

# AN INTER-RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE of THE NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

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**HUNTER COLLEGE AUDITORIUM**  
**FRIDAY MAY 14, 1976**  
**6 o'clock p.m.**

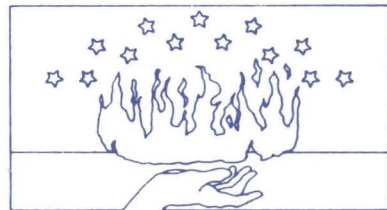
- \*Readings from the prayers of the Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim, Sufi ... traditions
- \*Interludes of classical music
- \*Excerpts from a play dedicated to the spirit of America written by Sri Chinmoy

*Admission free*  
*All are welcome*



Member  
National Bicentennial Service Alliance

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Sponsored by **THE SACRED FIRE**

THE NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER  
FRIDAY MAY 14, 1976

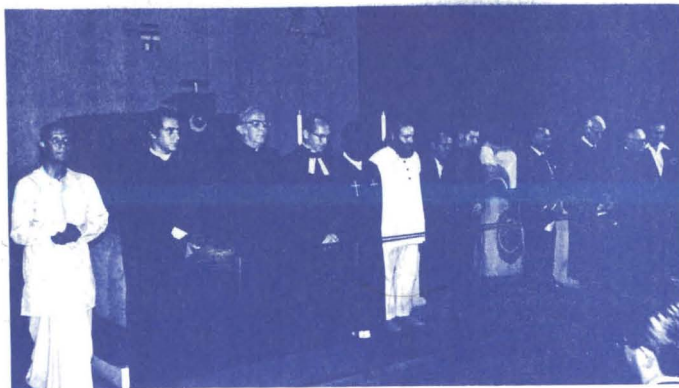
Each year, by national tradition, the President of the United States declares one day The National Day of Prayer, a day for all Americans to gather in worship. On July 24, 1975, the first such Observance was held at the United Nations. Leaders of six of the world's major religious bodies were invited by the U.N. Meditation Group, the New York City Council of Churches and The Sacred Fire to offer their commentaries to the more than 100 persons present at the Church Center for the United Nations.

The enthusiasm generated by this event inspired members of the Sacred Fire to collaborate with the U.N. Meditation Group and The International Cooperation for Peace Committee in sponsoring a recent World Day of Prayer at the United Nations, April 5, 1976. "Prayers for Peace and Progress" were delivered by the distinguished Pir Vilayat Khan, Head of the Sufi Order in the West; the Reverend Nakajima, Director, New York Zen Center; Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, National Director, Inter-religious Affairs, The American Jewish Committee; Edna McCallion, Director, U.N. Office, Church Women United; Dr. Hosny Gaber, Director, Islamic Center of New York; Munishree Chitrabhanu, Founder, Jain Meditation International Center.

This year, as it is the Bicentennial of the United States of America, we have invited persons exemplary of a wide variety of professions and beliefs to join us in our reaffirmation of America's spiritual heritage. To house the many community members wishing to offer their prayers, we have employed the use of Hunter College Auditorium for this event. The program will include these prayers of the invited guests and scenes from a play dedicated to the spirit of America written by Sri Chinmoy. We have requested the presence of Sri Chinmoy, Director of the U.N. Meditation Group, to preside at this National Day of Prayer and open the evening with a silent meditation.

We offer a most sincere invitation to participate with us on this day. The impact of such a communion of prayer should be quite profound.

## 6 FAITHS PRESENT AT CHURCH CENTER



Leaders Mark National Day  
of Prayer at the U.N.

Representatives of Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Baha'i and Muslim groups  
at prayer ceremony at the Church Center of the U.N.

By **GEORGE DUGAN**

Leaders of six of the world's major religious bodies marked this country's National Day of Prayer yesterday at a ceremony attended by 100 people in the chapel of the Church Center for the United Nations, at First Avenue and 44th Street.

The Rev. Dr. Dan M. Potter, executive director of the Council of Churches of the City of New York, called it the "most representative gathering of religious leaders ever held in the city."

Sri Chinmoy, a Hindu and director of the United Nations Meditation Group, presided at the hour-long ceremony. He opened the meeting with silent prayer, standing behind a plain white marble altar.

Then, in brief comments, the leaders representing Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Baha'i and Muslim groups—called upon Amer-

icans to renew their "dedication to the eternal" in prayer and asked God to lead all nations in "paths of righteousness."

The speakers, in addition to Dr. Potter, included the following: Rabbi Samuel Geffen of the New York Board of Rabbis, Lozang Jampal of the Buddhist Monastery of America, the Rev. Robert Kennedy of the Brooklyn Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church, the Rev. Stephen Kyriacou of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, Catherine Mboye of the Baha'i International Community, Muddassir Ali Shamsee of the Muslim Prayer Group, Sheik Shahabuddin of the Sufi Order, the Rev. Grant Anderson of the Queens Federation of Churches, the Rev. Kenneth Folkes, president of the Council of Churches of the City of New York.

Dr. Potter said there was much for

which "we can thank God, but, we see so many shortcomings, so many failures, so many examples of injustice, inequality, discrimination, brutality, pain, suffering and interminable degrading violence to human dignity."

"We cannot celebrate this Bicentennial," he added, "without feeling the compelling need to sit in sackcloth and ashes, in penance for our failure to God as well as our disappointment to fellow citizens."

Following the commentaries, excerpts were read from President Ford's statement proclaiming yesterday as a National Day of Prayer, the late President John F. Kennedy's inaugural address and the writing of the late Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Sacred Fire, a 30-member choral group, sang "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "America the Beautiful."

Our Nation was born 200 years ago poor and very weak. Our leaders were untested and our land remote from much of the world. This continent was mostly a virgin wilderness.

Yet our new Nation displayed extraordinary determination and near limitless capacity for discovery about ourselves and about our future. Our Declaration of Independence surpassed all worldly doctrines in its enlightened pronouncements on human rights and individual liberty.

Our leaders showed that the inspired will and raw courage of our ragged defenders could defeat not only hardship and privation but the disciplined power of an empire. Our people demonstrated extraordinary belief that their cause was just and that it would prevail.

I think it is well to recall at the start of this Bicentennial Year that it was not might nor wealth which ultimately gained American independence and liberty but more powerful forces—the unshakable, unbreakable belief of our people in themselves and in their cause. They proved that a people's greatest strength is its own faith...

We know that wealth and power do not measure the greatness of this or any other nation. Our spiritual principles and moral value transcend the physical capacities and the boundaries of our land...

Let us pray for God's guidance in our pursuit of peace. Let us rediscover our past and renew ourselves in its cherished principles. And then let us begin our journey into this third century with the same faith and the same purpose of our Nation's founders. Let us span the centuries at this moment and unite the past, the present and the future in spiritual communion...

Let us make it "our earnest prayer," as George Washington did two centuries ago, that "God would graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with charity and humility, and a peaceful temper of mind, without which we can never hope to be a happy nation."

And let us make it our "constant prayer," as Lincoln did more than a century ago, not only that God is on our side, but that we "and this Nation should be on the Lord's side."

Finally, let it be said that in this great Nation of ours freedom still flourishes and liberty still lives. As we declare our dependence on God, let us unite in the same bond which united those who signed America's Declaration of Independence 200 years ago."

**The President's, Gerald R. Ford, Remarks  
at the 24th Annual Prayer Breakfast. Jan. 29, 1976**

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...Every nation has its soul. The soul of a nation consists of its aspirations, aptitudes and capacities placed at the service of the Supreme. Judging by her history, America holds the brightest promise of placing at the service of the Divine her aspirations, aptitudes and capacities, as she has often, in times of need, placed them at the service of humanity.

Now that a spiritual awakening is upon the world, it is only a question of years—and certainly not centuries—before its golden glint falls on the face of every nation. The Divinity now hidden beneath the surface will shine forth, to a greater or lesser degree, upon each one.

Until now the world has seen largely the surfaces of American life, and it has formed its opinion accordingly. Not that her depths have not occasionally come to view, but such occasions have been few in relation to the vastness and variety of her population. Needless to say, there are great indications of a greater future; and as the Golden Hour of God dawns and advances towards its fulness, the splendour of America's soul will shine more and more on the surface, even for crude eyes to see...

America is wealth.

America is heart.

America is sacrifice.

Before long in America hopefully there will shine forth the world's collective soul.

from **America In Her Depths**  
by Sri Chinmoy