

**Community of the Cross of Nails
at St Martin Coney Street, York**
Friday Prayers for Peace and Reconciliation
Friday 7th May 2021

Bible Reading: *Revelation 21.1-5*

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true."

Reflection

Today in the Community of the Cross of Nails prayer cycle we remember a number of partners in Germany. I have had the privilege of visiting two of these.

The Antonine Church (Antoniterkirche) in Cologne is the Protestant church in the city centre which I was able to visit in 2017. My penultimate visit abroad was to Berlin in the summer of 2019. The Marienkirche (St Mary's Church) is the medieval church in the heart of what used to be the centre of East Berlin and is one of the main Lutheran churches in the city. In that church I was able to attend both the Friday Cross of Nails prayers and Coventry Litany and also the Sunday morning service. Although I was not able to visit St George's Anglican Church, another Community of the Cross of Nails partner, I was able to attend the Sunday evening service that congregation holds in the Marienkirche.

The churches in both Cologne and Berlin were badly damaged in the Second World War. The physical wounds of history may have been healed but the evidence of the utter devastation suffered by those and many other cities, not least Coventry, can be seen. The Cologne church is surrounded by modern postwar buildings. The Berlin church was once surrounded by old buildings. Now it stands alone in the middle of a large square surrounded by modern buildings and loomed over by the Communist-era television tower.

Our Bible reading from the Book of Revelation tells of a new heaven and a new earth. Creating something new was very much a task that faced cities like Coventry, Cologne and Berlin after the War. Out of the rubble and ashes a new environment and a new hope arose. Some hopes were realised, others not.

We too face a new future after the current pandemic. There will be many wounds to heal: some physical, but mostly psychological, social and economic. With God's help and together as communities and nations we as Christians have to believe that can be done.

The restrictions imposed by the pandemic have meant that many of us have been able to travel very little if at all for the last year. Technology has enabled us to keep in contact with people but that is not the same as actually meeting others in person and visiting places. We look forward to a time when socialising and travel will again be possible and that we can continue to learn from the diversity and richness of the cultures and peoples of the world, God's world, in which we live.

(Kingsley Boulton)

Prayers

The Universal Prayer for Peace

Lead me from death to life, from falsehood to truth.
Lead me from despair to hope, from fear to trust.
Lead me from hate to love, from war to peace.
Let peace fill our heart, our world, our universe. Amen.

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 Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

Community of the Cross of Nails Prayer Cycle:

We pray today for partners in **Germany:**

in Berlin: The Martin Luther Memorial Church;

St George's Anglican Church; and

St Mary's Church;

in Cologne: The Antonine Church;

in Cottbus: The Human Rights Centre.

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.**