

PRAY ON SUNDAY, 7 APRIL 2013

Prayer for Reflection: The Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9-13)

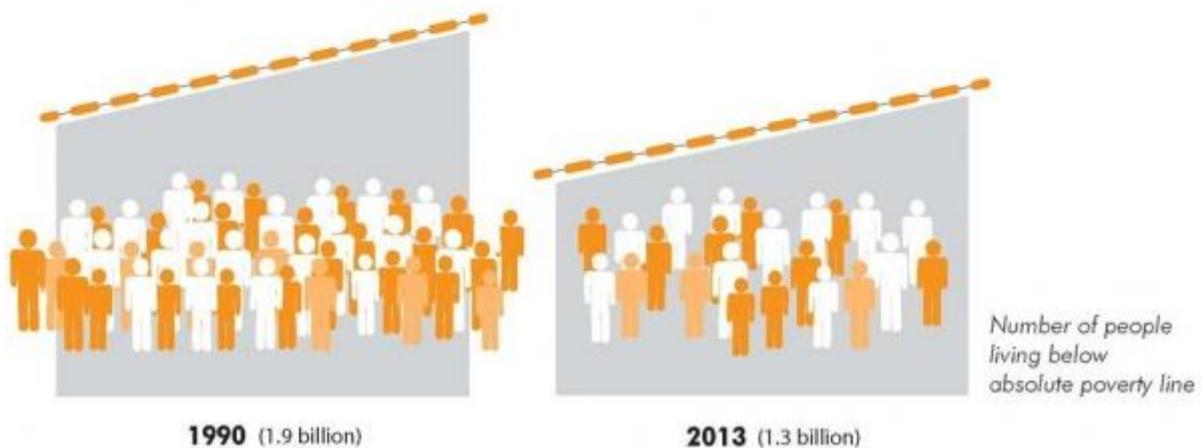
Lord, teach us to pray.

*"This, then, is how you should pray:
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from the evil one."*

GOAL 1:

ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY & HUNGER

Since 1990 **two billion** people have been lifted out of extreme poverty and **the proportion living below the absolute poverty line (\$1.25/day) has halved.**



Targets for Goal 1 include halving the number of people living on less than US\$1.25 a day, and halving the number of people suffering from hunger.

Over the last decade, progress toward the financial goal has been strong but progress on hunger has been much slower. Despite progress, more than one billion people still live below the poverty line. The recent global food and economic crises have slowed progress towards eradicating poverty and hunger. Rising food prices may cause up to 100 million people to remain trapped in poverty rather than escape it. It therefore remains necessary

to diligently commit to praying for action. Access to food and job opportunities is fundamental to increasing income and reducing poverty and hunger.



Pray with us:

- Pray for God to continue to provide food and reliable food sources for all of his creation. Give thanks for new agricultural techniques that are helping to improve crop yields for rural farmers, ensuring stable income and increased savings.
- Ask God for relief for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America that are subject to the highest levels of people living below \$1.25 a day and also the highest levels of underweight and malnourished children.
- Pray for swift relief for many of the world's poor struggling to cope with the effects of the global food and economic crises. Ask that God will open doors for the poorest people to access vocational training and jobs.
- Pray that employers will act with justice to ensure all workers receive a fair income that will enable them to adequately provide for their families.

