

Intercessions: Palm Sunday 2020

by Chris Seward

Lord God, these are difficult times; times when we remember again the story of suffering that led your Son to death on the Cross and times when, today, so many are suffering the immediacy and the fear of Coronavirus. May we strengthen ourselves with the knowledge that you have not forsaken us and that, within the grief, you are with us.

And we give thanks that we can be more aware of your presence in our lives through the renewed spirit of your church nationally and, particularly, here at St Andrew's and St Mary's. We witness the creativity of all involved in leading worship, the commitment of those whose work is to spread your word beyond the immediate church family and the compassion of those who show such concern for others. Out of darkness there is light.

Lord, in your mercy...

Let us pray this morning for all who are on the front line of dealing with the emergency of Covid-19. For government ministers and officials, for senior managers and executives, for voluntary organisations and for all key workers, especially carers and those working in the NHS. May they be safe and, Lord, may they sense your presence at this time when they do what has been asked of them.

Lord, in your mercy...

We pray, also, for the wider world, especially those countries who are particularly damaged by the virus: for Italy, for Spain, for the USA. And we pray for those countries that are poor, communities that are over-crowded, war zones such as in Yemen, and camps that are full of refugees such as in Lebanon. As they suffer, may your grace compel us to act on their behalf and to be inspired by agencies such as Living Hope, an agency known to many in Hertford who are undertaking critical work in

their community of Cape Town - we are all connected, united in your family.

Lord, in your mercy...

We remember those who are sick, those afflicted with the virus, those with other illnesses that make them more vulnerable, those with poor mental health. We remember silently those known to us... And especially we pray for:

**Paul, Suzanne, Tim, Susan Aldridge, Joe Caruana,
Linda Radford, Bernard Stack, Al, Andy, Ellen Cook,
Barbara Wilbourn-Smith, Mark Johnson, Malini, Debbie,
Dennis Wiggins, Gillian MacKenna, Nan Tuck, Carol
Crowhurst**

May they experience your love, your comfort and your healing.

Lord, in your mercy...

And we remember also those who have died - the people and the families behind the statistics, and especially from our own church families **David Smith and Joan Beagles**.

And we remember in prayer those whose anniversaries fall at this time:

Paul McCormick, Derrick Babb, Jim O'Smotherley

May all those who mourn be assured of your presence in their lives.

Lord, in your mercy...

We finish our prayers, this morning, with a short extract from a prayer by the Dean of Southwark:

Ever-present God,

Be with us in our isolation

Be close to us in our distancing

Be healing in our sickness

Be joy in our sadness

Be light in our darkness

Be wisdom in our confusion

Be what is familiar when all is unfamiliar

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