

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

Friday Prayers for Peace and Reconciliation Friday 30th January 2026

Many apologies that due to illness there were no prayers and reflection last Friday.

Bible Reading:

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)

If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. (1 Corinthians 12.26-27)

Reflection

An important theme of the Epiphany season is that of unity. We have just had the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity between 18th and 25th January. The need for unity between Christians is a goal to which we must continue to inspire. Disunity does not help the call to spread the Good News, the Good News of God's love. Unity is not the same as uniformity, though. Diversity of interpretation and presentation, far from being a barrier, should be seen as something to be welcomed and celebrated, an expression of the richness and depth of the Christian message.

The deeper understanding of unity in the Church ought to be able to provide an example to the world. Disunity is sadly a feature of so much of our world. At worst it results in conflicts, many of which continue if not to rage then at least to simmer. There is much instability in the world.

The temptation to see oneself as different from others, to create barriers between groups, often based on stereotypes or prejudice, is to say the least unhelpful and unhealthy.

Tuesday was Holocaust Memorial Day, a reminder if we need it of the depths of cruelty and depravity stereotypes and prejudice can lead if unchecked. Arguably we have not learned the lessons of the Holocaust and other acts of genocide. Antisemitism, Islamophobia and all other forms of hate continue and yet are totally unacceptable in a world that aspires to be considered civilized.

They are also, we believe as Christians, contrary to God's will for humanity. Our Bible verses refer specifically to the Church, and yet they apply equally to the wider world. God makes no distinctions. All are equal in God's sight. All are equally loved by God. At the same time we are all linked to one another. If one suffers, then, in a very real sense, we all suffer. We are all dependent on one another, and at all levels, individual, community, national, global.

We are called to be one with God and one with each other. It is only through co-operation and collaboration, with God's help, that ours can be an effective Church and a peaceful and just world.

(Kingsley Boulton)

Prayers

A prayer for the Holy Land

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 Cyprus, Greece, Türkiye.

Community of the Cross of Nails Prayer Cycle:

We pray today for partners

in Poland:

in Krzyzowa: The Krzyzowa Foundation for Mutual Understanding in Europe;

in Lublin: The Evangelical-Augsburg Holy Trinity Church;

in Romania:

in Sibiu: Centre for Ecumenical Research;

in Stein/Dacia: Copiii Europei. Michael's Centre;

in India:

in Nagpur: India Peace Centre.

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.**