PRAY ON MONDAY, 8 APRIL 2013

Prayer for Reflection: The Sinner's Prayer

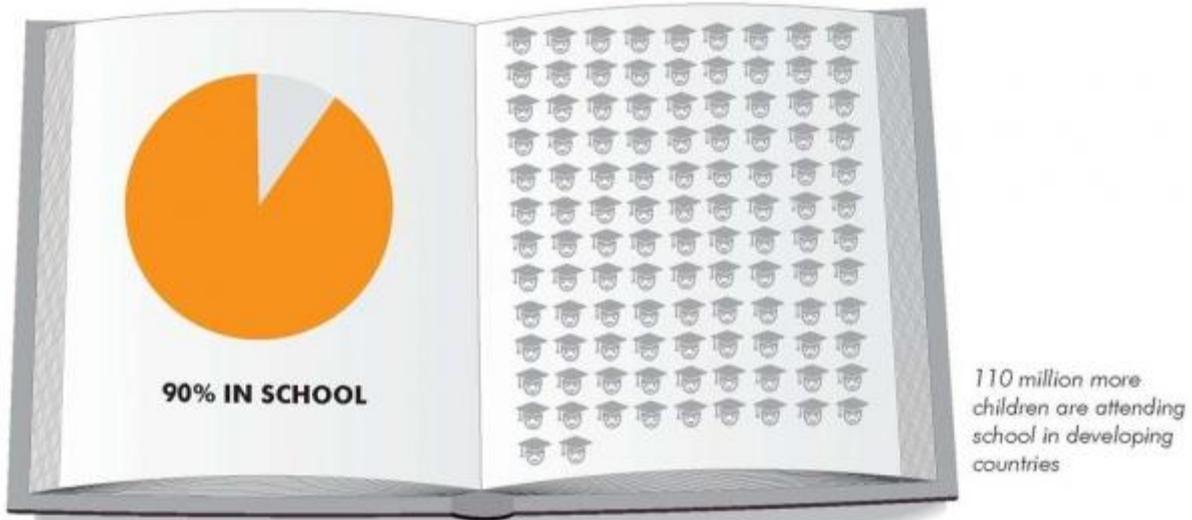
This prayer of meditation, originally from the Eastern Orthodox Tradition and based on the tax collector's prayer in Luke 18, can be used as an act of repentance, recognising the part we play in injustice, that we are both in need of mercy and agents of mercy, that we are both perpetrator and victim of injustice.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

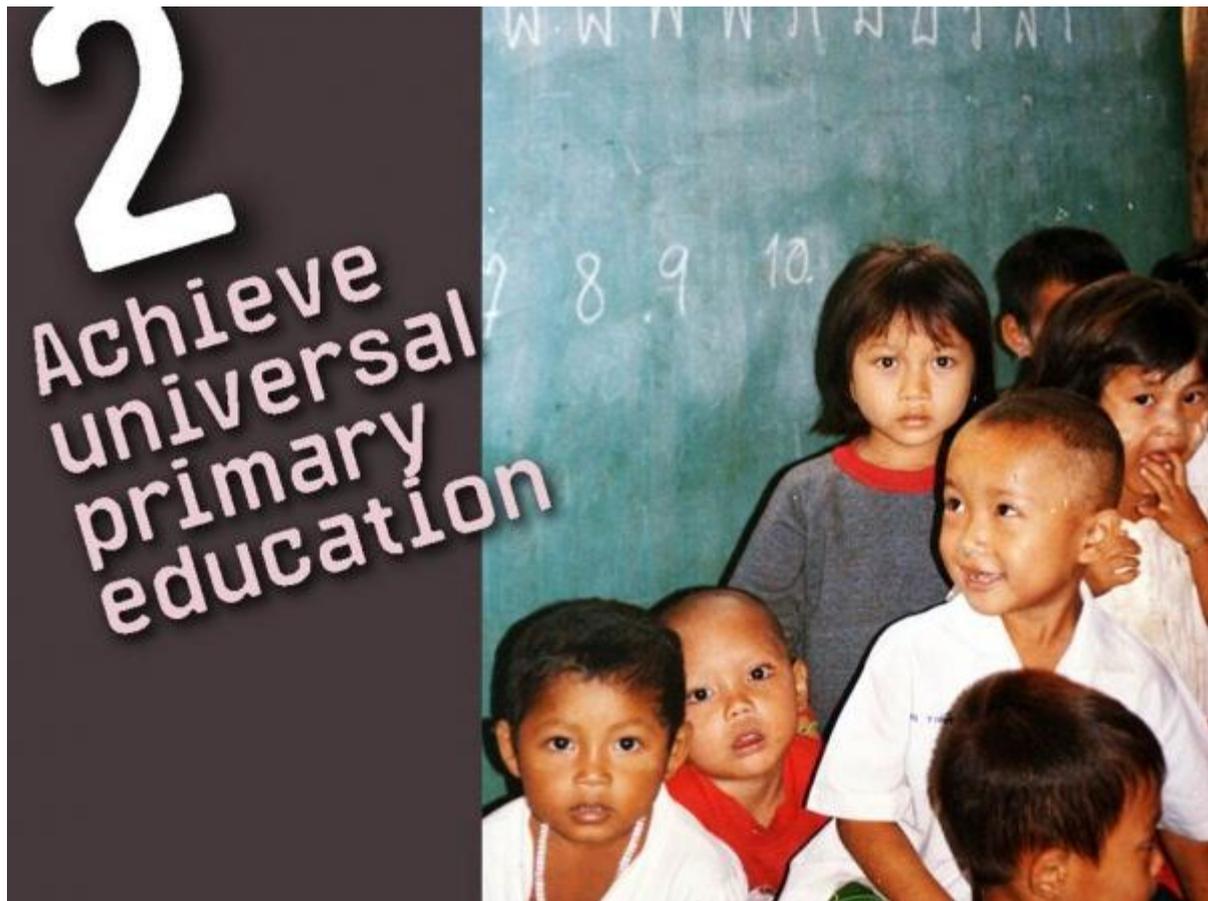
GOAL 2:

ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

Since 1990, **an additional 110 million children are attending school**, which means over 90% of all primary level children in developing countries are now enrolled.



Goal 2 seeks to ensure access to primary education for all children worldwide, both male and female, by 2015. Education is something often taken for granted in Australia, but for many children in developing countries, it is a dream come true. Since 2000, primary school enrolment has increased from 83% to 90%, but progress is not yet adequate to achieve MDG targets. Additionally, school enrolment is susceptible to significant falls if other aspects of poverty, including food security and displacement, are not efficiently addressed. Schooling is often a significant cost for poor families, costing up to a quarter of the family's income. Without the provision of adequate resources and funding, some poor children will never have the opportunity to go to school. There are still more than 60 million children missing out on any form of schooling.



Pray with us:

- Ask God to convict world leaders to make education for all children a priority. Pray that governments will build capacity, including infrastructure and teachers, to provide adequate schooling for all children in their countries.
- Give praise to God for the programmes that support and provide school funding so that more struggling families can afford to send their children to school.
- Pray that parents will understand the importance of schooling for their children and do everything they can to make sure their kids go to school and stay in school.
- Ask for God's blessing upon children to go to school and learn well and be given hope and opportunities for life in the future; including literacy skills, empowerment, and self confidence.

PRAY ON TUESDAY, 9 APRIL 2013

Prayer for Reflection - A prayer by Glenda Weldon

And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God.

Father, we come into your presence with the words of Micah ringing in our minds and hearts.

We humble ourselves before you with a deep sense of gratitude and praise for all you have done for us and continue to do for us through Jesus our Saviour and Lord.

We delight in the sure knowledge that we live in you and you live in us 24/7 through your Holy Spirit.

We delight in the reality that he fills our hearts with the certainty of your unconditional love for us and with your

love for all people everywhere.

Lord, you are the God of extravagant love and holiness, grace and mercy. We remember how Jesus was moved

with compassion towards those in need and miraculously met those needs. He challenged and empowered his followers to the same.

Lord, you are seeking to make us more and more like Jesus. Lord do what you need to do in us so that you can do what you long to do through us.

Touch our eyes so that we can see what you are doing.

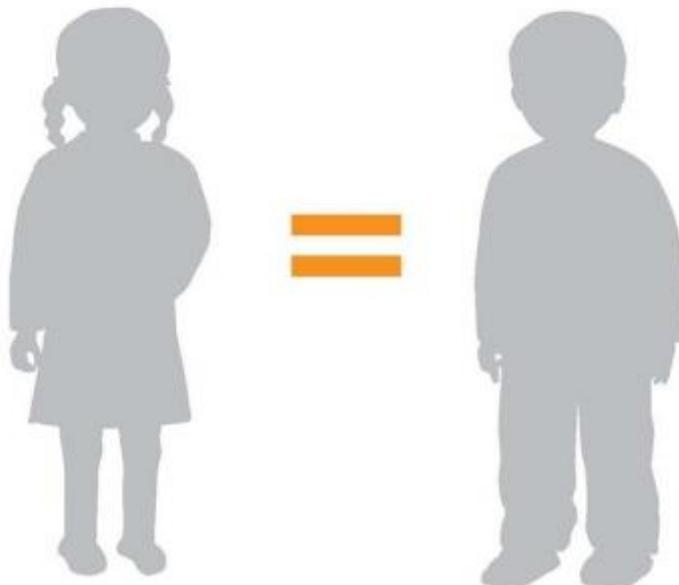
Give us faith and the courage to speak and act with your love and compassion.

