

Let us pray,

Lord, help us to live into our ideals as Christians and Americans.

May we learn to love one another as you love us.

Amen.

*Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”*

That's the poem inside the statue of liberty called the *New Colossus*.

Written by a Jewish American from New York City, Emma Lazarus during the year 1883.

The poem is in direct contrast to the Colossus of Rhodes from the time of Greek prosperity in 292 B.C.

This Colossus was a giant male figure who was meant to depict the Sun God, Sol.

It was predicted to be 108 feet tall and straddled the entrance to the port of Rhodes.

It was one of the Wonders of the World of the Ancient world.

The Colossus of Rhodes also had a poem inscribed on it, it went like this:

*To thy very self, O Sun, did the people of Dorian Rhodes
raise high to heaven this colossus,
then, when having laid to rest the brazen wave of war,
they crowned their country with the spoils of their foes.*

*Not only over the sea, but on the land, too,
did they establish the lovely light of unfettered freedom.*

*For to those who spring from the race of Heracles
dominion is a heritage both on land and sea.*

The Greeks constructed this statue as a victory Ebenezer.
Showing the world that they are divinely gifted and favored.
It was a show of strength, it was a warning to foreigners.
But the Statue of Liberty, it tells a different story.
The Statue of Liberty is a female figure, it is a symbol of welcome.
The Statue of Liberty isn't a deterrent, its a welcome sign.

*“Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”*

The Statue of Liberty, says that we are a place of freedom and refuge for the outcasts and exiles of the world.

It is a welcome to those that are not welcomed elsewhere.

The Statue of Liberty, is the American Dream.

It is the embodiment of saying, come here, be free, you are wanted and welcomed in this place.

Immigration is at the heart of what this country is about.

It is the foundation of who we are.

We are strong because we welcome the weak, the poor, the outcast, the exiled, the abused.

We are strong because we welcome diversity, different people from across the world.

The best part about our American identity, is that there is no one American identity, other than the ideal of human freedom and the freedom to pursue happiness.

Which can look very different depending on who you talk to.

Our identity, as Americans, is in the Statue of Liberty, it is in the diversity of those who have come to make a better life for themselves and their families, and to worship their God without fear.

This country was founded with the ideals of religious and personal freedom.

And may we learn to continue to live into this ideal.

Just like anything that involves humans, we have failed many times over the span of 250 years.

We failed to live into the ideals of freedom, when we enslaved Africans.

We failed to live into freedom when we pushed out our indigenous siblings.

When we promote or tolerate racism, bigotry, zionism, homophobia, islamophobia, anti-semitism, and any other -ism or -phobia that attacks a humans right to dignity, the pursuit of their

own happiness and freedom, we as Americans have failed to live into our ideals.

But the great part about America, is that our ideals are beautiful. They are truly an inspiration to the world.

But as we celebrate our 250th year as America, may we remember to continue to be better at living out those ideals.

As Christians who happen to also be Americans, may we learn to embody both the Greatest commandment, To love our God with all our heart, mind and soul and our neighbor likewise.

As well as the cornerstone of what this country is all about.

Remember we are a country of exiles.

So may we remember and embrace the Statue of Liberty and what she stands for.

May we:

“Embrace the worlds tired, the worlds poor,

The world’s huddled masses yearning to breathe free,

The wretched refuse of the world's teeming shore.

May we lovingly receive, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,

May we lift our lamp beside the golden door!"

May we embody what it means to be the Mother, the Country of
exiles.

Amen.