



First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer – January 2012

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. Philippians 4: 6 ESV

Welcome to our January 2012 first Friday Call to Prayer. Our aim is to provide you with teaching that we trust will enhance your prayer experience and will be an encouragement to you. We will also provide you with praise items and prayer requests coming from within ANiC and the Anglican Communion worldwide.

<p>We encourage you to set aside the first Friday, January 6th, as a day to pray for the Church, ideally gathering with other believers in your parish or region for corporate prayer. Given that in the church calendar, it is also a feast day, Epiphany, fasting is not essential.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Prayer Quotes</p> <p><i>Our ordinary views of prayer are not found in the New Testament. We look upon prayer as a means for getting something for ourselves; the Bible idea of prayer is that we may get to know God Himself.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Oswald Chambers (1874-1917)</p>
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Resolve #1 – To Know Him More

Do you make New Year's resolutions? Many of us do, of course, and they are usually concerning such issues as those extra pounds we put on during the Christmas festivities. Or perhaps we have decided to not let our smart phone or iPad dominate our time as much this year. On a more positive note, maybe there is a renewed commitment to read the entire Bible through in a year (there are many excellent reading plans online that can help with such a goal).

All of these and many others are worthy resolutions to make, and it is sometimes helpful to have a significant date, like January 1st to hang them on. So what about those of us who believe that intercessory prayer is a vital part of our spiritual lives and the life of the Church? Are there any helpful resolutions that we can make that will deepen our prayer experience and make our prayers more effective?

Let me make one important suggestion to you based on the words of Jesus in His high-priestly prayer recorded in John 17. Jesus makes this incredible statement:

“And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”
John 17:3 ESV

How would you describe “eternal life” if someone asked you? Well, it means we will live forever in heaven with the Lord, right? Yes, it included that, but that's not the definition that Jesus gives in this passage. He says that the very experience of knowing the Father and His Son is eternal life, and we should make every effort to pursue knowing Him better. These amazing words are reflected in the familiar Collect for Peace that is in the daily office of Morning Prayer. Check it out:

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, **to know you is eternal life** and to serve you is perfect freedom: Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The apostle Paul expressed a similar thought when he said:

*“I count everything as loss because of the **surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord**. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ.”*
 Philippians 3:8 ESV

Note that Jesus did not say “to know **about** You is eternal life” nor did Paul speak of the “surpassing worth of knowing **about** Christ Jesus.”. This is not about amassing factual data concerning God, but it is about a relationship with Him that brings eternal life and surpassing worth. There is just nothing better or more valuable!

Over recent decades, men and women seeking training for the ministry have gone to seminary and learned much about God. The tragedy is, however, that frequently no one has ever asked them, “Have you met Jesus?” As a result, many have emerged with only information about God to offer their congregations. Knowledge about our amazing God is important because the more we know what our God is really like the more we can trust Him. But information itself is no substitute for the experience of having a dynamic, intimate relationship with the Lord that infuses and empowers every aspect of our lives. Every day can be a new experience of knowing and delighting in Him at a deeper level.

When I seek to comprehend the profundity in Jesus’ words about knowing Him and the Father being eternal life, I look to my own earthly experiences with my dear wife, Margaret. I knew about her before I met her. She was working at a retreat centre and part of her responsibility was to manage the book-table. I was a keen salesman of Christian literature, most eager to sell her every book she might ever need. And so, we met for the first time. I no longer just knew “about” her.

Several years passed and we soon found ourselves working together on staff at the same retreat centre. During those days, we were getting to “know” each other by spending time together, both in ministry and in relaxed down time. We found a common interest in youth work and many other areas of life. The effort of spending time together to get to know one another better was deeply rewarding, and ultimately we believed that God had called us to be married. Thirty-four years later, we are still deepening our relationship as we continue to enjoy the pleasure of one another’s company.

So should it be with the Lord. Let me encourage each one of us to do some new year’s evaluation. Where are we on the “*know about ->having met->know the Lord*” continuum? Even if we have known Jesus for many years, we can plumb the depths of loving intimacy with Him much further. But like any valued relationship, it takes commitment and investment; perhaps even a new year’s resolution! Let me conclude with a few suggestions as to how to grow in knowing Him more:-

1. recognize that we still come to Him solely and utterly on the basis of the shed Blood of Jesus. We’ll never deserve it or earn our way in.
2. ask God to give you a fresh hunger and thirst for His presence. Let Psalm 63:1 become the passion of our hearts; *“O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water”*.
3. come into His presence through the scriptural door of praise and worship. Psalm 100:4 says *“I will enter His gates with thanksgiving in my heart; I will enter His courts with praise”* Try singing to the Lord. If you play an instrument, use it – if not, play a worship CD. Using the daily offices in the Book of Common Prayer can be helpful. Read or sing the Psalms out loud.
4. cultivate His presence. Set aside a daily time that’s not negotiable – first thing in the morning works for many, but meet with Jesus first, before checking emails or getting started on the details of the day. Tell Him of your love for Him, and take time to listen. If your mind wanders, and it will, don’t feel guilty or a failure, just come back to focus on the Lord.
5. use waiting time wisely. See it as a gift from God, rather than a nuisance and time waster. Standing in line in the grocery store, bank, post office, traffic jam, border crossing; all can be a time of lovely fellowship with the Lord. *“Be still and know that I am God”*. Psalm 46: 10 ESV.



Praise God ...