Give us strength to be a clear voice against every form of injustice, right here, right now, in this nation and across the world.

GOAL 3:

PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN

In almost all countries, **girls now have the same chance as boys** to complete primary school.



It is often said that poverty has a woman's face. Goal 3 seeks to achieve equal ratios of education enrolment for girls and boys. Whilst there has been an increase in gender equity across all education sectors, there remains a great need to stand firm in the commitment to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in education and employment. It is also essential that women play increasingly significant roles in parliament and income-earning employment. The proportion of seats held by women in parliaments in the developing world are higher than ever before. Worldwide, women now hold 18.2% of parliamentary seats. In many developing countries, although women have better access to paid work, their wages are still one third less than men's wages. Women work two-thirds of the world's working hours and produce half of the world's food, yet earn only 10% of the world's income.



Pray with us:

- Pray for girls to have equal opportunity to attend school and university as their brothers.
- Ask God to protect women from domestic harm or unfair treatment at work.
- Pray for global governments to be inclusive of women. Ask God to open up opportunities for women to have their voices heard in politics.
- Give thanks for the increasing opportunities for women to be involved in parliament and the non-agricultural sector. Pray that this social transformation will help to empower women across the world.

PRAY ON WEDNESDAY, 10 APRIL 2013

Prayer for Reflection: Habakkuk's complaint to God (Habakkuk 1:2-4)

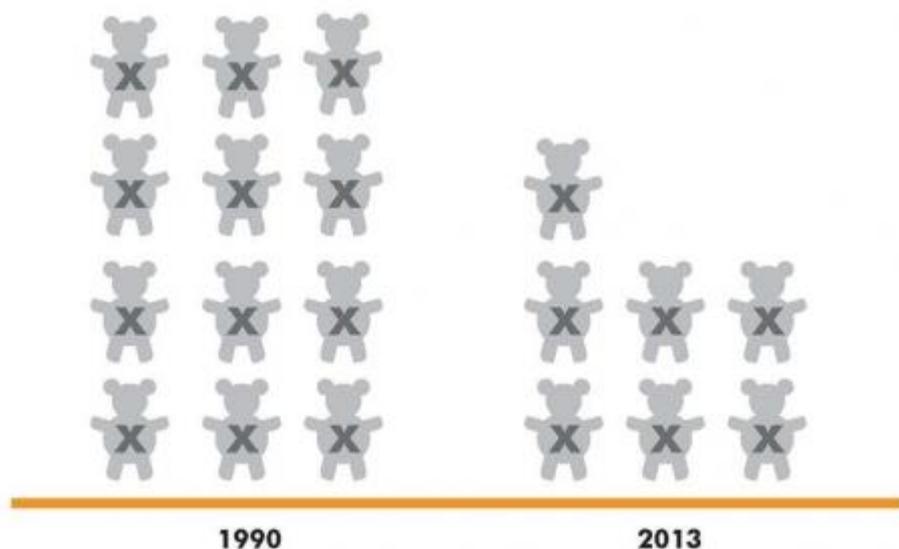
The plight of children dying around the world - through no fault of their own - leads us to echo the words of Habakkuk as we cry out to God in our grief.

