



## A Prayer for Pink Shirt Day -- Feb. 28, 2018

Pink Shirt Day arose because a new student came to a grade 9 class wearing a pink shirt and he was ridiculed. Two students in the class bought pink t-shirts for all the young men in grade 9 in that school to wear in solidarity with the young man who had worn the pink shirt. Pink Shirt Day has become a day to reflect on the ways those who are different from "the norm" are bullied and how others might stand up for them.

A Prayer:

God of infinite creativity you have made human beings in breath-taking diversity, each of us unique.

We confess that we focus on how other people do or do not fit the social norms we have adopted, rather than seeing them as people made in your image. We use labels to mark those who are different from our definitions of what is socially acceptable; labels that degrade, hurt, and alienate.

O God, we recognize as teenagers and as adults, as children and as seniors, our desire to "fit in", to be part of the in-crowd, to be seen with the "right" group, so distracts us that we do not see those who are ignored, belittled, and looked down on. We confess that we have looked down on others, belittling them.

We have lied when we have said and taught others to say, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." This lie has caused us to not take seriously the ways in which words and labels harm others.

Open our hearts to welcome those who are visibly different. Give us courage to welcome those who march to the beat of a drum they alone can hear, even when we are criticized for offering such welcome. Discipline our tongues so that our response to those who label others is not to label in return. Guide us by the Holy Spirit to be the community you desire us to be, bearing the burdens of others, including those who are ridiculed and bullied.

We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, who welcomed the rejected and cared for the outcast. Amen.

—*The Rev. Peter Bush, moderator of the 2017 General Assembly*