

Prayer for Our Government—Appropriate for Thanksgiving Day
by Archbishop John Carroll, the first bishop of the United States (1791)

We pray, O almighty and eternal God, who through Jesus Christ has revealed thy glory to all nations, to preserve the works of your mercy, that your Church, being spread through the whole world, may continue with unchanging faith in the confession of your name.

We pray Thee, who alone are good and holy, to endow with heavenly knowledge, sincere zeal and sanctity of life, our chief bishop, the pope, the vicar of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the government of his Church; our own bishop, all other bishops, prelates and pastors of the Church; and especially those who are appointed to exercise among us the functions of the holy ministry, and conduct your people into the ways of salvation.

We pray O God of might, wisdom and justice, through whom authority is rightly administered, laws are enacted, and judgment decreed, assist with your Holy Spirit of counsel and fortitude the president of these United States, that his administration may be conducted in righteousness and be eminently useful to your people over whom he presides; by encouraging due respect for virtue and religion; by a faithful execution of the laws in justice and mercy; and by restraining vice and immorality.

Let the light of your divine wisdom direct the deliberations of Congress, and shine forth in all the proceedings and laws framed for our rule and government, so that they may tend to the preservation of peace, the promotion of national happiness, the increase of industry, sobriety and useful knowledge; and may perpetuate to us the blessing of equal liberty.

We pray for his excellency, the governor of this state, for the members of the assembly, for all judges, magistrates, and other officers who are appointed to guard our political welfare, that they may be enabled, by your powerful protection, to discharge the duties of their respective stations with honesty and ability.

We recommend likewise, to your unbounded mercy, all our brethren and fellow citizens throughout the United States, that they may be blessed in the knowledge and sanctified in the observance of your most holy law; that they may be preserved in union, and in that peace which the world cannot give; and after enjoying the blessings of this life, be admitted to those which are eternal.

Finally, we pray to you, O Lord of mercy, to remember the souls of your servants departed, who are gone before us with the sign of faith and repose in the sleep of peace; the souls of our parents, relatives and friends; of those who, when living, were members of this congregation, and particularly of such as are lately deceased; of all benefactors who, by their donations or legacies to this Church, witnessed their zeal for the decency of divine worship and proved their claim to our grateful and charitable remembrance. To these, O Lord, and to all that rest in Christ, grant, we beseech you, a place of refreshment, light and everlasting peace, through the same Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Savior. Amen.