



Anglican Network in Canada

PREPARATION IN PRAYER FOR OUR 2010 SYNOD

Dear ANiC Member;

As we approach our annual synod, now as a diocese in the Anglican Church of North America, our hearts are overflowing with gratitude as the Lord continues to lavish his grace upon us for the ministry with which he has charged us. Archbishop Bob Duncan's daunting, yet Spirit-led, challenge to establish 1000 new churches across Canada and the United States has focussed us, and helped turn our priorities away from ourselves and the persecutions that we have faced to truly embrace the task at hand – reaching a lost, secularized society with the transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What a privilege we have in partnering together with the Lord in his redemptive plan for humanity!

And so we come to our third Synod, November 4th to 6th in our nation's capital where Bishop Dr. Michael Nazir-Ali, the retired bishop of Rochester, UK will be bringing to us an important word. Whether you are a delegate to synod or not, **please** take this prayer preparation to heart and make a commitment to uphold synod in prayer on a daily basis. May the Lord grant great wisdom and vision to those giving leadership in these days.

Daily Meditation and Prayer

Beginning with Sunday, October 24th, you will find below a brief meditation for each day until November 4th, the first day of our 2010 synod. Our moderator, Bishop Don Harvey, has given us as a theme for this important event: **“We Would See Jesus”**. This is taken from John 12:21, and was a the request made of the disciples by a group of devout Gentiles who had come to Jerusalem for Passover. Surely as we gather together in Ottawa, this should be our deep desire as well – to see Jesus, lifted high in our times of worship, and exercising his kingly authority over all that occurs. To prepare for this, we will be looking at daily scriptures for meditation that provide an open window on Jesus, taken from both the Old and New Testaments, giving us insights into various aspects of his calling and ministry. My vision this year is not so much to give you a list of things to pray about synod, although that kind of specific prayer is vital. Rather I want us to be preparing our hearts before the Lord prior to synod, so that we can be in a receptive place spiritually, whether we are actually attending or not. May the Word of God provide both encouragement and challenge to us as we uphold synod before the Lord, and indeed, may we in our lives, families, parishes and diocese “see Jesus”!

We also commend to you for daily use the prayer items listed in the October and November ANiC Prayer Calendars.

Rev. Garth V. Hunt
National Prayer Coordinator, ANiC
prayer@anglicannetwork.ca

Sunday, October 24

*The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; **he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.**”*

Genesis 3:14-15 ESV

As early as Genesis chapter 3, we see what many biblical scholars believe is the first “glimpse” of Jesus, the coming Messiah. It is referred to as “Protoevangelium”, the first announcement of the Gospel. It seems clear that in this highly significant cosmic event, the fall of humanity and the entrance of sin into the world, the first Man and Woman were dealing with more than a mere snake, but rather Satan himself. Jesus is the ultimate “offspring” of the woman and the titanic struggle alluded to here was settled victoriously on the Cross of Calvary where Jesus defeated the forces of darkness once and for all. Isn't it a wonderfully encouraging thought that, even as God drove Adam and Eve from Eden, his plan for the restoration of humanity was already in place!

O Heavenly Father, whose love for humanity is so great that You spared not Your own Son to buy us back, grant that we may have the eyes of our hearts opened anew so that we can see Jesus with greater clarity, marvel at His breathtaking beauty, adore Him more passionately, and obey Him more fully. In His mighty and victorious Name, we pray. Amen

Monday, October 25

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Colossians 1:15-20 ESV

So, who is this seed of the woman who would bruise the head of the serpent? St. Paul gives us this marvellous glimpse of the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, the Lord of All Creation. He is the One by whom all things were created. Yes, that's **all things**, whether in heaven or on earth, whether visible to our eyes or not, whether earthly or spiritual rulers or authorities, it was all created by our Saviour. In Him the very fullness of God was pleased to dwell on his mission to reconcile all the things that he had created to himself. He holds all things together – it would all fly apart without him! He is the first one resurrected from the dead, never to die again, living eternally, with many brothers and sisters to follow. Wow! We have an Awesome and Mighty Saviour, who is, beyond any doubt, up to the task!

O Heavenly Father, whose love for humanity is so great that You spared not Your own Son to buy us back, grant that we may have the eyes of our hearts opened anew so that we can see Jesus with greater clarity, marvel at His breathtaking beauty, adore Him more passionately, and obey Him more fully. In His mighty and victorious Name, we pray. Amen

Tuesday, October 26

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”

And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!” Isaiah 6:1-5 ESV

The prophet Isaiah received a glimpse into the heavenlies, a vision of our majestic God that is very reminiscent of John's visions recorded in Revelation. The power and might that he observes and the

overpowering sense of the holiness of God causes him to tremble with fear and to immediately become aware of his own sinfulness, perhaps at a deeper level than he had ever experienced.