- For the incredible privilege of actually knowing Almighty God on a personal, intimate basis and thereby embracing eternal life now!
- For the gift of a new year in which to love and serve the Lord.
- For the work God is doing in the life of our diocese and province: – cleansing, restoring, transforming, healing and equipping.
- That the Creator and Sustainer of the universe loves us unconditionally and walks with us through the hard times – and the happy times.
- For the reformation God is working out in global Anglicanism – and the entire Christian Church. In the midst of chaos, He is building His Kingdom and refining His bride, the Church.
- For the many ANiC “projects” and church plants – the small, but growing congregations of faithful Anglicans that He is adding to our number.
- For faithful Anglican Primates, bishops, clergy and laity – throughout the Communion – who are standing for truth even when their stand for Christ and His Word makes them targets of attack.

Confess if needed...

- For settling for so much less than all God has made available to us if we would only seek to know Him more.

Please pray...

- For each parish member, that as the new year begins, we would commit to knowing the Lord more deeply and passionately that we ever have before..
- That each of us would recognize our desperate **need to be dependent on God** for all things.
- That we would demonstrate our faith in God’s goodness and sovereignty by cultivating **thankfulness** and expressing **praise** in the midst of loss, adversity or injustice.
- That we would have a **passion for souls** – for those around us who need our Lord.
- For the **ministries** of our churches; that we would become intentional in reaching our communities.
- For **Bishops** Donald Harvey, Stephen Leung, Charlie Masters, Trevor Walters, Malcolm Harding and Ronald Ferris – and their families. Pray for spiritual and physical protection and renewal, for wisdom, and for a daily closer walk with God.
- For our **Archdeacons**: the Venerables Ron Corcoran (Vancouver Island), Dan Gifford (BC), Paul Charbonneau (Ontario), Paul Crossland (Prairies), Michael McKinnon (New England, USA), and Darrell Critch (Atlantic Region & Quebec).
- For **ANiC clergy** and their families, especially those experiencing spiritual and physical attack. May the joy of the Lord be their strength.
- For **those suffering** under the attack of the enemy in our congregations and families. Pray for victory in Christ and healing where needed.
- For **new and forming ANiC congregations** as they attend to the many details of organizing and launching a parish – and for other congregations considering joining ANiC.
- For the **ANiC congregations** that have lost and are losing their places of worship. May God comfort and pour our His blessing on them. May they be filled with the joy of the Lord.
- For **parishes involved in legal disputes**.
 - For wisdom for the people and leaders of St Aidan’s Windsor as they seek God’s leading.
 - For St George’s (Burlington, ON), Good Shepherd (St Catharines, ON) and St Hilda’s (Oakville, ON) in dealings with the Diocese of Niagara.
 - For a change of heart on the part of the leaders of dioceses pursuing ANiC parishes. May they genuinely seek to work with parishes to reach amicable, mutually beneficial settlements.

- For **Anglican orphans** – Biblically-faithful Anglicans in Canada who feel isolated in liberal churches and dioceses – as well as for those who feel they can no longer remain in the Anglican Church of Canada. May they find Christian support and spiritual nourishment through the newly launched “virtual” fellowship.
- For the leaders of the **Anglican Communion Alliance** (formerly Anglican Essentials Federation), **Anglican Essentials Network**, and **Anglican Essentials Canada** as they provide support for orthodox Anglicans still within the Anglican Church of Canada.
- For those in the **Zacchaeus Fellowship** who are giving testimony to the liberation God offers those held captive in sexual sin; for the Anglican Church of Canada to listen to their testimony.
- For strength and wisdom for the Presiding Bishop of the Southern Cone, **the Most Reverend Tito Zavala** and for God’s blessing on the **Province of the Southern Cone**.
- That God would continue His work in and through the **Anglican Church in North America**
 - For **Archbishop Bob Duncan** (and wife, Nara), especially as his diocese deals with the ramifications of recent court decisions.
 - For the other ACNA dioceses.
- For **Anglican1000** and those engaged in **church planting** in Canada and throughout ACNA.
- For orthodox Primates and bishops – especially those in the **Global South** – who are courageously standing for Truth. Pray for spiritual and physical protection and for discernment, grace and strength as they lead in a torn Communion.
- For the orthodox **Primates** in the Anglican Communion – especially the GAFCon primates – as they prepare for upcoming FCA/GAFCon gatherings of orthodox global Anglicans in 2012 & 2013.
- For growing support of the **Anglican Relief and Development Fund Canada (ARDFC)**. For the ARDFC’s new project in the Diocese of Kindu, **Congo**, focused on peace-building and restoring lives and reestablishing livelihoods devastated by years of war.
- For the **Archbishop of Canterbury**. May he pursue God wholeheartedly and seek the wisdom and discernment he needs to fulfill his responsibilities to the glory of God.
- For **suffering Christians** around the world in conditions of persecution, war and poverty – especially those in Muslim and communist countries who face injustice and violence.
- For those in **areas suffering from famine and natural disasters** – especially in East Africa.
- For God’s protection of **Israel** as it is surrounded by those who seek its destruction.
- For peace in **Sudan** and in **South Sudan**.
- That **God would revive us**, our church and, ultimately, our nation.
- For **those in authority** over us and who serve our country. Pray for wise decisions that honour the Lord and promote the welfare of **our nation**. Pray specifically:
 - For those in **government** – both for our elected leaders creating laws and for civil servants in positions of responsibility – that they would uphold righteousness.
 - For **judges in our court system** who are charged with interpreting and applying laws;
 - For **officers of the law & emergency response personnel** who risk their lives for us.
 - For those who selflessly serve our country in the **military** as well as their families at home.



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