



Prayer for Canada

(Prayer service to prepare for Canada's 150th birthday. Suitable for Canada Day celebrations)

INTRODUCTION

Good morning/afternoon. Welcome to our prayer for Canada as it approaches its 150th birthday. Please join in our opening song, _____.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us begin our prayer with the sign of our faith: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

And let us pray. O God, you created the earth to be our dwelling as we journey toward our heavenly home. We praise you for the riches of this land that feeds and sustains us. We thank you for the kindness of those who welcomed the newcomers who settled here. We thank you for the faith of those who worked to build a just society that honours you. We ask you to send your Spirit upon our gathering this morning. Open our hearts with gratitude for your blessings; with repentance for our failures; and grant us an unshakeable hope, to build a future that glorifies you in all things. We ask you this through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord. Amen.

And now, let us listen to God's word.

READING

A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah (Is 42: 5-9)

Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and who stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the Lord, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols.

The word of the Lord,
Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION

This land known as Canada has always been a sacred place. Our country's indigenous peoples know that it is a gift from the Creator. It provides us with food, medicine, and what we need for shelter. Who else but God could create waters teeming with fish; forests, plains and tundra with plentiful wildlife; mighty rivers and awe-inspiring mountains? We see the beauty of this land, and something deep in our hearts understands that it is God's gift to us.

Canada is not just about land. It is also about people – people who live together and share common ways of life. Our reading from the prophet Isaiah tells us that it is God who created this land, who gives us our breath, and gives us His spirit to walk in His righteousness. God calls us to be His *witnesses*: to worship Him in love, to reach out to those in need, to share our food with the hungry, to visit the sick

and imprisoned, to welcome the stranger, to work for peace and clothe the naked. As God's witnesses, we are called to honour our elders, our parents, and all those who teach us to walk in God's righteousness.

In God's eyes, our greatness as a nation comes from living as His witnesses. Jesus gives us the strength to live this way – to become all that God calls us to be. He calls us from many cultures and nationalities. He inspires and raises up Godly people to shine with His light in our families, in our communities, in the Church and in our schools – to lead us by example.

The light of Jesus shines in our witness. It makes us a light for one another, and a *light to the nations*. The light of Jesus, shining in our witness opens the eyes of those who are blinded by injustice; it shines on those who sit in the darkness without hope, on those hungering for a home, for friendship, for safety, for food, for love. As we prepare to celebrate 150 years of Canadian nationhood, let us give thanks to God for this great land. Let us give God thanks for the people who first welcomed our ancestors and families. Let us give God thanks for the faith-filled people in our lives who shine with Christ's life. Let us give thanks for the Godly women and men in our history who worked to build a just and free society for all who call Canada home. Let us invite Jesus into our hearts to shine in us, that we might continue building what God began in their hearts and lives.

LITANY OF CANADIAN SAINTS AND BLESSEDS

As Christians, we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. These are people who went before us, leading others by their holy example in building a more just society, and making the world a more Godly place. They are the parents, grandparents, elders, aunts, uncles, coaches, teachers, priests, religious and friends who watch and pray for us from heaven. The saints and blessed of Canada are part of this cloud of witnesses. Let us turn to them, asking for their prayers, that we too might live as God's witnesses in Christ. The response is: *Pray for us*.

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| St. Jean de Brebeuf: | Priest, apostle to the Hurons and martyr for the faith, - <i>Pray for us</i> . |
| St. Noël Chabanel: | Priest, apostle to the Hurons and martyr for the faith, - <i>Pray for us</i> . |
| St. Anthony Daniel: | Priest, apostle to the Hurons and martyr for the faith, - <i>Pray for us</i> . |
| St. Charles Garnier: | Priest, apostle to the Hurons and martyr for the faith, - <i>Pray for us</i> . |
| St. Isaac Jogues: | Priest, apostle to the Hurons and martyr for the faith, - <i>Pray for us</i> . |
| St. Gabriel Lalemant: | Priest, apostle to the Hurons and martyr for the faith, - <i>Pray for us</i> . |
| St. René Goupil: | Layperson, apostle to the Hurons and martyr for the faith, - <i>Pray for us</i> . |
| St. Jean de Lalande: | Layperson, apostle to the Hurons and martyr for the faith, - <i>Pray for us</i> . |
| St. François de Laval: | Bishop of Quebec, - <i>Pray for us</i> . |

