – they are our cross.

God of life – who works with us for peace, destroy the weapons of war and the trade agreements that displace and destroy your creation.

We are your people who yearn to return to our land and, like Jesus, be resurrected.

Amen

*Source: Milton Mejia, exiled Colombian Presbyterian Pastor*

For a country which has been ravaged by war, death and violence for many decades...

**Spirit, bring peace and justice**

For poor farmers and their families who produce both legal and illegal crops, trying to survive...

**Spirit, bring peace and justice**

For the Colombian government, that it may seek just solutions, respectful of the dignity of the poor and vulnerable...

**Spirit, bring peace and justice**

For the US government, that its policies would focus on social and economic renewal, instead of military solutions...

**Spirit, bring peace and justice**

For ourselves and all citizens of the world, that we might advocate fair and sustainable solutions....

**Spirit, bring peace and justice. Amen.**

*Source: Education for Justice, a Catholic social justice organisation*

Creator God,

We pray for the peacemakers in Colombia, the churches, and all people who in countless ways seek to right the wrongs, heal the wounded and sick, speak the truth, and protect the vulnerable. We give thanks for those who are empowered by their faith to be peacemakers. We ask that you would protect them from all harm and danger. God, give us strength as we seek to be voices for peace in Colombia, strengthen our efforts to bring forth words of truth, compassion and peace that we receive from our Colombian brothers and sisters. Bring us all to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly in your ways, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Source: Lutheran World Relief*

## **Blessing**

May God the creator, who danced creation into being, dance with us.

May God the redeemer, who lived for justice, live in us.

May God the sustainer, who offers hope, offer hope through us.

Amen