*How long, LORD, must I call for help,
but you do not listen?
Or cry out to you, "Violence!"
but you do not save?
Why do you make me look at injustice?
Why do you tolerate wrongdoing?
Destruction and violence are before me;
there is strife, and conflict abounds.
Therefore the law is paralyzed,
and justice never prevails.
The wicked hem in the righteous,
so that justice is perverted.*

GOAL 4:

REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

More children are **surviving past their 5th birthdays than ever before**, with child mortality rates reduced by 42%. Annual deaths of children under five worldwide fell from 12 million in 1990 to 6.9 million in 2011. **That's 14,000 fewer children dying each day** than 20 years ago.



Child mortality is a terrible and heartbreaking aspect of poverty, and in many instances deaths are preventable. Goal 4 aims to significantly reduce the mortality rate of children under 5 by two thirds by 2015. Currently, the rate has dropped from 12.6 million to 6.9 million. Whilst this is an encouraging development, there are still many countries that have made little or no progress in this area. Child mortality can be largely prevented through adequate provision of health services and education programmes for mothers.



Pray with us:

- Give thanks for more than 5 million children's lives being saved each year, and for the increase in immunisations and health interventions, such as insecticide treated bed nets, which have helped to reduce preventable diseases.
- Pray for governments to prioritise health education programmes and services to help families provide their children with good diet, a safe environment and access to health care.
- Pray for God to show compassion on families that lose children in their time of grieving.
- Pray particularly for Africa, which has the lowest percentage of children immunised against measles, and the highest mortality rate of children under five.

PRAY ON THURSDAY, 11 APRIL 2013

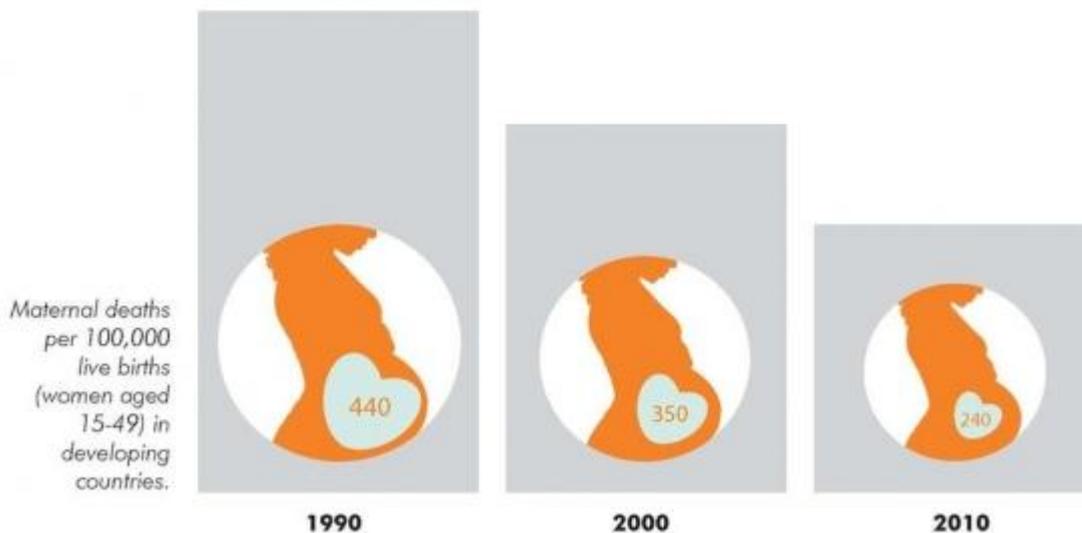
Prayer for Reflection: Extract from St. Patrick's Breastplate

*The strength to respond to injustice comes from
the reality that our life is assured in Christ
Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.*

GOAL 5:

IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

More women are experiencing safe pregnancies, with **maternal mortality rates reduced by 47%** since 1990.



Goal 5 remains one of the furthest off track. Renewed efforts in this area are reaping benefits, however estimates suggest that more than 240,000 mothers die in childbirth or during pregnancy. 99% of these deaths occur in the developing world simply because they do not have access to appropriate medical facilities, treatments, training, or nurses and doctors. Once again, in Sub-Saharan Africa mortality rates are among the highest. The number of women giving birth with the help of a midwife or doctor has risen, but the statistics are

still too low. The risk of maternal death in developing countries is extremely high and needs to be urgently reduced. This requires the cooperation of people at all levels of society.



