

# LET JUSTICE FLOW LIKE WATERS

*A Lenten Prayer Service for Europe, the Displaced, and the Vulnerable*



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*“But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness  
like an ever-flowing stream.”*

*Amos 5:24 (NRSV)*

## I. Opening Prayer

*Light a candle and pause in silence before beginning...*

God of the flood and the desert, of the river and the dry well

You who parted the waters for your people and led them through the wilderness...

We come now to lean in and learn, and ask that you open our eyes and hearts as we bring many burdens in Europe to you now.

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## II. A Meditation: From the Gharb Plain to Your Table



### The Flood

Begin in the Gharb Plain of northwestern Morocco—a flat, fertile lowland between two rivers, the Loukkos and the Sebou. For seven years, the farmers here endured drought. Their dams sank to thirty percent capacity. Their soil cracked. They prayed for rain. The rain came. And it did not stop.

In one month—**from mid-January to mid-February 2026 - we're talking in the last month to two weeks**—Morocco's dams received nearly nine billion cubic metres of water. That is as much as the previous two years combined. The ground, hardened by seven years of drought, could not absorb it. The rivers swelled. The dams reached 146 percent capacity. Controlled releases sent walls of water downstream. In Ksar El Kebir, eighty-five percent of the city's population fled. By mid-February, 188,000 people had been displaced across four provinces.

*"The waters saw you, O God, the waters saw you and writhed; the very depths were convulsed." — Psalm 77:16*



## The Displaced

Near Kenitra, forty thousand people now live in rows of blue tents. Families queue for medical care. Livestock—for many, their only capital—are sheltered in separate enclosures nearby. The Moroccan Red Crescent distributes food, blankets, and water purification tablets.

*“The water took everything.”* — Ibrahim Bernous, 32, camp near Kenitra

*“We have no grain left to feed our livestock, and they are our main source of income.”* — Chergui al-Alja, 42



## The Journey North

***Now follow the water's consequences north. Every winter, Europe depends on Morocco and southern Spain for the fresh produce that northern fields cannot grow.*** Spain and Morocco together supply 58 percent of Britain's tomatoes, 72 percent of its cucumbers, 75 percent of its sweet peppers. Much of this produce crosses the Strait of Gibraltar—and in early February, that crossing was disrupted by the very storms that flooded the farms.

***In Andalusia, Spain's agricultural heartland, the same storms destroyed eighty percent of the olive harvest.*** Forty thousand hectares of farmland were inundated. Greenhouse structures collapsed. Berry harvests halted. Seasonal workers—many of them migrants from North Africa and Eastern Europe—cannot reach the fields. Their wages have stopped.

***This is the hidden thread that connects a flooded Moroccan village to a supermarket shelf in London, Brussels, or Budapest.*** The bread we break, the oil we pour, the fruit we eat in winter—they are not abstractions. They come from specific fields, tended by specific hands, watered by specific rains. When those fields flood, the ripple reaches all of us. But it does not reach us equally.

*“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” — Matthew 25:35*

## The Most Vulnerable

***In every crisis, those with the least absorb the most.*** In Morocco, the displaced are predominantly rainfed smallholders and pastoralists—people who farm without irrigation, who depend entirely on what the sky provides. Seven years of drought depleted their reserves. Now the flood has destroyed not just this season’s crops, but next season’s productive capacity: the topsoil stripped away, the irrigation channels broken, the seed grain consumed because there was nothing else.



***In Spain,*** the seasonal agricultural workers—many undocumented, many from countries that are themselves in crisis—lose income with no safety net.

***Across Europe,*** rising food prices fall hardest on the families already spending the largest share of their income on groceries.

***And further east, in Ukraine,*** the war that began four years ago this week continues to grind. Every power plant in the country has been struck. Half of Kyiv’s apartment buildings lost heating this winter. Russian forces continue to advance, gaining territory the size of Martha’s Vineyard in a single month. Peace talks in Geneva are described as “difficult.” 173 children were evacuated from front-line areas in Donetsk in a single day last week.

***These crises are not separate. They are woven together by the same threads: climate, food, displacement, and the unequal distribution of suffering.*** The olive oil that European consumers cannot afford traces back to the same changing atmosphere that drives both drought in Andalusia and flooding in Morocco—and that same instability reshapes the energy markets intertwined with the war in Ukraine.

