Dear Friends,

In these overwhelming days after the earthquake in Haiti and many missteps by Christian communities, the Boston University School of Theology shares our sadness with millions of people across the world – people of many faiths and many countries. We join our prayers with yours, offering the prayer below and many others that are too deep for words.

We pray that our tiny points of light will join with thousands of others arising from the human family as we seek collectively to act with compassion, respect, and justice. Professor Kirk Wegter-McNelly has written a profound theological reflection, which we invite you to ponder; it is available at http://www.bu.edu/sth/academics/perspectives/psalm-88-and-haiti/. We also offer the two prayers below, joining our prayers with yours in these days and weeks of trauma.

Throughout Boston University, schools and colleges, small groups, and individuals are actively working in response efforts, as you are undoubtedly doing in your communities. Dean Imani-Sheila Newsome-Camara is coordinating the response efforts of the School of Theology community, and you can learn more by contacting her (inewsome@bu.edu). We recognize how limited our efforts are, but we hope they will contribute in some part to supporting and nourishing life.

With prayers of mourning and hope,
Mary Elizabeth Moore
Dean, BU School of Theology
Dear God of Mournful Tears,
    Whose love embraces those who mourn,
    Whose Spirit moves through streets forlorn,
    Who judges hateful acts with scorn,
    And calls a world to be reborn –
    Reborn as a world that deeply cares –
    that feels the rift of earthquake tears,
    and sees the pain in human snares,
    and stands with those who hold more cares
    than anyone can ever bear.

Dear people of Haiti,
We do not know you
    But we see your face,
    We hear your stories,
    We pray God’s grace.

Yet we know how little we do know you;
    We cannot conceive
    Of families crushed under mounds of debris,
        people buried who no longer breathe,
        children orphaned without a reprieve,
        tragedies mounting as your people grieve.

We are learning more of U.S. neglect,
    Global failings to relate with respect,
    Trade blocked from Haiti and structures deferred,
    Failed opportunities for just deed and word.

We cry for your land and for peoples lost,
    For diminished hope and ecological costs,
    For dwellings collapsed and services ended,
    For unceasing cries that cannot be tended.

What can happen in a land filled with pain?
How do we respond without adding strain
    to a people oppressed by imperial winds
        and strangled by a mountain of human sins,
    Made all the more vicious by the earthquake master,
    Following so close upon hurricane disaster.

Dear God of Mournful Tears,
    Whose love embraces those who mourn
    Whose Spirit moves through streets forlorn,
    Who judges hateful acts with scorn,
    And calls a world to be reborn –
We pray for Haiti,
We pray for hope,
We pray for genuine love and wise courage,
We pray with Haiti.

(Prayer offered by Mary Elizabeth Moore, 5 February 2010)
A PRAYER FOR HAITI

Haiti, we lift you up in prayer.
Your cries to God are heard.

God, we come to you feeling so small
in the face of the tragedy in Haiti.

We have seen the picture in our screens and
heard the words that squeeze out floods of pain.

We have watched and prayed for the people
who have lost so much family and friends.

We have cried with those who need
comfort and care.

We are stunned by the chaos that our
sisters and brothers are still experiencing.

We have grieved with our
communities and churches.

Still we are restless even as the images of death
and dust are no longer on our screen.

Give us renewed strength to act, as we must,
for we cannot forget that you call us to minister
to your people, wherever they are.

May every prayer we pray for Haiti as we work be heard.

Haiti, we lift you up in prayer.
Your cries to God are heard.

AMEN

(“A Prayer for Haiti” was written by Rev. Dean Imani-Sheila Newsome-Camara, Boston University School of Theology, shared in STH Chapel Worship, 10 February 2010.)