

Intercessions 19 April 2020

Let us pray for the church and the world, and thank God for his goodness.

We affirm the words of the psalmist:

*"For God alone my soul waits in silence, for (our) hope is from him.
He alone is (our) rock and (our) salvation, (our) fortress; (we) shall not be shaken.*

(Psalm 62:5-6)

Lord, we thank you that you strengthen us with power through the Holy Spirit, that you have placed Christ within us and rooted and grounded us in love. May we have the power to understand the love that surpasses knowledge and be filled with all your fulness. (Based on Ephesians 2:16-19)

During one of Israel's Old Testament crises, God spoke to Ezekiel:

"The people of the land practice extortion and commit robbery; they oppress the poor and needy and mistreat the foreigner, denying them justice.

I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one." (Ezekiel 22:29-30)

Lord, in our current crisis we struggle most of the time to intercede, to know how to stand in that gap and reconcile the hope we have in you with the death and grief which surrounds and overwhelms us and the whole world at this time.

Be our rock, our salvation, our fortress, so that we shall not be shaken.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Give wisdom to those in Government and Parliament, and those who advise them.

There is an Old Testament proverb which says:

".....with an intelligent ruler there is lasting order." (Proverbs 28:2b)

Lord, help us to intercede on behalf of the those who have leadership responsibilities. We long to see government that doesn't oppress the poor, mislead, conceal transgressions and mistakes, lack understanding, show partiality or trust in their own wits; but rather we long to see government that walks in wisdom and integrity, understands justice, listens to the law and hates unjust gain.

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Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

As we scan the news every day, still in the midst of the crisis, anxiously waiting for signs that things are getting better, we also see glimmers of hope. In many countries, authorities are beginning to ease lockdowns and starting the slow return to **normal**.

But, as the Canadian writer Naomi Klein has said: "**normal**" **was already a crisis**. "**Normal**" was inequity, oppression, and climate breakdown. "**Normal**" was the interests of fossil fuel companies and pollution dominating us, while workers, public services, and democracies suffered.

(I omitted this section in the end!)

Another Canadian wrote and sung:

"Ministers meet, work on the movement of goods

Also work on the movement of capital

Also work on the movement of human beings

As if they were so many cattle"

'Grim Travellers'; Bruce Cockburn (from the album Humans, 1980)

(Bruce Cockburn also wrote another song called 'The Trouble with Normal' with the chorus line:

'The trouble with normal is it always gets worse')

Lord, instead of returning to **normal**, help us to build back better, to refuse a return to the status quo and bring about fundamental change. Inspire our imagination as we make choices in dealing with the fallout of the coronavirus crisis which will shape our society, economy, health, and climate for decades to come.

Be our rock, our salvation, our fortress, so that we shall not be shaken.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Another Old Testament proverb says:

"Keep falsehood and lies far from (us);

Give (us) neither poverty nor riches;

but give (us) only (our) daily bread,

Otherwise (we) may have too much, and disown you and say 'Who is the Lord?'

Or (we) may become poor and steal, and so dishonour the name of (our) God."

(Proverbs 30:8-9)

Some us are experiencing reduced income and facing uncertainty in the near future about things we previously took for granted. So we ask, Lord, that you feed us with the food we need.

For many families in poorer countries, being in lockdown means no longer being able to earn enough to feed their children. In places where malnutrition is already a problem, even more people are going hungry and face the risk of starvation.

Lord, again help us to intercede on behalf of the those in the most vulnerable communities who:

- need emergency food and supplies;
- may get very ill from coronavirus and have no access to healthcare.

Lord, you are sufficient; in you is everything that we need. Help us to share resources and protect countries where there is a lack of basic healthcare, and encourage governments to release funds to help these countries tackle coronavirus.

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Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

As of today's date, there are:

- Over 2.2 million confirmed cases of coronavirus in 185 countries, and at least 147,000 have died; and
- 109,000 confirmed cases in the UK with more than 15,000 deaths in hospitals.

Lord, help us in our grief and sadness for all at the moment. But we thank you too for the solidarity, hope, and urgency to come together across our different struggles, across borders, across divisions, and to decide what kind of future we want.

There are news reports this morning about the under-reporting of more than 4,000 deaths of elderly and disabled people in residential and nursing homes. Lord, we lament the neglect and lack of attention being given and lack of provision being made for the care and protection of residents and care workers in these homes.

We remember those who are living in care homes, in particular:

Joy John, Mavis Kernock, Heather O'Smotherly

Comfort and protect them, and all those living and working in residential and nursing homes in our parishes, especially in Calton Court extra care housing on Sale Farm.

Restore the joy of your salvation and sustain those who are unwell, in particular:

Beth, Joe Caruana, Susan Aldridge, Tim, Suzanne, Paul, Dave Martin, Ellen Cook, Andy, Al, Malini, Debbie, Carol Crowhurst, Mark Johnson, Barbara Wilbourn-Smith, Bernard Stack, Dennis Wiggins

Comfort those who mourn the death of a relative or friend.

We remember those who have died:

Arthur Haynes, Linda Radford, Terry Asser, David Smith, Canon Jim Birtwhistle

We remember the anniversaries of:

Winifred Brooks, Phoebe Game, Peter Rumney, Polly Bishop

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

".....(so let us) stand firm.....may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, comfort (our) hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word." (2 Thessalonians 2:15-17)

Be our rock, our salvation, our fortress, so that we shall not be shaken

Merciful Father.....**accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.**
Amen