

**Offered by His Excellency Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo
President of Nigeria**

5 September 2000

As we come into the presence of God this morning, let us begin with a moment of united silence for prayer and personal reflection. . .

Our Father in Heaven,

We are gathered together this morning, grateful for your presence among us, and to acknowledge You as our Creator and Shepherd.

It is You that has made us and not we ourselves. You have created us with dignity and worth, with human rights and responsibilities. Nevertheless, we are tempted to treat others as though they have no dignity and no rights. We are tempted to be self-sufficient and independent. We ask you to forgive us for that.

As we gather together for the imminent opening of the Millennium Summit and the 55th General Assembly, we acknowledge that our human authority is a trust from you. We come to you as our Shepherd. The challenges before us are great—hatred, war, poverty, injustice, and the powers of evil. We realize that our solutions, when we can achieve them, are often temporary and incomplete. We need your great wisdom to guide us in the paths of righteousness. We need your great power as we work together for the common good.

We pray for the Heads of State and Heads of Government, and all who are here for the Millennium Summit. We pray they would be examples of your justice, love and mercy, so all may live quiet and peaceful lives.

We pray for the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary General, and the representatives of nations. Be with them as they work for peace and progress.

Bless our efforts so that we might be a blessing to others.

Please give us compassion for those who are victims of violence, injustice and intolerance.

Be with those who are persecuted for their beliefs.

Hear the cry of the forgotten and the needy.

Protect the innocent and especially the children.

We pray for understanding as we consider the words of Jesus which were read this morning. Empower us to love our enemies, to love those who persecute us, enable us to be peacemakers, to be pure in heart. We realize that if there is to be peace between peoples and nations, we must first know Your peace within ourselves.

Thank you for the life and teachings of Jesus, for his death and resurrection on our behalf. Thank you for your forgiveness and the hope of eternal life. Thank you for the reminder of your unconditional love for each us this morning.

O God, we bring all these requests before you because you are the sovereign and living God. Your kingdom will endure forever. In the name of Jesus I pray, Amen.