

National multi-faith prayer effort hopes to unite Canadians

Two Ottawa-based faith leaders have joined together to offer comforting words to Canadians during the COVID-19 health crisis that has closed most places of worship across the country.

Ottawa Archbishop Terrence Prendergast and Rabbi Dr. Reuven P. Bulka, former co-president of the Canadian Jewish Congress, have co-authored a National Prayer for Canada that they hope will be shared by people of all faiths across the country during on March 31.

On his Twitter feed, Prendergast issued “an invitation to Canadians to pray for all in any way touched by the coronavirus” on March 31.

While Prendergast said the prayer can be recited at any time, he suggested “common action” on Tuesday, March 31, at 3 p.m. Eastern time. (1 p.m. Alberta time)

The call to join together in a national prayer on March 31 is being shared by representatives of other faiths as well and more information can be found on Facebook.



Ottawa Archbishop Terrence Prendergast composed the prayer with Rabbi Reuven P. Bulka.Canadian Catholic News

The director of the Religious Freedom Institute at the faith-based think tank Cardus has added his voice to the call for a national multi-faith prayer on March 31.

“During this time of affliction it is important to celebrate and support worthy communal efforts that unite us in prayer as people of faith, as citizens, and above all in our shared humanity,” said Andrew Bennett, adding “as faith leaders across the country think creatively about ways to care for their communities, I would invite you to join me in supporting such a worthy initiative.”

Archbishop Linda Nicholls, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, is among the Canadian religious leaders supporting the national prayer effort.

“Prayer is the shared language with which we express the hopes and longings of our hearts to God with our sisters and brothers of faith,” Nicholls said. “Please join in prayer as we face this common challenge in every community.”

The prayer created by Rabbi Dr. Reuven P. Bulka and Ottawa Archbishop Terrence Prendergast is:

O God,

We gather together separated by life-saving distancing, but united more than ever in spirit;

We know we are in a war against COVID – 19 together, and the more together we are, the better and stronger we will emerge:

We know the challenges are enormous, yet so are the opportunities;

That whether we are in isolation with loved ones, or alone, we will have abundance of time;

We commit to using that time to the max, to help those in greater need in whatever way we can;

We know we all have the opportunity, and time, to be life savers and life enhancers;

We give thanks for those who are on the front line taking care of those who are not well;

We give thanks for the researchers who are working at breakneck speed to find cure and vaccine;

We give thanks for our leaders, federal, provincial and local, for their dedication to all of us;

We give thanks for the providers of our daily needs who go to work in spite of the risk;

We give thanks for those who have ramped up their ability to produce life-saving supplies.

We pray for the well-being of all our life savers; For those who are not well, that they recover fully;

For those enduring difficulty, that they may overcome their challenges.

We pray that a cure and vaccine will soon be available,

And that we all – family, friends, all Canadians, the entire world may be healed in body and spirit.

We ask you, O God, to bless our leaders, our front line care givers, our life savers and life enhancers.

We ask you, O God, to bless Canada, to bless the world, to bless everyone.

Amen.