

**Community of the Cross of Nails
at St Martin Coney Street, York**

Friday Prayers for Peace and Reconciliation
Friday 9th April 2021

Bible Reading: 1 Peter 1.3-9

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith — being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire — may be found to result in praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Reflection

This is now the second Easter in a row under restrictions occasioned by the pandemic. In the circumstances “Alleluia” is a word that may not come easily or naturally to us, despite the gradual easing of some of the limitations on what we are able to do and where we are able to go. St Peter’s reference to various trials in our Bible reading may well ring particularly true to us. The last year has been an especially testing and challenging time for all of us, and it is not over yet, despite all the undoubted progress that has been made.

One benefit, though, has surely been the need to review our lives and revise our priorities. Rather than being a challenge that should be seen as an opportunity for the better. What is really important to us, to our community, our country, our world? What can we safely do without? A new perspective on life may well, we hope, lead to a better, more peaceful, more equitable, more just world.

That very much ties in with the message of Easter. Our Lord’s resurrection, his victory over death and sin, overturned all human assumptions, all human understanding of what life is really about. It brought to the fore in a unique and potent way the reality of God’s reconciling love. As we read in our Bible passage: “By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”. Yes, something new, a real transformation and a real and living hope. That is a powerful and much needed message for our world today.

Easter reminds us of a deeper dimension to life. It offers us a share in the risen life of our Lord here and now. What a gift that is. The response required from us is a turning to God and an openness to God's love. It does not mean we will have an easy life. There will still be challenges and difficulties. Yet we will be enabled to see those challenges and difficulties in a new and hopeful light.

Despite all the current difficulties we can thus with confidence and in sure hope proclaim:

Alleluia. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

(Kingsley Boulton)

Prayers

An Easter Collect

God of glory, by the raising of your Son you have broken the chains of death and hell: fill your Church with faith and hope; for a new day has dawned and the way to life stands open in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

(Common Worship)

A prayer for the Community of the Cross of Nails

Almighty God, you have committed to us the ministry of reconciliation of your Son, Jesus Christ; give us the confidence in your power to forgive, as your Son forgave us from the Cross. Enable us to be witnesses of your forgiveness at work and where we live. Unite us in a sacred fellowship to heal the hostilities we see, and give us the grace to love one another, rejoicing in this life together. Amen.

Church of England prayers for the nation

Gracious God, as we remember before you the thousands who have died, surround us and all who mourn with your strong compassion.

Be gentle with us in our grief, protect us from despair, and give us grace to persevere and face the future with hope in Jesus Christ our risen Lord. Amen.

Watch, O Lord, with those who wake, or watch, or weep tonight, and give your angels and saints charge over those who sleep.

Tend your sick ones, O Lord Christ. Rest your weary ones.

Bless your dying ones. Soothe your suffering ones.

Pity your afflicted ones. Shield your joyous ones, and all for your love's sake. Amen.

(Attributed to St. Augustine)

A prayer for all those affected by coronavirus and other illness:

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy. Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

World Council of Churches Ecumenical Prayer Cycle:

We pray this week for the peoples of the Balkans: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia.

Community of the Cross of Nails Prayer Cycle:

We pray today for partners in the **United Kingdom**:
in Bolton: Canon Slade Church of England School;
in Branscombe: Branscombe Church of England Primary School;
in Braodhembury: Broadhembury Church of England Primary School;
in Bromsgrove: CFR Footprints and Touch of Hope.
And we ask God's blessing on our own ministry of peace and reconciliation at St Martin.

Coventry Litany of Reconciliation

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

The hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class,
Father Forgive.

The covetous desires of people and nations to possess what is not their own,
Father Forgive.

The greed which exploits the work of human hands and lays waste the earth,
Father Forgive.

Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others,
Father Forgive.

Our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the refugee,
Father Forgive.

The lust which dishonours the bodies of men, women and children,
Father Forgive.

The pride which leads us to trust in ourselves and not in God,
Father Forgive.

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**