

## Welcome/Introduction

### Prayer for America

“O Thou kind Lord! This gathering is turning to Thee. These hearts are radiant with Thy love. These minds and spirits are exhilarated by the message of Thy glad-tidings. O God! Let this American democracy become glorious in spiritual degrees even as it has aspired to material degrees, and render this just government victorious. Confirm this revered nation to upraise the standard of the oneness of humanity, to promulgate the Most Great Peace, to become thereby most glorious and praiseworthy among all the nations of the world. O God! This American nation is worthy of Thy favors and is deserving of Thy mercy. Make it precious and near to Thee through Thy bounty and bestowal.” - *Abdu'l-Baha*

### Music Selection #1

...The angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

*The New Testament: St. Luke 1:26-35; 46-48*

Behold! the angels said: "O Mary! God hath chosen thee and purified thee—chosen thee above the women of all nations.

Behold! the angels said: "O Mary! God giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him: his name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honour in this world and the Hereafter and of (the company of) those nearest to God; "He shall speak to the people in childhood and in maturity. And he shall be (of the company) of the righteous."

She said: "O my Lord! How shall I have a son when no man hath touched me?" He said: "Even so: God createth what He willeth: When He hath decreed a plan, He but saith to it, 'Be,' and it is!

*Mohammad: The Qur'an: 3:42, 45-47*

In the Qur'án it is said: "And We sent Our Spirit unto her, and He appeared unto her in the shape of a perfect man," meaning that the Holy Spirit took the likeness of the human form, as an image is produced in a mirror....

*Abdu'l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions, p. 87*

### Music Selection #2

...It is evident that Jesus came into this world through the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit, and that consequently His birth was quite miraculous.

*Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, December 1937*

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

*The New Testament: St. Luke 2:7-14*

...God conferred upon that Essence of the Spirit, Who was known amongst the people as fatherless, the glory of Prophethood, and made Him His testimony unto all that are in heaven and on earth.

*Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitab-i-Iqan, p. 57*

As to the position of Christianity, let it be stated without any hesitation or equivocation that its divine origin is unconditionally acknowledged, that the Sonship and Divinity of Jesus Christ are fearlessly asserted, that the divine inspiration of the Gospel is fully recognized, that the reality of the mystery of the Immaculacy of the Virgin Mary is confessed....

The Founder of the Christian Faith is designated by Bahá'u'lláh as the "Spirit of God," is proclaimed as the One Who "appeared out of the breath of the Holy Ghost," and is even extolled as the "Essence of the Spirit."

His mother is described as "that veiled and immortal, that most beautiful, countenance," and the station of her Son eulogized as a "station which hath been exalted above the imaginings of all that dwell on earth,"

...The deepest wisdom which the sages have uttered, the profoundest learning which any mind hath unfolded, the arts which the ablest hands have produced, the influence exerted by the most potent of rulers, are but manifestations of the quickening power released by His transcendent, His all-pervasive and resplendent Spirit. We testify that when He came into the world, He shed the splendor of His glory upon all created things. Through Him the leper recovered from the leprosy of perversity and ignorance. Through Him the unchaste and wayward were healed. Through His power, born of Almighty God, the eyes of the blind were opened and the soul of the sinner sanctified.... He it is Who purified the world. Blessed is the man who, with a face beaming with light, hath turned towards Him."

Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day is Come*, pp. 109-110

### Music Selection #3

The West has always received spiritual enlightenment from the East. The Song of the Kingdom is first heard in the East, but in the West the greater volume of sound bursts upon the listening ears. The Lord Christ arose as a bright Star in the Eastern sky, but the light of His Teaching shone more perfectly in the West, where His influence has taken root more firmly and His Cause has spread to a greater degree than in the land of His birth. The sound of the Song of Christ has echoed over all the lands of the Western World and entered the hearts of its people....

The West is like a strong sturdy plant; when the rain falls gently upon it to give it nourishment and the sun shines upon it, then does it blossom in due time and bring forth good fruit. It is a long time since the Sun of Truth mirrored forth by the Lord Christ has shed its radiance upon the West.... But now again, praise be to God, the Holy Spirit speaks anew to the world! The constellation of love and wisdom and power is once more shining from the Divine Horizon to give joy to all who turn their faces to the Light of God. Bahá'u'lláh has rent the veil of prejudice and

superstition which was stifling the souls of men. Let us pray to God that the breath of the Holy Spirit may again give hope and refreshment to the people, awakening in them a desire to do the Will of God.

May heart and soul be vivified in every man: so will they all rejoice in a new birth. Then shall humanity put on a new garment in the radiance of the love of God, and it shall be the dawn of a new creation! Then will the Mercy of the Most Merciful be showered upon all mankind and they will arise to a new life.

*Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, pp. 33-35*

If men followed the Holy Counsels and the Teachings of the Prophets, if Divine Light shone in all hearts and men were really religious, we should soon see peace on earth and the Kingdom of God among men.

*Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 108*

### Prayer for New York

"I eagerly anticipate the day when New York will become a blessed spot from which the call to steadfastness in the Covenant of God will go forth to every part of the world, thus making that city outstanding from every point of view.

Bless Thou, O King of Kings, the city of New York! Cause the friends there to be kind to one another. Purify their souls and make their hearts to be free and detached. Illumine the world of their consciousness. Exhilarate their spirits and bestow celestial power and confirmation upon them. Establish there a heavenly realm, so that the City of Bahá may prosper and New York be favoured with blessings from the Abhá Kingdom, that this region may become like the all-highest Paradise, may develop into a vineyard of God and be transformed into a heavenly orchard and a spiritual rose garden."

*Abdu'l-Bahá*

### Music Selection #4 Prayer Requests Announcements Fellowship

