

# Group seeks to change nation through prayer

By Patrick J. Buechi  
Staff Reporter

As the nation moves through difficult and uncertain times, prayer becomes a much-needed comfort for many people. At St. Amelia Parish in Tonawanda, the Precious Blood of Jesus Prayer Community continues to meet, as they have for 36 years, to pray for peace, vocations, and now, a new direction for the country.

Inspired by 2 Chronicles and Nehemiah in Scripture, the group wrote a prayer that recalls the Founding Fathers' goal of creating one nation under God, and asks that same God for forgiveness of sins committed.

"We need to bring God back into our daily lives, our government, our schools," said Harriette Hoebel, one of the founding members of the group.

The prayer thanks God for the inspiration and courage He provided to the Founding Fathers to establish the laws that would guide citizens into the future.

"We've been praying for our nation for quite a while," Hoebel said. "We've studied Scripture. I've read Nehemiah and I was very impressed by it, and of course the prayer from Chronicles; and we would pray that in our own way. Finally, one day we were praying and just experienced the Lord saying, we need to do more. The question was, what more can we do than pray and pray?"

The suggestion came to write the prayer down and spread the message to a wider community. Jane Brown suggested they print it as a prayer card and distribute it to friends and family. The group now passes out the prayer cards to family and friends, who in turn, spread the message further. The prayer has found its way outside the Buffalo Diocese into Elmira, Canada, and as far west as California. Many local parishes have been asking for the cards

A Web site at [prayerforournation.org](http://prayerforournation.org) has been established to download PDFs of the prayer card being established.

"It is absolutely wonderful," said Brown. "Everyone is so encouraged. When I ask people if they are willing to say the prayer, everyone readily accepts the prayer card."

Non-Catholic churches have also taken an interest. In all, 12,000 cards have been distributed.

"We have to realize that we are all together in this," said Hoebel. "As a nation we are one people and we need to pray that way. Like Nehemiah, he prayed for his people. He took responsibility as an Israelite for the sins of the



Photo courtesy of St. Amelia Parish

Students at St. Amelia School in Tonawanda, Matthew Mizerkiewicz (from left), Akash Ghose and Louis Rodriguez join in the "Prayer for Our Nation."

nation, and that is how he prayed. So, that's how we pray."

Sebastian J. Militello, one of only a few men in the prayer group, said the prayer is God's word. "He makes the promise to us. If we do what we have to do, He will heal our nation," Militello said.

Born in 1931, Militello has seen difficult times in our nation's past from effects of the Great Depression to World War II to the legalization of abortion. He feels today Americans face the most dire era in history.

"That is, at my age, with my children and grandchildren, I feel it is the worst that I've seen," he said.

He blames society's problems on a lack of trust in the Lord.

"I believe people in our country have turned away from God," he said. "You can argue the issue all day long, but I think in times like these our churches should be packed. I really do. We should turn back to God because that is what God wants us to do. If we pray and change our ways, He will heal our nation. I believe that very strongly."

## Prayer for our nation

*If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."*

(2 Chron. 7:14)

Almighty and Eternal Father, we thank you for the inspiration and courage you gave to the founding fathers of our nation to establish a land where your principles and laws would guide us. You have provided for this nation mightily with every good thing but we have squandered your gifts and turned away from your laws and principles.

Forgive us Lord. We acknowledge we have sinned against you and one another in every conceivable way. We deserve your just punishment but plead for your mercy (Neh. 1: 4-11).

Grant us, the people of our nation, the grace to turn from our sins and return to you that we might be healed. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son and our Savior. Amen

*God is faithful to His Word and shall accomplish that which He has spoken.*

(Is. 55:11)

**Precious Blood of Jesus Prayer Community**

Karen Mayer worries about the lack of integrity she sees in our leaders.

"We have lost our first love," she said. "We have strayed from what our country was originally founded on – under God. It has been taken out of so many things, like schools. I think we are seeing, in my opinion, the results of putting God aside."

Donna Timineri feels there is a decline of Christianity in the world today, "the decline of doing God's will in the world. We see this happening more and more, that God's will is not being followed in our country. We're seeing more and more devastation, and less regard for God's word. And that troubles us deeply. His word is life to us."

In the first letter to Timothy, Paul writes to pray for all who are in authority so they will be able to lead a peaceful and honest life.

"I feel we need to pray for our judges because they will determine the way our country goes eventually," Hoebel said. "We need a man of integrity or a woman of integrity who will lead the people according to God's plan, not their own plan, and bring us back to where we were."

Along with the Prayer for Our Nation, the Precious Blood of Jesus Prayer Community has written many prayer cards in the parish. In 1972 they wrote "A Prayer for Quiet Time," inspired by an African bishop. A Prayer for Priests was created and used often in the parish back in 1979.

The prayer group, which has 15 members from various parishes mostly in the Kenmore-Tonawanda area, began as a Bible study back in 1973. It then became a prayer group meeting in the St. Amelia choir room. It soon outgrew that room, then outgrew the sacristy. They now meet at the school's Don Miller Hall.

"It's a community of faith that nourishes my faith, and that gave me a wonderful insight into the Bible so that the words made sense to me," said Sandy Tomasulo of the prayer group. "It has been a support to me through the ups and downs of my life. It's a joy to be with these people who have been such a blessing to me for many years."

"It's just a wonderful thing to gather together with people who know the Lord, love the Lord and want to give Him praise and glory," Timineri said.

As they have prayed for one another, those in the prayer group have had many answered prayers.

"It is a place to worship the Lord and to bow down before Him as our creator Lord and Redeemer," said Mayer.