

**Community of the Cross of Nails
at St Martin Coney Street, York**
Friday Prayers for Peace and Reconciliation
Friday 15th August 2025

Bible Reading: Ephesians 4.1-7, 11-13

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift.

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

Reflection

Tuesday, 12th August, was marked by the United Nations, as it is each year, as International Youth Day. This provides an opportunity to celebrate and encourage the work of young people throughout the world. The UN provides the following interesting statistics:

Half of the people on our planet are 30 or younger, and this is expected to reach 57% by the end of 2030; a survey shows that 67% of people believe in a better future, with 15 to 17 year-olds being the most optimistic about this; by 2050, the people who are under 25 today will compose more than 90% of the prime-age workforce; 13% of the young labour force is unemployed.

This does not mean that they all have a voice or are given the opportunities they need, though. It is sometimes said that children are our future, but in fact they are very much our present too.

It is easy to compartmentalize different groups, such as young people, ignoring what we all share in common. This includes concern for issues of peace and justice, and not least for environmental issues. The future of our planet is of concern to us all but young people will be affected particularly. It is so encouraging that young people are at the forefront of calling for action in the face of climate change and of the detrimental effects human activities are having on the natural world.

This year the Secretary-General announced the 14 young leaders appointed to the third cohort of his Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change who will bring their expertise and recommendations to guide the UN's effort on climate action.

Our Bible reading relates specifically to unity within the Church. All are equal members and are to be valued as such. All have individual gifts which contribute to the life of the Church. Those gifts are all equally important and needed.

The same is true of the wider world. Both young and old have much to contribute to the well-being of our world and they need to have the opportunity to contribute in a real way. Sadly that is not always the case. That is why educational opportunities are so important. In many parts of the world the Church still has a significant role in education.

As just one example of the continuing role of the Church, last Saturday the Church of England remembered Mary Sumner, founder of the Mothers' Union. This movement continues to support families and communities throughout the world motivated by a commitment to end violence, poverty and injustice.

Our prayer is for all, young and old, as we work together for the well-being of all in God's world.

(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 Cameroon, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea.

Community of the Cross of Nails Prayer Cycle:

We pray today for partners in **South Africa**:

in Cape Town: St George's Cathedral;

St Saviour's, Claremont (with Church of the Good Shepherd, Protea);

in Faure: St Paul's Primary School.

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

in Bethlehem: Mar Ephrem School;

in Jerusalem: Musalaha;

St George the Martyr Cathedral;

St Mark's Church and Monastery; and

Tantur Ecumenical Institute;

in Ramallah: Arab Evangelical Episcopal School;

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

St Paul's Episcopal Church.

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.**