

Pause . . . for Prayer

July 2020

Theme: All those suffering the consequences of COVID 19

As usual, there will be periods of quiet for your own thoughts and prayers

We meet in the name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Jesus said: "where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

We take a few moments of quiet to come into God's presence

I weave a silence on to my lips, I weave a silence into my mind, I weave a silence into my heart.

I close my ears to distractions, I close my eyes to attractions, I close my heart to temptations. Let all tumult within me cease; Enfold me Lord in your peace. *David Adam*

Loving God, in this time of uncertainty in the world around us keep our hearts and minds focused on the certainty of your love. You hold all people within your loving care; there are no barriers, no boundaries to your kindness, your graciousness. We ask that you hear us now as we pray for all those, in this country and around the world, suffering the consequences of the Coronavirus pandemic.

We pray for those who are ill with COVID 19, entrusting them all to your tender care. We remember especially those in hospital, without the re-assuring support of their family or friends and surrounded instead by medical staff hidden behind protective clothing.

We pray also for those front-line staff, putting their own health at risk to care for others. Give them compassionate and understanding hearts, skilful and tender hands, listening ears, and mouths that speak words of comfort.

We pray for those still suffering the long-term effects of the illness as they struggle to regain their health and fitness.

We pray for those who are ill in countries where the health system is under funded and under developed and where the hospitals simply cannot provide adequate, life-saving treatment.

In this country some 46,000 people have died from Coronavirus. Worldwide it is over 660,000. And so we pray for those who mourn the loss of a loved-one.

Loving God, we pray for those who weep as they mourn the loss of friends, colleagues or family members. Comfort them in their time of sorrow. Give them courage to face their loss. Bring them the reassurance that life is eternal and love cannot die; that their loved ones now know the fullness and completeness of your eternal love.

We are gradually realising the devastating effects of the virus, beyond the physical health of the individuals who have contracted it.

There has been a huge impact on the mental health and wellbeing of so many, due to – loss of earnings, loss of job, restricted contact with family and friends, limited physical exercise. There are so many reasons, and many of them were, initially, unforeseen. We were unprepared for the full impact of the pandemic.

And so we pray for those in darkness and despair.

Loving God, come close to those who feel anxious, confused or afraid, who feel isolated and unable to cope with the changes they find in the world around them. Give them strength to face their inner emptiness. Give them courage to reach out for help. Give them hope, like a light shining in the darkness.

We pray for children and young people, cut off from the routine of school life and the companionship of friends, and thrown into an unfamiliar and unsettling world of uncertainty. We pray for a successful return to schools, colleges and universities, and that the staff will be able to adapt the teaching to the individual needs of all in the care.

We know there has been a huge economic impact. Shops have closed, companies have made many thousands redundant. There are few sectors of the economy that have not been adversely effected.

And so we pray for those facing financial insecurity.

Loving God, we bring before you all those who suddenly find themselves with insufficient income to meet their needs. We remember those struggling to provide food for their families, or new clothes and shoes for their growing children; those facing eviction because they cannot pay the rent or the mortgage; those who feel they cannot look for a new job because they can no longer afford to run a car or pay their fares on public transport.

We recognise their despair and, often, their shame. As we ask that you look with mercy on them, help us also to treat them with mercy and understanding.

Charities have suffered as a result of the pandemic. Unable to hold their usual fundraising events, their income has plummeted, resulting in both a reduced ability to reach out to those in need and job losses amongst their staff.

And so we pray for charitable organisations – those who work for them and those who rely on the help and support they provide.

Loving God, we bring before you the many and varied charitable organisation in this country, providing financial and practical help here and around the world. We remember the many people who are reliant on their services and their support and who will struggle to cope when that help is no longer available. Give us all generous and caring hearts and a willingness to give whatever financial support we can offer.

A prayer for ourselves in this time of anxiety.

As we prepare to leave this place of stillness and peace and return to our everyday lives, we ask for that quietness of mind and spirit which reflects the stillness in the heart of God, as a calm sea reflects the shining stars.

Enable us, Lord, to hear the still, small voice of eternity speaking through the sounds of the day, that we may dwell in your peace and be one with your love. May the knowledge of that love carry us through each and every day.

We'll take a few more moments in the stillness of God's presence.

Let's close by saying the grace together

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen