



# Anglican Network in Canada

## First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer – April 2009

*You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.*  
Isaiah 26:3 ESV

Welcome to our April 2009 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

We encourage you to set aside **the first Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>**, as a day of prayer and fasting for the Church in these critical days, ideally gathering with other believers in your parish or region for corporate prayer at some point in the day.

### Prayer Quotes

*Prayer should not be regarded "as a duty which must be performed, but rather as a privilege to be enjoyed, a rare delight that is always revealing some new beauty."*

*E.M. Bounds*

## “What Are You Looking At?”

The teenage girl got on the Toronto subway train at the Yonge-Bloor station. She was dressed in classic stark Goth style, complete with jet-black hair and lipstick, and numerous ring piercings including tongue and navel. She sat down across from an elderly man who gaped at her with an obvious measure of shock. Everyone else on the train either stared at the floor or the periodical they were reading.

The girl fidgeted restlessly in her seat and then yelled at the old man, “What are YOU lookin’ at?” After a tense few seconds he replied, “Ah, . . . nothing,” and then promptly got off at the next station. A classic example of generational distrust and misunderstanding? Perhaps. . . I silently prayed that the girl might come to faith in Jesus and find the peace and identity for which she so desperately was seeking, and then I, too, got off the train.

But her question haunted me – What are you looking at? As intercessors, living in extraordinary times of upheaval in the Anglican Church, global financial instability, major corporations teetering on the brink of bankruptcy, and “wars and rumours of wars” seemingly widespread across the planet; given all that and more, what are you looking at?

As people who care about those around us and believe that prayer makes a difference, we cannot ignore all the pain and difficulty. But it can soon bury us if we are not vigilant to ensure that we are looking in the right direction. We can easily succumb to the burden of a desperate and needy world, if our focus is fixed on the problems at hand.

There is a familiar story in Matthew 14 that many of us have known since we were in Sunday School; the story of Jesus and Peter walking on the water. If you’re involved in the preaching ministry, you’ve probably given sermons on this passage. It seems we easily identify with

Peter in both his great and less-than-great moments. As we seek to answer the question “What am I looking at?”, it’s appropriate to reflect on his experience once again.

*In the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." Matthew 14: 25-33 ESV*

The point here and the answer to our question is simple – when Peter kept his eyes on Jesus, he moved supernaturally, but when he looked at the waves and the strong winds, he faltered and sank. It’s understandable, isn’t it? The “wind and the waves” are so distracting, so menacing, they almost inevitably draw his eyes away from his Master.

Our situation is remarkably similar. Each ANiC parish has responded to (what we believe to be) Jesus calling us to get out of the boat and to come to Him. We have responded in faith, and have begun our “walk on the water”. But then come the accusations, threats, lawsuits, deceptions and misunderstandings. The wind howls and the whitecaps grow higher. Our gaze is pulled away from our Master who still calls us to Himself. Sometimes we may find ourselves wondering, “How did we get ourselves out here on the water?”

It takes a specific, intentional decision to choose to turn our eyes back on to the Lord, and away from the current distracting situations. King Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah found themselves surrounded by an enormous hostile army, bent on their capture and the destruction of Jerusalem. It would have been so easy to succumb to their taunting and menacing threats. Instead, the king declared a national fast and time of repentance, and, standing before all the people, he prayed to the Lord, “*O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. **We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you***” (2 Chron. 20: 12 ESV). Jehoshaphat and his people make the difficult but necessary choice to remove their gaze from the “great horde” and place it on their divine Deliverer.

In Psalm 123, we see a similar expression of choice being expressed in one of the liturgical “ascent” psalms. Let these words find deep root in your spirit:

*To you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens!  
Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master,  
as the eyes of a maidservant to the hand of her mistress,  
**so our eyes look to the LORD our God, till he has mercy upon us.***

Psalm 123: 1-2 ESV

There is great power in making eye contact with people. There is a deeper connection made relationally, and a point of view can be expressed more emphatically when we communicate with those we love, face-to-face, eye-to-eye. That’s why phone conversations are a limited alternative at best. Now I can’t imagine what it must have been like for the disciples to make

regular eye contact with Jesus during those three years of His ministry or to be with Him during those forty days after the resurrection! Indeed, one must have felt that unto Him “all hearts are open, all desires known and from Him no secrets are hidden”. And yet, there would also have been deep compassion, understanding, and unwavering acceptance in those eyes that would melt away all fear of rejection.

As Easter approaches, we will have ample opportunity to make the choice of looking unto Jesus and not at our circumstances. Take time to gaze upon Him; as He rides into Jerusalem on the borrowed colt, as He washes the disciples feet and shares the Passover with them, as He agonizes in Gethsemane over what lies ahead, as He stands acquiescently before Pilate, as He is horribly crucified in our place, as He greets Mary in His resurrected body. Let the eyes of our hearts dwell on the incredible beauty of His holiness. This is what I choose to look at, even when the wind and the waves wrestle for my attention.

And if we're ever asked, “What are YOU lookin' at?”, may our reply be simply: “Jesus. I'm looking at Jesus”. Amen.

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### **Praise God ...**

- That we have the privilege of looking to Jesus no matter what our circumstances.
- That through Jesus, we enter the very presence of God.
- That He allows us to share in Christ's sufferings now – and in His glory for eternity.
- That He loves us passionately and allows nothing that will not serve our ultimate good – if we respond in faith.
- That He hears and responds to our cries and prayers, when we pray in submission to His will – and answers in His way and in His time.
- That He accepts our praise and worship as the expression of our faith.
- That we have an advocate with the Father, Christ Jesus.
- For faithful Anglican bishops, clergy and laity who are taking a stand for the truth of God's Word in the Anglican Church in North America and within the Anglican Church of Canada – even when their stand for Christ and His Word makes them targets for attack.
- For the courage of orthodox Primates who are working together to care for faithful Anglicans in North America – and in other Provinces that have wandered from the Truth.
- For the “new thing” God is working out in global Anglicanism. In the midst of chaos, He is building His Kingdom and refining His bride, the Church.
- For God's blessing on ANiC and for all He has planned for the months ahead.
- For the congregations of faithful Anglicans He is adding to our number.

### **Please pray...**

- That we choose to look to Jesus and not at the difficulties.
- That we would see in those we meet each day, people created in God's image, whom He loves deeply, and for whom Christ willingly laid down His life.
- That we would fall deeper in love with Jesus, growing more like our Saviour each day.
- That we see as Jesus saw, love as He loved, serve as He served, and die to ourselves as He died to Himself.

- For Bishops Don Harvey, Malcolm Harding and Ron Ferris, and their families. Pray for spiritual and physical protection and for a daily closer walk with God.
- For those suffering under the attack of the enemy, especially spouses of clergy and leaders. Pray for victory in Christ and physical healing, if that is God's will.
- For new ANiC congregations as they get organized and take care of all the many practical details – and for emerging congregations considering joining ANiC.
- For congregations that have lost their places of worship as well as for those forced to appeal to the courts and facing the possible loss of their buildings. May they demonstrate love to those who persecute them.
  - For the judge's decision regarding court costs in the case of the three ANiC parishes which were in court March 11 in Hamilton. May the judge have wisdom and insight.
  - For the April 6 court appearance in London, ON involving St Aidan's.
- For a change of heart on the part of the dioceses which are pursuing ANiC parishes in court. May they choose to work with parishes to reach amicable settlements.
- For those who feel called to remain in the Anglican Church of Canada to pray and work for a renewed commitment to Jesus Christ and His inspired Word.
- For 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 fellowship and spiritual nourishment.
- For the recovery of a lively orthodoxy in the Anglican Church of Canada.
- For the leaders of Anglican Essentials Federation, Anglican Essentials Network and the ANiC as they provide leadership and support for orthodox Anglicans in Canada.
- For Archbishop Gregory Venables (and his wife, Sylvia) who has graciously provided a temporary "home" for ANiC members who no longer have a home in the Anglican Church of Canada due to "serious theological disputes".
- For the emerging Province, the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA).
  - For our partners in ACNA who are uniting to build an orthodox, biblically-faithful Anglican Province – especially our Canadian partners, the Anglican Coalition in Canada and the Reformed Episcopal Church.
  - For Archbishop-designate, Bob Duncan, for the Lead Bishops and for all those involved in bringing this new Province to fruition.
- For the orthodox Primates – including the GAFCon Primates – and bishops who are taking a stand for truth at great personal cost. Pray for spiritual and physical protection and for discernment, grace and strength as they lead in a torn Communion.
- For the Covenant process. May the Lord clearly lead and may His will be done.
- For the Archbishop of Canterbury. May he be fully yielded to God and seek the strength, guidance 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.
- For those in authority over us in government; for judges in our court system; for officers of the law; for those who serve our country in the military. Pray for wise decisions that honour the Lord and promote the welfare of the citizens.
- That God would revive us, our church and, ultimately, our nation.



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