



# Good News

August 2020

## Prayers for August

### **The Serenity Prayer by Reinhold Niebuhr**

God, give us grace to accept with serenity  
the things that cannot be changed,  
Courage to change the things  
which should be changed,  
and the Wisdom to distinguish  
the one from the other.  
Living one day at a time,  
Enjoying one moment at a time,  
accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,  
taking, as Jesus did,  
this sinful world as it is,  
not as I would have it,  
trusting that You will make all things right,  
if I surrender to Your will,  
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life,  
and supremely happy with You forever in the next.  
Amen.

### **The streets we will pray for this month are:**

Paghams Road, Payne Close, Pilgrim's Way, Princes Croft, Priors Way, Priory Close, Pryors Lane, Pyrford Close, Queensmead, Radmall Close, Regis Avenue, Ross Close, Sandy Road, Saxon Close and Sea Lane.

We remember those who have died: Mike Cole, Eileen Knight

## Letter from the Parish

Reflecting over the turmoil of these last few months, we – both as a society and as individuals – have faced two great challenges: first, the challenge of change; second, the challenge of difference. Covid-19 has affected livelihoods, families, and faith, forcing us to accept a “new normal”; the public debates and protests on issues of race and gender identity have questioned prejudicial “norms” of social inequality and cultural bias. Our foundations of social and material security have been shaken; and now we have to rebuild our lives...but how will they take shape?

Through these challenges, I have found, along with many others, relief in praying through the psalms, many of which give us words of anger, despair, hope, and comfort as we try to process the enormity of the Covid crisis in feelings of confusion and powerlessness, as well as critically reflecting on our own failings as a society in feelings of guilt and frustration: “Why standest thou so far off, O Lord: and hidest thy face in the needful time of trouble?”; “In my trouble I will call upon the Lord: and complain unto my God.”; “God is our hope and strength: a very present help in trouble”; “The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: long-suffering, and of great goodness.”; “Be still then, and know that I am God...”.\* The psalms, and indeed the rest of Scripture, testify to the love of God that follows and accompanies humankind throughout the ages and even beyond death, a love that was shown most fully in the person of Jesus, who Himself said that He came “that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”\*\*

This life Jesus speaks of giving us is one that challenges us, calling us to accept a “new normal”, one that is defined by radical selflessness in a loving and equal community, and a trust and hope in God who promises to be with us always. This “new normal” calls us into a distinctive society, one that is counter-cultural to the unjust structures of the world as we know it. This life is a life of freedom: freedom from self-will and pride, freedom from discrimination and fear. Not only is it a life that provides strength and guidance through the challenges of change and difference, but it is also a life that calls us *to change and be different*: the life of discipleship demands us to think on God and think on our neighbour, to love both with a love that changes our hearts and minds, and consequently sets us apart from a society and culture of competition, discrimination, and consumerism. It is a life *of change and difference* that can provide healing to the wounds of insecurity and division in our society and culture today. It is a life that God wills for all of us, yet we need to be open to accept it.

Reinhold Niebuhr’s prayer of serenity is a prayer that perhaps gives us words in this regard, to ask God for guidance and strength through change, both in ourselves and in the world around us. Just as the psalmist struggles amid fear and trouble and confusion, so can we too pray to God to be with us, and give us wisdom to know His love and trust in His goodness, that our minds may be still and rest in His love. As we, then, gradually rebuild our lives after the turmoil of the last few months – and after the unknown challenge of the months to come – may we draw near to God and pray that we can be open to change and difference, both in ourselves and as a community, that we may live an abundant life of love and freedom together.

Gemma Green  
Parish Ordinand

\*Psalms 10:1; 18:5; 46:1; 103:8; 46:10 BCP

\*\*John 10:10b KJV