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| St. Kateri Tekakwitha: | Lily of the Mohawks, - <i>Pray for us.</i> |
| St. Marie of the Incarnation: | Mother, religious and apostle to New France, - <i>Pray for us.</i> |
| St. Marguerite Bourgeoys: | Religious, educator and apostle to New France, <i>Pray for us.</i> |
| St. Marguerite d'Youville: | Mother, religious, educator, hospital director, - <i>Pray for us.</i> |
| Saint Brother André: | Religious, tireless promoter of St. Joseph, - <i>Pray for us.</i> |
| Blessed André Grasset: | Priest and Québécois martyr of the French Revolution, - <i>Pray for us.</i> |
| Blessed Marie-Rose Durocher: | Religious and educator, - <i>Pray for us.</i> |
| Blessed Marie-Léonie Paradis: | Religious and educator, - <i>Pray for us.</i> |
| Blessed Louis-Zéphirin Moreau: | Bishop of St-Hyacinthe, - <i>Pray for us.</i> |
| Blessed Frédéric Janssoon: | Priest, - <i>Pray for us.</i> |
| Blessed Catherine of Saint Augustine: | Religious, - <i>Pray for us.</i> |
| Blessed Dina Bélanger: | Religious and educator, - <i>Pray for us.</i> |
| Blessed Marie-Anne Blondin: | Religious and educator, - <i>Pray for us.</i> |
| Blessed Émilie Tavernier Gamelin: | Mother, religious and apostle to the poor, - <i>Pray for us.</i> |
| Blessed Nykyta Budka: | Ukrainian Catholic Bishop of Winnipeg, defender of the faith, - <i>Pray for us.</i> |
| Blessed Vasil Velychkovsky: | Ukrainian Catholic Bishop, defender of the faith, - <i>Pray for us.</i> |
| Blessed Élisabeth Turgeon: | Religious and educator, - <i>Pray for us.</i> |
| All you Holy Women and Men: | - <i>Pray for us.</i> |
| St. Anne | Mother of Our Lady - <i>Pray for us.</i> |
| Our Lady of the Cape | Notre Dame du Cap - <i>Pray for us.</i> |
| St. Joseph | Patron of Canada - <i>Pray for us.</i> |

LITANY OF PRAISE FOR CANADA'S GIFTS

And now, let us give praise and thanks to God for His many gifts to us across this land. The response is,
We praise You and thank You, O God!

For the gift of the Pacific Ocean, its salmon, orcas, and seals

- *We praise You and thank You, O God!*

For the gift of the Yukon Territory, Land of the Midnight Sun with all its riches:

- *We praise You and thank You, O God!*

For gift of the Northwest Territories, the MacKenzie, the Nahanni, Great Slave and Great Bear Lakes:

- *We praise You and thank You, O God!*

For the gift of Nunavut's Arctic islands, polar bears, narwhals, colourful tundra and boreal forests:

- *We praise You and thank You, O God!*

For the gift of British Columbia's majestic mountains and towering firs:

- *We praise You and thank You, O God!*

For the gift of Alberta's grain and oil, for the Athabasca, Peace and Saskatchewan rivers:

- *We praise You and thank You, O God!*

For the gift of Saskatchewan's rivers, lakes, open prairies and sweeping sky:

- *We praise You and thank You, O God!*

For the gift of Manitoba's lakes and forests, from its southern border to Hudson's Bay:

- *We praise You and thank You, O God!*

For gift of Ontario's Great Lakes, waterways, lush farmlands and forests:

- *We praise You and thank You, O God!*

For the gift of Quebec's St. Lawrence lowlands, the Gaspé and Canadian Shield to Hudson's Bay:

- *We praise You and thank You, O God!*

For the gift of New Brunswick, from Fundy's tides and its forested heart, to the Gulf of St. Lawrence:

- *We praise You and thank You, O God!*

For the gift of Nova Scotia, the Annapolis Valley, Cape Breton Highlands and Lobster fisheries:

- *We praise You and thank You, O God!*

For the gift of Prince Edward Island, its Cavendish dunes, fertile fields and peaceful breeze.

- *We praise You and thank You, O God!*

For the gift of Newfoundland and Labrador, its rocky forests, whales, icebergs, fisheries, and fjords:

- *We praise You and thank You, O God!*

For the gift of the Atlantic Ocean and its riches that supply us with food:

- *We praise You and thank You, O God!*

For the gift of the Arctic Ocean, Baffin Bay, Hudson and James Bay and their bounty of marine life:

- *We praise You and thank You, O God!*

Blessed are you, O God, for the wonderful gifts you bestow on us across this beautiful land!

- *We praise You and thank You, O God!*

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

And now, let us bring our prayers and needs before God.

Let us pray for the Church. That the followers of Jesus in all nations will work make their lands places of God's love, justice and peace. We pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for the world. That peoples of all nations will work together to build civilizations of love. We pray to the Lord.
Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for all those who suffer without a home, without a community, without a country or without rights where they live. That God will fill them with hope and change the hearts of all who can make a difference in their lives. We pray to the Lord.
Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for the people of Canada. For healing and reconciliation, for unity in love of God and neighbour, and greater stewardship for the many gifts God has bestowed on us in this land. We pray to the Lord.
Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for our home-school-parish communities. That we might grow in oneness in Christ, and witness to his Gospel by our love and welcome for all. We pray to the Lord.
Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for our needs, the needs of our friends, families and loved ones. We pray to the Lord.
Lord, hear our prayer.

And let us gather all the prayers we have spoken and those that remain in our hearts and bring them before the Father in the words that Jesus taught us: ***Our Father...***

CLOSING PRAYER

We thank You, O God for the many blessings You have bestowed on the people of Canada. We thank You for the rich gifts of this land, and for those who teach us to live in harmony with its resources. We thank you for every person whose loving work, leadership and ministry has helped this country shine with the light of Christ. We ask you to bless this country of Canada; bless our families and communities with Your peace. Make us good stewards of its resources and inspire us to shine with Christ's light in all that we do. We make this prayer to you through this same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. And may Almighty God bless us: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

CLOSING SONG

Please join in our closing song, *O Canada*.

