

Pastoral prayer: Into darkness of the
 human night, O God, you have injected
 a song of peace and hope and love. Now,
 after all these centuries, we gather here around
 candles, and candles to pray for the con-
 sentance of that song. Our world, as
 always, is in deep trouble. Nations are at
 war with one another, and classes and races
 still struggle for supremacy. The generations
 and the ideas and the hopes are in conflict over
 what is due them. Even as individuals we are
 caught up in competition and strife and strive
 for what we can get out of life. Turn up
 the volume of the angels' song, O God,
 and let us hear it for this day at least. Meditate
 our eyes for getting ahead, control our lust
 for the things that do not matter. Remind us
 of one another and of the poor, who surround
 us like grains of sand on a beach. Give us a
 vision of your new age, where all wars are
 abolished, where all is love and forgiveness,
 where all is laid to rest, all angry and
 jealous, put behind us, all prejudiced, and
 all things settled up in love and forgiveness,
 in love and all angry brought to rest.
 Shipping upon and enjoying what you have
 made.
 Give safety to all who travel in this way
 world, that the joy of heavenly things be
 unimpeded. Show mercy on all who have done
 what was evil or wrongheaded or simply
 confused, and guard from seduction all who
 face temptations beyond their powers of re-
 sistance. Let the light that shone over
 the birthplace of that most precious
 Child shine now for us, that our hearts
 may be filled with gladness and
 goodness, and that we may be purified
 of our old beliefs and turn again in all the
 powers of the Manager, to fulfill the wishes
 of your love and your will for ever -