

Intercessions 21 May 2017

Reading 1: Acts 17:22-31

Gospel: John 14:15-21

On Monday evening 10 candidates for confirmation knelt here to affirm their faith and be confirmed with the Holy Spirit: Patrick, Rebecca, Bethan, Megan, Hannah, Elijah, Grace, Olivia, Lucy and Kathryn. The congregation prayed that night and we pray again this morning for each of them and ourselves:

Defend us your servants, O Lord, with your heavenly grace, that we may continue yours for ever, and daily increase in your Holy Spirit more and more until we come to your everlasting kingdom.

We thank you for the gift of an Advocate, the Spirit of truth who abides in us.

Lord, in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

4 nights are set aside here this week called House of Prayer to challenge us to give prayer a more central place in our lives, so that prayer becomes the DNA of our lives and our church. We pray Lord that people will indeed come, and that we will all see God's kingdom come.

Between 25 May (Ascension Day) and 4 June (Pentecost), under Archbishop Justin's initiative 'Thy Kingdom Come', communities and churches around the world will be praying that friends, families and neighbours come to know Christ.

May we find the time and space to be still and listen - at home or at work or in the Chapel here or elsewhere. May we enter the sanctuary of God and see the whole picture, avoiding envy and ignorance, but remain in your presence as you take our hand and wisely and tenderly lead us and then bless us. May we want nothing else but you in heaven and on earth, and to be refreshed in your presence, making you our home and telling the world what you do. (*Psalms 73*)

Lord, in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

Every day now as politicians, pundits and the media argue and debate, may we dare not miss what people of faith are always supposed to be most concentrated on - the poor and the vulnerable who are potentially facing unprecedented threats from funding decisions that lie just ahead.

Lord, we see no easy answers or strategies, but acknowledge our call to go deeper in our faith, to centre ourselves on you rather than news cycles, to pray for your wisdom and presence, if necessary to fast, in order to focus our hearts and minds, and to be ready to advocate - to speak truth to power - for those whom Jesus calls "the least of these".

As we pray up to Pentecost and beyond to polling day on 8 June, may we realise that we have the power to influence candidates, elected members and officials, but that this power needs to be rooted deeply in our faith.

In the book of Esther, her uncle Mordecai told Esther that God put her in a position of influence "for a time such as this". Esther called for a time of public fasting, praying and petitioning of political powers to change or block injustice actions.

"Is this not the fast I choose" said the prophet Isaiah, "to loose the bonds of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?"

Again Lord, we acknowledge that we see no easy answers or strategies, but help us sustain the spiritual discipline of prayer and, perhaps for some of us, fasting in order to prepare ourselves for

action and advocacy, for speaking out clearly and publicly if necessary, against budget cuts and policies that would be harmful to the hungry, the poor and vulnerable, wherever our neighbour may be - in the UK or in the many parts of the world facing famine, lacking water and having to deal with the effects and impact of war on their lives.

(Source: Jim Wallis, Sojourners, 18 May 2017)

Lord, in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

Lord, we pray for those standing for office, and for those who will be elected and who will face enormous responsibilities and complex issues. Help us to set aside apathy and cynicism and to participate, and encourage others to do the same.

We pray for cohesion that has concern for the weak, poor and marginalised, and for the common good, including: education for all; our housing challenges and creating communities (not just buildings); for an NHS that give support to all, especially the vulnerable; maintaining the 0.7% aid commitment; standing up for those suffering persecution on the grounds of faith; continuing to lead on campaigns against slavery, trafficking and sexual violence in conflict.

Give us courage and guide us as partners into trading agreements that are effective and just, and that will reduce the drivers for mass movements of peoples. May we be an outward looking and generous country, with distinctive contributions to peacebuilding, development, the environment and welcoming the stranger in need.

Give us courage to work for economic and financial systems at home and abroad that provide a 'just economy', not simply traders for their own account, developing 'just finance' and avoiding the dangers of an economy over-reliant on debt.

Stability is an ancient Benedictine virtue about living well with change. We pray for a recognition of the importance of religious belief and the contribution that faith communities make as stable communities: skilled in reconciliation, resilient in setbacks, and diligent in sustainability, particularly in relation to the environment. Help us to contribute to deep understanding and out working of the common good.

(Source: Archbishops' letter 6 May 2017)

Lord, in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

At the end of Christian Aid week, we thank you for their vision for an end to poverty and their action to bring justice to all people.

God of the impossible,
we pray for justice, peace and reconciliation.
And when the challenges seem too many,
remind us of your resurrection power,
and the miracles of your love that happen
whenever injustice is dismantled and rebuilt with peace.
Help us to hope that the impossible can happen
and live as if it might do so today.

(Source: Christian Aid)

Lord, in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

Hear us as we pray for those who live with doubt, suffering, fear, sorrow; those for whom every day requires courage and sacrifice.

Within our community we pray for

We ask for healing, protection and restoration.

We remember those who have died and their families and friends who mourn

We remember the anniversaries of

Lord, in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

Lord Jesus Christ, make us intelligent and discerning in knowing you personally, our eyes focused and clear, so that we may see exactly what you are calling us to do, and grasp the immensity of this glorious way of life you have for us, the utter extravagance of your work in us who trust you - endless energy, boundless strength! (*Ephesians 1:17-19*)

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ**