

From "Sacred Values: A Multifaith Celebration of Freedom, Health, and Justice," held on 2/8/2007 at the Indiana Statehouse, sponsored by the Indiana Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

Welcome and Opening Prayer by Rev. Hilary Krivchenia

Thank you all for being here this morning. Thank you for your time, your good hearts, and your willingness to be present together to do this important work. Your being here is an act of honor – both for the purposes of health, justice, and freedom and for our great democratic institutions.

This house is the capitol of our common ground, our common good. We gather here first in an interfaith worship to show that the highest is best served in the many voices and manifestations that it appears to people throughout our state and around our nation and that there is a way to do this that honors this house and our nation's precious tradition of shared religious freedom. We gather *here* in worship this morning to remind ourselves that it is our common ground we seek as well as our highest good. It is our purpose to do as the world's religions have called us to do – to alleviate suffering. We gather here to remind ourselves and our leaders in their secular work that we serve a spirit deeper and higher than any that can be contained in this or any other single building. We are here to remind our leaders that the highest is served when we take in the fullness of human experience and thus make our hearts and our minds wider. We gather here in prayer profound and earnest – that we will prevent suffering, that we will choose to honor life and foster healing, and that we will not close our ears, hearts, and minds to the best wisdom of our times for doing this.

We are blessed to have many religions gathered in one place, one room, one nation – for in that way we experience the many ways that Spirit manifests in our lives.

Let us pray together –

God of Our deepest understanding, Sovereign of the soul and the conscience, hear our prayer for we have come here in an hour of great need. Spirit of Life – guide us to honor life in all its times and with all its faces. Guide us to prevent suffering by opening our eyes to the reality of people's lives and, especially, to the realities of our children and young people. Open our ears that we will hear those who cry out for wisdom, for understanding and for education that can truly hold life in the very center. Lead our leaders to honestly walk in the footsteps of others that they may know the conditions of our lives and make their decisions based upon realities that can make our lives better rather than on fantasies that lead to false choices, and imprison our hearts, lives, and our bodies. Sit with our leaders that they will deliberate in wisdom and compassion. Teach our leaders that education liberates and brings wisdom while ignorance makes slaves of us all. And bring clarity to our leaders that they may discern in the voices of the people – our call for real justice.

For us, oh, Beloved Spirit of Life and Sovereign of Mercies, make us all gentle actors on the world's stage. Make our voices and actions embody kindness. Help us to promote education, healing, understanding, and compassion in our work here today and all days. Give us courage to speak our lives in truth and to honor one another's experience in our work. Hold our hands together in prayer that we always take time for Your voice within. And bring our hands together in community that we ever honor this great democracy whose fruit should also be wisdom and life to us all.

We pray in Your Every Name,
in greatest humility

and gratitude for all that is our lives.

Bless our work here today and our lives everyday.