

# **The City Church, New York**

**The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession – Sunday January 15, 2006**

Although Increase Mather and other Puritans opposed the Salem witch trials of 1692, the trials and executions went forward. But only five years later, the town of Salem and the Massachusetts Bay Colony proclaimed this day, January 15th, a day of fasting and repentance for their atrocities. They prayed to the Lord: "Show us what we know not, and help us, wherein we have done amiss, to do so no more." Let us pray.

Our Father:

We intercede on behalf of all whom we have misunderstood and mistreated – especially all whom we've abused in an arrogant misuse of Your Name. Undo the damage we've done. Heal the hurts we've inflicted. Bind up the hearts broken by our ignorance and insensitivity. Bless all our victims, in Jesus' Name. And if they're blaming You for faults that are entirely our own, if they've turned away from You because they've been negated or neglected by us, in Your Name, bring them back into Your loving arms and assure them that we, in our offense against them, were not behaving on Your behalf.

We thank You for the examples of these Puritans at Salem, not only in the example of their horrible, and high-handed error but in their honorable confession in humility. It's so easy to have a cocksure conscience that's blind and deaf to Your revealed wisdom and mercy. May we all learn what we need to learn, not only from the mistakes of these earlier pilgrims, but from our own mistakes made at earlier points in our pilgrimage. May each of us learn to follow Jesus more closely so that all with whom we have to do may see our goodwill and good works and glorify our good Father in heaven. Thank You for Your assurance that, in Your sovereign love, we may count on You to answer these prayers, graciously working out everything in this world to Your holy purpose.

We pray for all our fellow worshippers in these pews around us this morning. We assume there's more to their needs than we know. But You know. So meet their needs in ways that far exceed our own limited wisdom and passing concern. Give to each person here the assurance that You really do want the very best for him or her – for after all, You gave Your one and only Son that each of us might truly know what it is to be really alive.

We pray by Jesus' authority and in these familiar words He taught us to pray, saying:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.