*“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house?” — Isaiah 58:6-7*

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### III. Headlines for Prayer

*The following are current as of February 22, 2026.*

#### Mediterranean Floods

**Mediterranean deluge revives worries about climate-driven food price rises** (Financial Times) — Europe’s winter “pantry” depleted as rains devastate crops in Spain, Portugal, and Morocco

**Floods wreak havoc in Morocco farmlands after severe drought** (AFP/Citizen Digital) — Over 100,000 hectares submerged; 188,000 displaced across four provinces

**Floods in Spain and Morocco set to hit UK fruit and veg supply** (The Grocer) — Spain and Morocco supply 58% of UK winter tomatoes, 72% of cucumbers

**Morocco to spend more than \$300 million on flood recovery** (Africanews) — Four provinces designated disaster zones; relief fund targets infrastructure and farmers

**Portugal, Spain on high alert as storms cause more damage** (RTE) — Storm Oriana follows Kristin, Leonardo, and Marta; atmospheric river event

#### Russia-Ukraine War (Four-Year Anniversary, February 24)

**Russia-Ukraine peace talks in Geneva described as ‘difficult’** (Al Jazeera, Feb. 18) — US-mediated negotiations; both sides describe “progress” but no breakthrough

**Russian forces gain 127 square miles in four weeks** (Russia Matters, Feb. 18) — Preparing offensive toward Slovyansk-Kramatorsk; Ukraine leverages Starlink shutdown for counterattacks

**Every power plant in Ukraine has been damaged** (Zelenskyy, Feb. 2026) — Half of Kyiv’s apartment buildings lost heating; 99,000+ households without electricity in Odesa

**How four years of Ukraine war have changed Russia** (Al Jazeera, Feb. 22) — Over 186,000 verified Russian combat deaths; millions displaced on both sides

**448 attacks on 34 settlements in one day in Zaporizhia** (Al Jazeera, Feb. 19) — 173 people, including 135 children, evacuated from Donetsk front-line areas

#### Other Areas of Concern Across Europe and the Mediterranean

**EU food inflation outpaces overall inflation** (Euronews/ING survey) — 58% of Europeans expect grocery prices to rise faster in the next 12 months

## V. Lament and Intercessions

**For the displaced of Morocco**—for the 188,000 who fled their homes; for the families in tent camps near Kenitra; for the farmers who lost everything and still give thanks for the rain. For their safe return and the long work of rebuilding. Lord, in your mercy—

*Let justice roll down like waters.*

**For the agricultural workers of southern Spain**—for the seasonal labourers who cannot reach the fields, many far from their home countries; for the small-scale olive farmers facing another devastating year; for the communities whose livelihoods depend on what the earth provides. Lord, in your mercy—

*Let justice roll down like waters.*

**For the people of Ukraine**—as the war enters its fifth year this week. For the families in Kyiv without heat (as temperatures remain right at or below freezing.) For the 173 children evacuated from Donetsk in a single day. For those negotiating in Geneva, that they may find a path toward peace. For the millions displaced, both within Ukraine and across Europe. Lord, in your mercy—

*Let justice roll down like waters.*

**For all who are refugees, migrants, and strangers in Europe**—for those who crossed seas and borders seeking safety; for those living in legal uncertainty; for those who harvest the food that feeds a continent but are themselves unseen. Lord, in your mercy—

*Let justice roll down like waters.*

**For the nations of Europe and their leaders**—that they may see the connections between the crises at their borders and beyond, and the policies and decisions they make daily that affect so many. That food systems may be rebuilt for resilience, not just efficiency. That the welcome of the stranger may be understood not as burden but as calling. Lord, in your mercy—

*Let justice roll down like waters.*

**For the earth itself**—for the topsoil stripped from Moroccan plains, for the waterlogged groves of Andalusia, for the rivers that have both sustained and overwhelmed the communities along their banks. For wisdom in how we steward what we have been given. Lord, in your mercy—

*Let justice roll down like waters.*

## Personal Intercessions

***We pause now to bring before God the names and faces known to us personally.*** If you know someone serving in Europe—in ministry, in aid work, in community—hold them before God now. If you know someone who is displaced, who is struggling, who is far from home—speak their name, silently or aloud.

*God who hears every prayer spoken and unspoken, receive these intercessions. Knit them together with your mercy.*

*Amen.*

## VI. Closing



As we leave this place of prayer, we carry with us the image of water—

water that destroys and water that gives life,

the flood that displaces and the river that sustains,

the tears of the grieving and the baptism that makes us new.

May we not turn away from this suffering, but instead learn to stand where the waters converge—where the displaced farmer and the distant consumer, the war refugee and the peacemaker, the broken earth and the praying church all meet in the mercy of God.

***Go now in peace, to love and serve the Lord.***

## ***A Blessing for the Journey***

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*May the God who parted the Red Sea and stilled the storm  
hold back the waters that threaten,  
and send the rains that heal.*

*May the Christ who was himself a refugee in Egypt  
walk with every family seeking shelter tonight—  
in Kenitra, in Kyiv, in every camp and crossing.*

*May the Spirit who hovered over the waters at creation  
hover now over the flooded plains and the broken cities,  
and breathe life into what has been destroyed.*

*And may justice roll down like waters,  
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream—  
through us, and despite us, and far beyond us.*

Amen.

