

**Community of the Cross of Nails
at St Martin Coney Street, York**
Friday Prayers for Peace and Reconciliation
Friday 25th July 2025

Bible Reading: John 14. 25-27

“I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”

Reflection

I wonder if like me you may have seen any of those television programmes of clips from, for example, the 1960s, 1970s or 1980s, with comments by various current personalities. The usual reaction from these people, who may even have been around at that time is: did they really say that? - did they really do that? – what were they thinking of? What was clearly acceptable then is not so now. Indeed some of what was happily accepted then, we might now even consider offensive.

Views change over the years. We may like to think that we are more sensitive and enlightened nowadays. Yet I wonder how people in twenty or so years will view what we deem acceptable now. Will they say of us: did they really say that? - did they really do that? – what were they thinking of?

We even find this in our reading of the Bible. A good example is the practice of slavery, which we would all consider abhorrent and demeaning, with no place in civilised society. Where it still persists today, we rightly condemn it. Yet in Biblical times it was an accepted part of life. There may be encouragement to treat slaves well, but the practice itself is not condemned.

When we look at the saints of the Church we may well find features of their life that are not exactly saintlike. Some of their words may be challenging in a negative sense to us today. Of course even those deemed holy are far from perfect. They are susceptible to flaws like the rest of us. They are also all too human.

We would like to think that attitudes to war have changed. In a sense we do see a development in that direction in the Bible. In the Old Testament there is much violence and killing, and occupation of lands belonging to others, even what we might consider genocide, presented as God's will. That was a position people had to grow out of. They needed to come to understand that God's will is instead for peace and justice.

Looking at our world today, though, the thirst for war and violence is sadly still very much with us. As a human race we have not yet learned that war is not the answer, and that peace in the deepest sense is the only real way forward.

For Christians that peace emanates from Jesus, as he himself teaches in our Bible reading from his final words to his disciples before his arrest, trial, death and resurrection. The Prince of Peace faced violence, brutality and pain. He thus stands in solidarity with all victims of war today.

Yes, some attitudes may change over the years. Yet there are constants: universal values of peace, justice and love, universal values of God's Kingdom ushered in by Jesus.

(Kingsley Boulton)

Prayers

A prayer for the Holy Land

O God of all justice and peace we cry out to you in the midst of the pain and trauma of violence and fear which prevails in the Holy Land. Be with those who need you in these days of suffering; we pray for people of all faiths – Jews, Muslims and Christians and for all people of the land. While we pray to you, O Lord, for an end to violence and the establishment of peace, we also call for you to bring justice and equity to the peoples. Guide us into your kingdom where all people are treated with dignity and honour as your children for, to all of us, you are our Heavenly Father. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.
(The Most Revd Hosam Naoum, Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem)

A prayer for Ukraine

Holy God, we hold before you all who live close to war and conflict; and all who live close to the threat of war and violence. We remember especially at this time, people in Ukraine and Russia. We pray for nonviolence and peaceful resolutions of conflict. Give us hearts of hospitality and sanctuary, forgive us all our hostility and hatred. Bring all people to the humanity you give us, and to the reconciliation and healing for which you gave your life. Strengthen us all to work with you to build justice and peace, reconciliation and healing, in our hearts and homes, in our streets, in all communities, neighbourhoods and nations. Bless all who live lives for the peace and wellbeing of others, and make their service fruitful. In the name of Christ. Amen. *(The Revd Inderjit Bhogal, Honorary President, The Fellowship of Reconciliation)*

A prayer for peace throughout the world

Lord, you have taught us that the world is yours and those who dwell on it. Hear us therefore as we pray for the life of the world; that every nation may seek the way that leads to peace; that human rights and freedom may everywhere be respected; and that the earth's resources may be ungrudgingly shared among all people. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
(A Christian's Prayer Book)

A prayer for refugees

Almighty and merciful God, whose Son became a refugee and had no place to call his own; look with mercy on those who today are fleeing from danger, homeless and hungry. Bless those who work to bring them relief; inspire generosity and compassion in all our hearts; and guide the nations of the world towards that day when all will rejoice in your Kingdom of justice and of peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*Church of England prayers*)

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.

A prayer for all those affected by 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 Djibouti and Somalia.

Community of the Cross of Nails Prayer Cycle:

We pray today for partners

in **Israel/Palestine:**

in Ramallah: Arab Evangelical Episcopal School;

in Shefar'Am: International Peace Centre (House of Hope); and

St Paul's Episcopal Church;

in **Namibia:**

in Windhoek: Farm School Baumgartsbrunn.

We pray too for the other partners in **Israel/Palestine:**

in Bethehem: Mar Ephrem School;

in Jerusalem: Musalaha;

St George the Martyr Cathedral;

St Mark's Church and Monastery; and

Tantur Ecumenical Institute;

We pray too for the partners in **Ukraine:**

in Odessa: St Paul's Congregation;

in **Russia:**

in Kaliningrad: the Evangelical Resurrection Church;

in Moscow: St Andrew's Anglican Church;

in St Petersburg: St Catherine's Lutheran Church;

and in **Belarus**:

in Minsk: the International Conference Centre IBB.

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.