As we continue our study of the prophets and learn about the destruction of the Temple, the enslavement of the Israelites and the march to a foreign land, we reflect on God's action in the lives of our ancient Jewish ancestors. We ask for the courage to go deeper into our study, to examine God's action in our own lives; to use the Scriptures, especially of Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Isaiah to invite God's mercy, compassion and understanding to penetrate down into our hearts and deepen our understanding.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (43:1-7)
Lamentations 1:1-3; 3:18-26, 31-33, 40-42, 55-57; 5:19-22

**Tables 1-4** How lonely she is now, the once crowded city! Widowed is she who was mistress over nations; The princess among the provinces has been made a toiling slave.

**Tables 5-8** Bitterly she weeps at night, tears upon her cheeks, with not one to console her of all her dear ones; Her friends have all betrayed her and become her enemies.

**Tables 9-13** Judah has fled into exile from oppression and cruel slavery; Yet where she lives among the nations, she finds no place to rest: All her persecutors come upon her where she is narrowly confined.

**Tables 1-4** I tell myself my future is lost, all that I hoped for from the Lord. The thought of my homeless poverty is wormwood and gall: Remembering it over and over leaves my soul downcast within me. But I will call this to mind, as my reason to have hope:

**Tables 5-8** The favors of the Lord are not exhausted, his mercies are not spent; They are renewed each morning, so great is his faithfulness. My portion is the Lord, says my soul; therefore, will I hope in him.

**Tables 9-13** Good is the Lord to the one who waits for him, to the soul that seeks him; It is good to hope in silence for the saving help of the Lord.

**Tables 1-4** For the Lord's rejection does not last forever; Though he punishes, he takes pity in the abundance of his mercies; He has no joy in affliction or grieving the sons of men.

**Tables 5-8** Let us search and examine our ways that we may return to the Lord! Let us reach out our hearts toward God in heaven! We have sinned and rebelled; you have not forgiven us.

**Tables 9-13** I called upon your name, O Lord, from the bottom of the pit; You heard me call, "Let not your ear be deaf to my cry for help!"

**ALL** You, O Lord, are enthroned forever; your throne stands from age to age. Why, then, should you forget us, abandon us so long a time? Lead us back to you, O Lord, that we may be restored: give us anew such days as we had of old. For now, you have indeed rejected us, and in full measure turned your wrath against us.

**Song: City of God**

1. Awake from your slumber, arise from your sleep. A new day is dawning, for all those who weep. The people in darkness have seen a great light The Lord of our longing has conquered the night.

**Chorus:**

*Let us build the city of God May our tears be turned into dancing, for the Lord our light and our love has turned the night into day.*

2. We are sons of the morning; we are children of day. The one who has loved us has brightened our way.

3. The Lord of all kindness has called us to be a light for his people to set their hearts free.

4. Let us build the city of God, may our tears be turned into dancing, For the Lord our light and our love Has turned the night into day.

*Text based on Is 9:6-7, 1 Jn 1. Text and music © 1981, Daniel L. Schulte and New Dawn Music. All rights reserved. Used with permission.*
The Sabbath Prayer by Jack Riemer  Website: socialjusticeresourcecenter.org

LEADER: We cannot merely pray to you, O God, to end war;
ALL: For we know that You have made the world in a way that people must
find their own path to peace within themselves and with their neighbors.

LEADER: We cannot merely pray to You, O God, to end starvation;
ALL: For You have already given us the resources with which to feed the entire world, if we would only use them wisely.

LEADER: We cannot merely pray to You, O God, to root out prejudice;
ALL: For You have already given us eyes with which to see the good in all people, if we would only use them rightly.

LEADER: We cannot merely pray to You, O God, to end despair;
ALL: For You have already given us the power to clear away slums and to give hope, if we would only use our power justly.

LEADER: We cannot merely pray to You, O God, to end disease;
ALL: For You have already given us great minds with which to search out cures and healing, if we would only use them constructively.

ALL: Therefore, we pray to You instead, O God, for strength, determination and will power,
To do instead of just pray,
To become instead of merely to wish.

A Step Along the Way: Dedicated to Archbishop Oscar Romero by Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw  Website: socialjusticeresourcecenter.org

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.
The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.
We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God’s work.
Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.
No prayer fully expresses our faith.
No confession brings perfection.
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No program accomplishes the Church’s mission.
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.
This is what we are about.
We plant the seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.
We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.
We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord’s grace
to enter and do the rest.
We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder
and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders, ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets of a future not our own.