

Dag Hammarskjold – United Nations Secretary General – posthumous Nobel Peace Prize, promoting peace and justice. Obviously dealt with many personalities and issues.

“It is more important to understand the ground of your own behavior than to understand the motives of another.”

Lord God, we are grateful to have waken to a new day, a new beginning, and a new opportunity here in this place to see you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly. It is here, when we take the time to sit in your presence, away from phones, computers, schedules, chores, all that pulls us in different directions, that we are reminded that our lives need to be rooted and grounded in you. That you give our lives balance and meaning and that it is your desire to help us live that abundant life Jesus promised. Lord, we know that sometimes we do get it right – we give of ourselves, we are grateful for our blessings, we treat others the way we want to be treated, we feel right with you and right with others, and we experience a joy that is profound and fulfilling. Other times, however, we don't get it right. We mess it up. And when that happens, too often, rather than look at our own behavior, we look to others to place the blame. We rattle off all kinds of things the other person should and could do to make things better. We bring up issues of the past, to reiterate just how right we are. And as for us – well, we can find all kinds of ways to justify our behavior, rather than to understand our behavior. To go deeper, to look more closely at what triggers us to do or say that which we later wish we hadn't. Or, what causes us not to do or say that which we should. Forgive us, Lord. And remind us that at this table of Communion set before us today we are compelled to look honestly at ourselves. Not to beat ourselves up or to feel shame or guilt. But rather to want to repent, to graciously accept your grace and forgiveness, and to be motivated to look within, to pray for transformation, to be made new. And so, in silence we come individually to you, with our own personal prayers of confession and petition.

Thank you for your mercy and forgiveness, O Lord. As St. Paul said, “If anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation.” May it be so for us today.

Lord, we come to you with prayers for others. We pray for the victims and families of the Virginia Beach shootings. May your Spirit of comfort be with them and heal them. And may we as a country use this tragedy that we have seen far too often, as a way to relook, rethink, reimagine our society so that we seek to bring peace and love and acceptance to all. There are others we wish to pray for...