

**Community of the Cross of Nails  
at St Martin Coney Street, York**  
**Friday Prayers for Peace and Reconciliation**  
**Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2025**

**Bible Reading:**

Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy. (*Proverbs 31.8-9*)

Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow. (*Isaiah 1.17*)

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. (*Galatians 3.28*)

**Reflection**

Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> December, was marked by the United Nations as Human Rights Day. As the official website states:

“Human Rights Day is observed annually around the world on 10 December. It commemorates the anniversary of one of the world’s most groundbreaking global pledges: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This landmark document enshrines the inalienable rights that everyone is entitled to as a human being - regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”

This year’s theme is: Human Rights, Our Everyday Essentials. As the official website explains:

“In this period of turbulence and unpredictability, where many feel a growing sense of insecurity, disaffection and alienation, the theme of Human Rights Day is to reaffirm the values of human rights and show that they remain a winning proposition for humanity.

Through this campaign, we aim to re-engage people with human rights by showing how they shape our daily lives, often in ways we may not always notice. Too often taken for granted or seen as abstract ideas, human rights are the essentials we rely on every day.

By bridging the gap between human rights principles and everyday experiences, we aim to spark awareness, inspire confidence and encourage collective action.

The campaign emphasizes that human rights are positive, essential and attainable.”

As Christians we affirm the human rights of all, but especially of the vulnerable and of those on the margins, as our Bible verses above testify. The Church and individual Christians should be in the forefront of protecting human rights when they are threatened. We do so because we believe that all are equal in the sight of God, that all are loved equally by God, and that we too should love others without any distinction or prejudice.

Any form of oppression or exploitation is against what we believe to be God's will for humanity. Instead all should be free to flourish and lead peaceful and fulfilled lives. We know all too well, though, that that is not the present reality for millions in our world today. Human selfishness and greed so often stand in the way of true equality. Yet that need not be the case. There is a better way, the way of love.

As we prepare in this Advent season for God's gift of love in the form of his incarnate Son Jesus Christ, we pray that the rights of all may be honoured and cherished.

*(Kingsley Boulton)*

## **Prayers**

*A prayer for the Holy Land – praying that the current ceasefire will lead to real peace and justice*

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: In your mercy, provide for all those in Gaza and beyond who suffer from hunger and starvation, that they may be given both physical bread to nourish their bodies and heavenly bread to sustain their souls. By the power of your Spirit, bring a speedy end to this cruel war, the release of all captives, care for the sick and wounded, comfort for those who have lost loved-ones, and the opening of a pathway for a just and lasting peace here in the very homeland where your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, ministered during his earthly life; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. *(The Most Revd Dr Hosam E. Naoum Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem – August 2025)*

*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 Myanmar and Thailand.

### *Community of the Cross of Nails Prayer Cycle:*

We pray today for partners

in **Sierra Leone:**

in Freetown: St George's Cathedral;

in **Slovakia:**

in Modra: Lutheran Church in Modra;

in **South Africa:**

in Amanzimtoti: South Coast Dutch Reformed Church.

We pray too for the 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;

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.**