I believe that we experience a similar response as we draw closer to the Lord and see him with the eyes of our heart more open. Our sinfulness and brokenness are inescapable, and our natural reaction is to back away, withdraw, and close our eyes once again. But our Saviour is not one who mocks us in our pitiful state, but who draws us to himself, forgives our iniquity, and delights in our communion with him. As we prepare our hearts for synod, let us not draw back from the awesome nature of our God, keeping him at arms length out of fear or shame, but let us embrace him with our eyes wide open, seeing him in all his majesty and putting our confident trust in him. We would see the Lord as Isaiah did!

O Heavenly Father, whose love for humanity is so great that You spared not Your own Son to buy us back, grant that we may have the eyes of our hearts opened anew so that we can see Jesus with greater clarity, marvel at His breathtaking beauty, adore Him more passionately, and obey Him more fully. In His mighty and victorious Name, we pray. Amen

Wednesday, October 27

One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. Psalm 27: 5 ESV

So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Psalm 63: 2 ESV

David, the psalmist and king, knew what it was to “see the Lord”. His deep, passionate desire to be in the presence of the Lord and to “gaze upon his beauty” is clearly revealed in the psalms. The poetic musician in him grasps the fact that seeing the Lord the way he really is, in all his awesome power and glory, is something to be deeply desired, and not something from which we should shrink back. In fact, for David, it’s the one thing, the most important thing, that he asks of the Lord.

I am convicted by David’s singleness of mind and heart. What is the “one thing” that I would ask of the Lord as I prepare for synod? May it be for all of us a desire to see Jesus, glorified and honoured in all that is done and said!

O Heavenly Father, whose love for humanity is so great that You spared not Your own Son to buy us back, grant that we may have the eyes of our hearts opened anew so that we can see Jesus with greater clarity, marvel at His breathtaking beauty, adore Him more passionately, and obey Him more fully. In His mighty and victorious Name, we pray. Amen

Thursday, October 28

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. Isaiah 9:6-7 ESV

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”

Luke 2:8-12 ESV

Our mighty and magnificent Saviour did not enter into our time and space world as a military conqueror or a invincible super hero. Far from it, he came in the most modest, unexceptional, and vulnerable way possible – as a helpless babe born in a stable, far from the political power centres of the known world. Let the eyes of your heart see him as he begins his life as the son of man in the same way that you and I did.

Behold, Immanuel (“with us God”)! Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace – all in human form! – come to take upon himself the sin of the world.

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Friday, October 29

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.”
Matthew 11:18-19 ESV

There was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.” So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all grumbled, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.” Luke 19:2-7 ESV

See now the adult Jesus, embarked on his messianic ministry – a friend of sinners. He constantly makes the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders furious because he isn’t “religious” and won’t do things their way. He enjoys the company of all the “wrong” people, and is severely critical of the “right” people. Sinners, like you and me, are comfortable in his presence, not because he condones their sin, but because they know he loves them in spite of their sin. They love to hear him tell stories, and watch him heal their sick friends. For once in their lives, they have Hope.

Catch a glimpse of our Saviour Jesus, the friend of sinners, and be grateful!

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Saturday, October 30

After six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”

Matthew 17:1-5 ESV

This is an extraordinary scene. Jesus takes Peter, James and John, the inner circle of his disciples, up a mountain for the expressed purpose of revealing his divine glory. His face shone, dazzling like the sun, and

his robe blazed with a brilliant pure white light. Moses and Elijah, representing the Law and the Prophets, appear before Jesus and there is conversation among them. The voice of God then speaks, as at Jesus' baptism, of his pleasure in his Son. The disciples, by this time somewhat accustomed to the unexpected with Jesus, are yet astonished. Here we catch another glimpse of Jesus, utterly human and utterly divine.

As we approach synod, what kind of Jesus do we wish to see? the Jesus of the stained glass window? the Jesus of our Sunday School picture books? the Jesus whose power and glory are somewhat shrouded by our over familiarity with the Gospel stories? May the Lord grant us vision to see beyond these distractions to encounter the authentic Jesus!

O Heavenly Father, whose love for humanity is so great that You spared not Your own Son to buy us back, grant that we may have the eyes of our hearts opened anew so that we can see Jesus with greater clarity, marvel at His breathtaking beauty, adore Him more passionately, and obey Him more fully. In His mighty and victorious Name, we pray. Amen

Sunday, October 31

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, "Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old... and you shall keep it until the 14th day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

"Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover. The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt."

Exodus 12:1, 3, 5-7, 11, 13 ESV

The next day he (John the Baptist) saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

John 1:29 ESV

Now we see Jesus in the primary purpose for which he came – to be the Paschal Lamb, slain for the sin of the world. Even under the Mosaic law, the shedding of blood was required for the forgiveness of sins. The story of the first Passover during Israel's enslavement in Egypt demonstrates the power of shed blood even over death. Jesus' sacrificial, substitutionary death and his appeasement of the divine wrath by way of atonement for sin on the cross of Calvary are God's ultimate and complete solution to humanity's sin disease.

