



Good News

July 2020

Prayers for July

Racial Harmony – Remembering George Floyd

O God who created all people in your holy image,
who loves the stranger, who cares for the oppressed:
walk with those who face discrimination, protect them
from harm, help them see Christ in our community.
Guide those who fan the fires of discrimination to open
their eyes to the beauty of all your creation and respect
the human dignity of all people.
Open our hearts to those who face hatred and injustice
because of their race, their background, their ethnicity,
that we might better help them belong;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Coronavirus

Lord God, we entrust to you the families and communities
affected by Coronavirus, wherever they may be.
We pray especially for health care workers, that you may guide
and protect them. In the search for a vaccine, may your Spirit
inspire those researching new medicines and treatments. Amen

Ourselves and those around us

In the midst of this, keep us strong in faith, hope and love.
Grant us the courage and perseverance to be good neighbours.
May the words of your Son Jesus Christ in the Our Father,
be our prayer as we entrust ourselves and all of us who are affected
to your infinite power and love. Amen.

Prayer of St Richard of Chichester

Thanks be to Thee, our Lord Jesus Christ
For all the benefits Thou hast given me,
For all the pains and insults Thou hast borne for us.
O most merciful Redeemer, friend and brother,
May we know Thee more clearly, Love Thee more dearly,
And follow Thee more nearly, day by day Amen

The streets we will pray for this month are:

Manor Way, Mayfield Close, Meadow Way, Mill Park Road, Mill View Close,
Millars Court, Millfarm Drive, Mulberry Court, Nyetimber Crescent,
Nyetimber Lane, Oaktree Close, Old Barn Close.

We remember those who have died recently: Darren Earwaker, Judi Evans, Renee
Beatrice Wilmot, Paul Goodland

Letter from the Parish

As the world coped with the effects of the coronavirus, summer crept silently over the eastern horizon in the northern hemisphere. It was wonderful to see once again, the beauty of creation, a reminder of God's generosity and abundant life: plants, animals, birds, the life in our oceans. Then again, I am all too aware of the countless ways we have taken and continue to take, this spectacular world for granted and the influence this has on creation and on all of us.

Understandably, anxiety and fear about the pandemic are widespread in our nation - we have been forced to recognise again the instability and insecurity of life in a way unknown since the last World War. Our sense of well-being had become centred on an assurance of materialism; good health and care, having a home and enough income to live comfortably. Alas, all these have been threatened, shaken or swept away by Covid-19.

The desire for security is a human instinct, "*The truth that many people never understand is, that the more you try to avoid suffering, the more you suffer*" * - because gradually less significant things begin to trouble us in proportion to the worry of being hurt. Likewise, the more we agonise and seek reassurance, so little by little, less significant possibilities seem to correspondingly threaten us.

The Archbishop of York Bishop designate, Stephen Cottrell, recently commented that this time of adjustment is going to help us all to re-evaluate our lives; perhaps to think about living simpler lives in the future, to spend extra time with family and friends; giving some time to ourselves. As the old saying goes, 'when life gives you lemons, make lemonade.' Although I rather favour 'when life gives you lemons, a gin and tonic (ice and lemon?) is always acceptable.'

I'm not one of those people who think the current circumstances are some kind of test or punishment from God. He promised Noah after the flood that the life of the earth would never again be wiped out - and the rainbows posted in windows up and down our land are a reminder of that guarantee. No matter where the strength of our faith lies, we are all able to serve God in the world with the unique gifts he has given each and everyone one to use the best of our ability: which is our commission, job and privilege.

One of the greatest promises the Bible contains is that God is always with us, an assurance repeated many times in numerous ways. We do not need to know just what is happening, or precisely where it is all going. It is however, a prerequisite to recognise the possibilities and challenges being offered by the present moment and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope. That is not to say everything will be easy, or that every situation will turn out the way we want it to.

"God is able to make 'all things work together for good for those who love him."

Come what may, we can use this time of restriction to reflect about what is personally important to us as individuals. The way to consider how we can help make the future better; while we still have time before normal (?) life returns and squeezes us back into its mould. For the time being, we have to care for those around us as well, so that not just the future, but the present can be as good as it can be.

**Thomas Merton 1916 - 1968*

*Roland Ell
Lay Reader*