Pray with us:

- Pray that the Australian government will respond to the call of Micah Challenge to increase spending on health to 15% of Australia's development budget.
- Pray for God to intervene with regard to the provision of health facilities and trained midwives so that no woman has to go through pregnancy and childbirth without health support. Pray especially for Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia where most maternal deaths occur.
- Give thanks for the blessing of medical professionals during childbirth to ensure the safe delivery of babies.
- Pray that cultural practices such as female genital cutting will be stopped so that the risk of obstructed labour will be reduced.
- Pray for those suffering from health complications related to pregnancy and childbirth such as fistula. Pray for healing and restoration through provision of health services.
- Ask God to bless the health of all mothers so that they can live well and provide for and nurture their children.

PRAY ON FRIDAY, 12 APRIL 2013

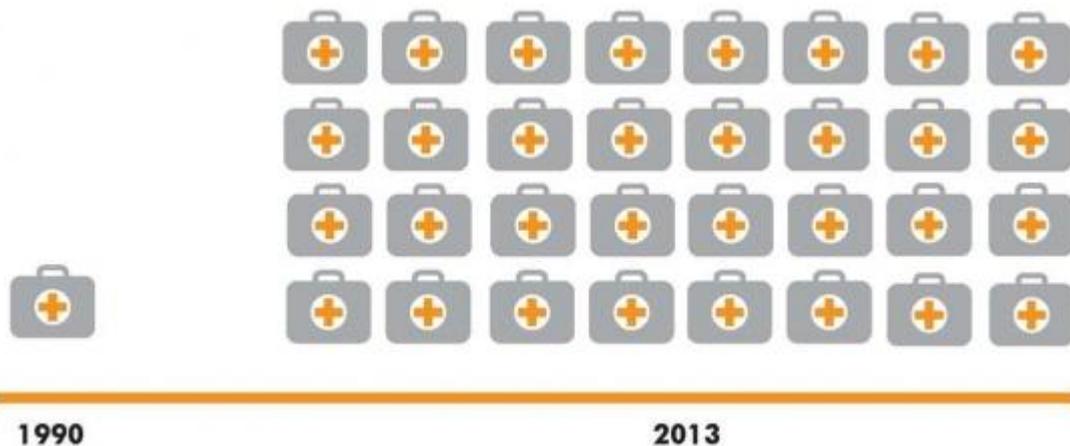
Prayer for Reflection: Extract from Psalm 82 - A prayer for God to intervene

*God presides in the great assembly;
he renders judgment among the "gods":
"How long will you defend the unjust
and show partiality to the wicked?"
Defend the weak and the fatherless;
uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.
Rescue the weak and the needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.
Rise up, O God, judge the earth,
for all the nations are your inheritance.*

GOAL 6:

COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES

The number of people receiving treatment for HIV & AIDS has risen from only 250,000 in 2002 to over 8 million today.



Preventable diseases, primarily HIV/AIDS and malaria, remain some of the biggest problems and causes of morbidity and mortality in the developing world. Goal 6 focusses on the reversal of the spread of these diseases, as well as the provision of universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS. Malaria is responsible for killing 1-2 children every minute and causing 660,000 total deaths every year. Across the globe there are more than 34

million people living with HIV and 1.7 million of those infected die each year. Through collective initiatives, such as the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; and simple strategies such as immunisation and the provision of treated bed nets; the incidence of these diseases is shrinking.



Pray with us:

- Pray for increased financial commitments from developed nations to the Global Fund.
- Give praise to God for those communities who have been educated and are now using bed-nets and practising safe sex to help reduce disease.
- Pray that God would convict multinational companies and governments to do all they can to allow access to required medicine to treat infected persons. In particular, pray that pharmaceutical companies will not withhold access to anti-retroviral drugs that can significantly improve the livelihood of people living with AIDS.
- Give thanks for the increase in targeted, grassroots-level programmes to address specific HIV/AIDS issues, particularly in countries such as Ecuador.
- Pray for AIDS rates to continue decreasing and for HIV infections overall to be significantly reduced. Pray for a global social transformation of lifestyles that will no longer expose people to the HIV virus. For example, those individuals exposed to unclean needles and victims of sex trafficking.

PRAY ON SATURDAY, 13 APRIL 2013

Prayer for Reflection: Prayer for Creation from Micah Network Creator

God, We thank you for the beauty of your Creation, and for giving us the privilege of caring for it. We confess that we have not cared for the earth with the self-sacrificing and nurturing love that you require of us.

We mourn the broken relationships in creation. We repent for our part in causing the current environmental crisis that has led to climate change. Faithful God, sustainer of all - we pray with hope, because you are already at work through Christ to reconcile all of creation to Yourself and to renew all things.

Loving God, help us to turn our lives around to be people of restoration. Help us build just relationships among human beings and with the rest of creation. Help us to live sustainably, rejecting consumerism

and the exploitation of creation.

God of justice, give us courage and persistence to work for justice for those most affected by environmental degradation and climate change.

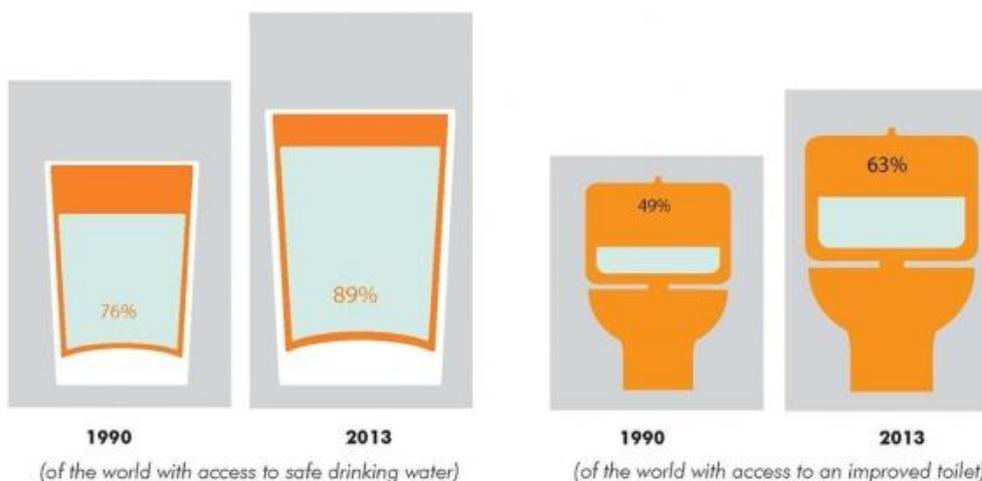
God of mercy, hear the cry of the poor who are already suffering and will continue to suffer water and food shortages and who will be displaced by climate change. Creator God, give us your Spirit to work together to restore your creation and to hand on a safe environment and climate to our children and theirs.

Let our care for creation be our act of worship and obedience to you. Your kingdom come, and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

GOAL 7:

ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Access to improved drinking water sources has risen from **76% of the world's population in 1990 to 89% today**, and access to improved sanitation has risen from **49% in 1990 to 63% today**.



Environmental issues have the potential to undermine all other development efforts if not properly addressed. Goal 7 sets out to integrate sustainable development practices into national policies and programmes to reverse

the loss of environmental resources. It also includes the aim of halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. An astounding 2.6 billion people are living without access to adequate sanitation and many without safe drinking water too. There needs to be continued and targeted approaches to provide safe water supplies to all communities, especially in rural areas. Often, initiatives in these areas do not reach the poorest of the poor. There are continuing environmental problems such as deforestation, exploitation of resources, and lack of preparedness for natural hazards and disasters. Often the world's largest consumers exploit the environment with little or no concern for the effect that their actions might have on the poor, who have a much higher dependence on their immediate environment.



Pray with us:

- Pray that environmental initiatives will help to reduce loss of biodiversity and ensure programmes are in place to effectively cope with natural disasters and erratic climate and weather, particularly for the most vulnerable.
- Pray for the one billion people that live in slums around the world. Pray for increased access to basic services and clean drinking water and that their governments will have the capacity to deliver services.
- Give thanks for increased awareness and dialogue over issues of climate change and environment sustainability. Pray for a more comprehensive international effort to address these concerns.
- Pray that God would challenge us to practise justice in the way we use and distribute the resources entrusted to us by God.

PRAY ON SUNDAY, 14 APRIL 2013

Prayer for Reflection: A Franciscan Benediction

*May God bless us with discomfort
at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships,
so that we may live deep within our hearts.*

*May God bless us with anger
at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people,
so that we may work for justice, freedom and peace.*

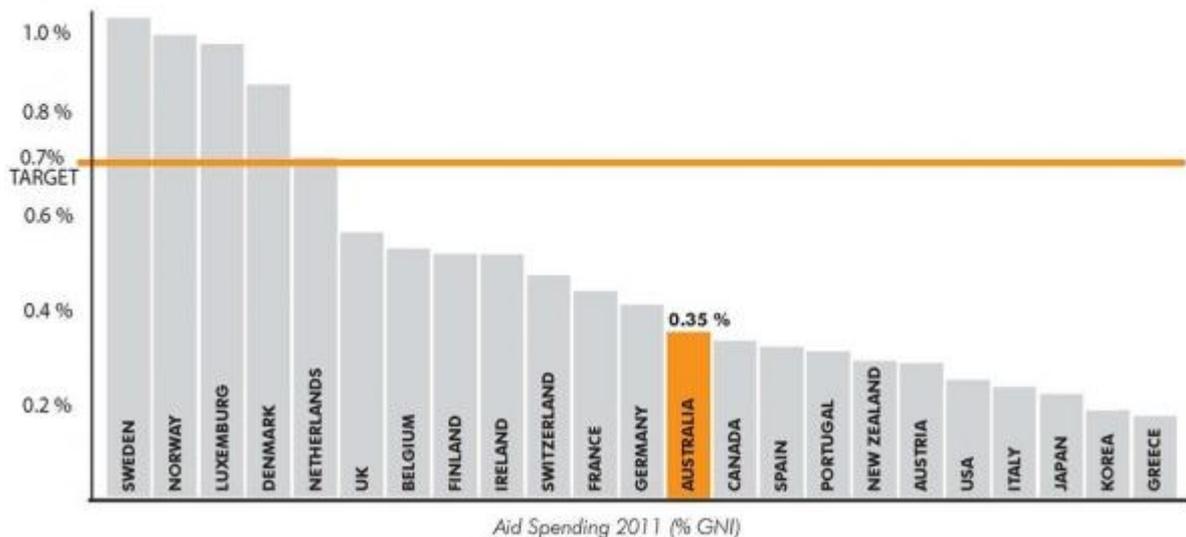
*May God bless us with tears to shed
for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war,
so that we may reach out our hands to comfort them and turn their pain into joy.*

*And may God bless us with enough foolishness
to believe that we can make a difference in this world,
so that we can do what others claim cannot be done.*

GOAL 8:

DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

While Australia's aid levels lag behind the international target of 0.7% of GNI, **it has grown from 0.24% in 2000 to 0.35% today.**



Goal 8 covers the international effort for cooperation in achieving the MDGs. We will only halve poverty by 2015 if we manage to develop a global partnership for development. Every government and individual must play their

part. As well as effective targeted aid, the poor need debt management and relief, information technology processes, essential drugs, and access to global markets. It is vitally important that God intervenes in developing countries that are landlocked, small island states and countries with instable or corrupt governments. It is estimated that ODA needs to double to achieve the MDGs effectively. Higher levels of cooperation are required, including government transparency, targeted investment programmes, follow through on ODA commitments, and grassroots advocacy in developing countries.



Pray with us:

- Pray for the Australian government to follow through on their promises and ensure effective delivery of international aid and strategic investments in developing countries.
- Praise God for the cooperation that has grown internationally over the last 13 years.
- Pray for God to convict the hearts and minds of leaders in wealthy companies and countries toward compassion and justice.
- Give thanks to God for the example of Jesus and for the sacrificial service of so many Christians. Pray for God to be moving in the hearts of all people to bring about positive change.