"Hear also what Saint John saith: If any one sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins." Thank you, Jesus, for dying in my place!

O Heavenly Father, whose love for humanity is so great that You spared not Your own Son to buy us back, grant that we may have the eyes of our hearts opened anew so that we can see Jesus with greater clarity, marvel at His breathtaking beauty, adore Him more passionately, and obey Him more fully. In His mighty and victorious Name, we pray. Amen

Monday, November 1 – All Saints Day

For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:2-6 ESV

Isaiah the prophet saw the death of the Messiah coming. His description of what went on is even more graphic than those of the eye witnesses to the crucifixion. Lawrence Olivier's reciting of these words as he portrayed Nicodemus in *Jesus of Nazareth* still moves me to tears even after many viewings. Here is a prophetic glimpse into what the Suffering Servant would have to bear at the hands of the very ones he had come to save. This is not a Jesus we delight to see, but we must look hard nevertheless, imprinting the scene on our memories, for without this scene there is no forgiveness.

O Heavenly Father, whose love for humanity is so great that You spared not Your own Son to buy us back, grant that we may have the eyes of our hearts opened anew so that we can see Jesus with greater clarity, marvel at His breathtaking beauty, adore Him more passionately, and obey Him more fully. In His mighty and victorious Name, we pray. Amen

Tuesday, November 2

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

Revelation 1:12-18 ESV

Death and Hades could not hold our Saviour Jesus. The Gospels give us a number of glimpses of the risen Lord prior to his ascension. But here, in John's vision, we see a very different Jesus, more akin to what Isaiah saw in his vision. This is no mere babe from Bethlehem; no carpenter from Nazareth. This is our glorious Lord in all his divine splendour, having conquered sin, Satan and death itself. And yet, he is reaching out to John (and us) in tender love saying, "Fear not – don't let all this terrify you. It is I, the One that you know loves you and has been preparing a place for you so that you can be where I am!" Awesome Saviour!

O Heavenly Father, whose love for humanity is so great that You spared not Your own Son to buy us back, grant that we may have the eyes of our hearts opened anew so that we can see Jesus with greater clarity, marvel at His breathtaking beauty, adore Him more passionately, and obey Him more fully. In His mighty and victorious Name, we pray. Amen

Wednesday, November 3 – Pre-synod Clergy Day

*Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, **for the marriage of the Lamb has come**, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.*

And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God." Revelation 19:6-9 ESV

In this passage, John's vision gives us a different glimpse of the risen Lord – we see him as the Bridegroom eagerly awaiting his bride – the Church. Do we see Jesus like that? Do we see the church as the spotless bride? Keeping this image before us as we enter synod tomorrow can keep us from being bogged down by the day-to-day issues with which we must deal, and hold our focus on our eternal destiny. This is not pie-in-the-sky mysticism. No, it is our Blessed Hope, and the angel emphasizes to John that these are the true words of God. As we work with constitutions and by-laws, may we be ever mindful of our passionate Bridegroom who loves his bride with a pure and perfect love.

O Heavenly Father, whose love for humanity is so great that You spared not Your own Son to buy us back, grant that we may have the eyes of our hearts opened anew so that we can see Jesus with greater clarity, marvel at His breathtaking beauty, adore Him more passionately, and obey Him more fully. In His mighty and victorious Name, we pray. Amen

Thursday, November 4 – 1st day of Synod

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:1-5, 9-14 ESV

As Synod 2010 begins this morning, it seems appropriate that our final view of Jesus is John's wonderful proclamation of Jesus as the Word. The "disciple that Jesus loved" in the prologue to his gospel presents Jesus as eternal, existing in eternity past with the Father, now the incarnate Word (logos). God spoke to his people in the Old Testament through prophets; now comes Jesus his Son, the very word of God incarnate. And he is the true light that overcomes all darkness. Let these familiar words, perhaps only read at Christmas, wash over your mind and spirit, cleansing away the debris of busyness, harassment, and the accumulated pain of others. And may we say with the psalmist, "*My eyes are ever toward the Lord*" (Psa 25:15). Amen

O Heavenly Father, whose love for humanity is so great that You spared not Your own Son to buy us back, grant that we may have the eyes of our hearts opened anew so that we can see Jesus with greater clarity, marvel at His breathtaking beauty, adore Him more passionately, and obey Him more fully. In His mighty and victorious Name, we pray. Amen

Let us also pray this well-known Prayer for the Church found in the Book of Common Prayer:

Most gracious God, we humbly beseech thee for thy holy Catholic Church. Fill it with all truth; in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where any thing is amiss, reform it; where it is right, strengthen and confirm it; where it is in want, furnish it, where it is divided and rent asunder, make it whole again, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen