

Intercessions on Sunday 13 December 2020

Third Sunday of Advent

by Andrew Goodman

Readings: Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11 & John 1. 6-8, 19-27

Lord, we thank you for the summit of more than 70 world leaders on the climate crisis hosted yesterday by the UK, France and the United Nations. We thank you that the UK government has this week committed to an emissions reduction of 68% by 2030, and announced a u-turn that the UK is to end aid for fossil fuel projects abroad.

There has been criticism that the summit lacked ambition, and we know from experience that such announcements of commitments and targets can be empty and devoid of action.

We thank you for the wisdom, leadership and urgency demonstrated by Greta Thunberg and thousands of young people around the world active in the school climate strike movement. Their words addressed to wealthy western/ developed countries may or may not have been written from any faith basis, but they can nevertheless help us pray:

"There can be no social justice without climate justice. And there can be no climate justice unless we acknowledge the fact that we have dumped large parts of our emissions overseas, exploiting cheap labour and poor working conditions as well as weaker environmental regulations.

"Our leaders need to face the climate emergency instead of creating new loopholes while building their so called "pledges" on the cheating tactics that got us into this mess."

So, Lord, as proclaimed by Isaiah and other Old Testament prophets, we long to see the justice that you so love and an end to the wrongdoing that you so hate.

Remove the haughtiness that prioritises our sovereignty and national rights ahead of others, and replace it with humility and an imperative to re-establish international alliances.

Remove the lies and deceit evident in our national leadership, and replace it with an imperative to rebuild and repair the devastation of many generations.

And, Lord, in a year of indecision and u-turns, we look for a significant change of direction that prioritises expenditure on poorer communities around the world over funding military expansion - *'beating swords into ploughshares'*¹ - re-establishing the 0.7% overseas aid spending commitment.

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

As 2020 comes to an end, many are reflecting on a year the like of which most of us have not experienced before, what with one thing and another.

As we journey through these times, perhaps feeling as if we are in a dry and weary land where there is no water, help us to seek you,

¹ Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3

to look upon you and call on your name, to meditate on you in the watches of the night, for you are our help and you uphold us.²

The impact of COVID-19 is immense, not just on our health and normal NHS services, but also through increasing poverty, hunger and those experiencing mental health problems.

One of the prayers from the Archbishops and senior church leaders' second lockdown 'Prayer for the Nation' initiative:

Loving Father God, be with us in our distress: with our families, friends and neighbours, our country and our world.

Give health to the sick, hope to the fearful, and comfort to the mourners.

Give wisdom to our frontline and key workers, insight to our government and patience to us all;

Overcome disease with the power of your new life, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen

Restore the joy of your salvation and sustain those we know who are unwell.

Circle them, Lord.

Keep comfort near and discouragement afar.

Keep hope within and despair without.

Keep peace within and anxiety without.

Eternal Father, Son and Holy Spirit shield:

² Psalm 63

Colin, Geoffrey, Athi, June Roe, Mark, Jess, Bernard, Colin, Mavis, Susan, Dorothy, Paul, Imogen, Tim, Barbara, Judy, Julie, Peter, Moyra, Patrick

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

Mary Mansfield

We remember in Year's Mind those whose anniversaries fall at this time:

Graham Rowley, Win Acheson, Grace Maud Wrangles, Eva Lamb, Florence Alderton (Florrie), Ted Carlton, Joan Nott

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

Alan encouraged us in his sermon last Sunday that:

"In Hebrew, the word translated 'comfort' actually means to strengthen, to encourage, to instill a sense of security. The Latin root of our word 'comfort' literally means 'to strengthen greatly'."

Lord, we reaffirm the prayer with which the sermon ended:

Lord, clothe us in the comfort and joy we need for this day.

Together, we rejoice today with all humankind in the long-awaited discovery of a Covid vaccine; a source of great comfort and joy at this time across our world. As talk turns to the return to normality, may we each dedicate ourselves to praying for those tasked with rolling out this vaccine, not least our own local GP surgeries.

May we also dedicate ourselves to vow never to return to the normality of before, but to reimagine and work for and fight for a

better normal; a new world where all might know the comfort and the joy of our God, the One, as Isaiah reminds us, who longs to gather us in his arms and hold us closely to his chest.

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