

Prayers on Sunday 5 July 2020

by Andrew Goodman

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

(Matthew 11:28-30 NRSVA)

Lord, when we are weary and carrying heavy burdens, give us rest as we come to you. Take the yoke with us and teach us; may we find rest for our souls.

We find it hard to imagine how weary we would feel if we lived in many countries around the world, how heavy the burdens would feel there. We remember NGO's and ongoing projects that have been adapting and responding to coronavirus and lockdown life, especially:

- Living Hope - working in Cape Town
- The Angel Tree Centre and Restoring Hope initiative in Oruru, Bolivia where Julie Noble works through Latin Link

Strengthen NGO's who are responding to emergency situations in places where normal was already a crisis:

- Flooding in South Sudan has washed away homes, destroying crops and any chance of earning an income to feed families. Conflict is increasing and coronavirus is spreading, creating a devastating hunger crisis. Feeding centres are needed more than ever.
- A drought across Zimbabwe and other parts of southern Africa has left many people desperate and at risk of disease. Clean

tap water is needed as use of unclean water supplies has led to outbreaks of diarrhoea and the threat of cholera and typhoid.

- The world's biggest humanitarian crisis in Yemen, a country ravaged by proxy war, on the brink of famine and a coronavirus onslaught, in need of urgent aid, including safe water, food and sanitation.

Provoke world leaders who have the resources and power to alleviate crisis in these places to increase their support.

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

The songwriter has said 'The trouble with normal is it always gets worse'. (Bruce Cockburn)

However, as Archbishop Justin Welby said in his Easter sermon:

"After so much suffering, so much heroism from key workers and the NHS, we cannot be content to go back to what was before as if all is normal. There needs to be a resurrection of our common life."

Jesus said:

".....new wine (is not) put into old wineskins.....new wine is put into fresh wineskins"

(Matthew 9:17 NRSVA)

Tearfund is promoting a campaign called 'A reboot for our world'.

Help us to listen for your guidance and intercede for an economic recovery that tackles climate change, protects the vulnerable and creates greater global solidarity.

As we look to the future and how the world might be, help each of us to play our part in seeing your kingdom come, the poor set free and creation well cared for. Give us each the wisdom to know our

part, and the courage to call our leaders to act to 'Build Back Better', to bring about a green and just recovery.

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

Although we might conclude that drinking alcohol has been given priority over education, we give thanks for schools. Strengthen teachers, and support and management staff as they work in a very different environment from normal at the moment. May those who are weary and burdened find rest in the coming weeks and months. Covid-19 has accentuated previous inequalities across the whole of society. We thank you for the St Andrew's School staff who have supported struggling families, and for partnerships with Hertford Foodbank, Gregg's bakers, St Joseph's in the Park School, Christians Against Poverty and various local businesses.

Restore and sustain everyone in school communities - staff, students and their families - who are feeling that a yoke has been placed upon them. Bring relief from financial pressures, and mental health and relationship difficulties. Help teachers and students prepare for the return to school later in the year, to enjoy education and learning, and quickly make up for what has been missed whilst schools were closed.

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

We give thanks for the NHS on its 52nd birthday. Strengthen clinicians, and support and management staff as it looks like its 53rd year will continue to be taken up with treating and caring for Covid-19 patients, and helping many Covid-19 survivors with the huge challenge of rehabilitation, both physically and mentally, because some survivors are living with long-term problems such as breathlessness, tiredness, cognitive defects, post-traumatic stress

disorder. May the staff who are weary and burdened find rest in the coming weeks and months.

We give thanks, too, for care services and care homes in our parishes. Strengthen carers and other staff in their work. May those who weary and burdened from providing day-to-day care limited by Covid-19 restrictions, and who have lost so many that they cared for, find comfort and rest.

Restore the joy of your salvation and sustain those we know who are unwell, including:

Pat, Jean, Tim, Lucy, Chris, Barbara, Andy, Mark, Debbie,
Bernard, Paul, Joe, Colin, Julia

Comfort those who mourn the death of a relative or friend. We remember those who have died:

Suhad Jarrar, Melanie Starling

We remember the anniversaries of:

Audrey Kemp, Mary Dormor, Reg Game

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

Lord, may we trust in you and be blessed. May we be like a tree planted by water, sending out our roots by the stream. May we not fear when heat comes, so that our 'leaves stay green'. May we not be anxious in drought, and may we never cease bearing fruit.

(Based on Jeremiah 17:7-8 NRSVA)

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