



Anglican Network in Canada

First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer – April 2010

“My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”
Matthew 26:39 ESV

Welcome to our April 2010 1st 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 2nd**, as a day of prayer and fasting for the ongoing ministry of ANiC and ACNA. Given that this day is Good Friday, you may already be gathering with other believers in your parish or region.

Prayer Quotes

If we would completely rejoice the heart of God, let us strive in all things to conform ourselves to His divine will. Let us not only strive to conform ourselves, but also to unite ourselves to whatever dispositions God makes of us.

Alphonsus De Ligouri 1696-1787

Gethsemane

When I was a young child, my favourite season in the church calendar was undoubtedly Christmas, and again undoubtedly, for all the wrong reasons. It was all about presents and food. Christmas usually meant new cool toys and turkey dinner. Easter, on the other hand, meant a new Christian book of some sort and a roast of beef. In the eyes of a nine year old, neither could stand up to the delights of Christmas.

Today, however, I find that the season of Lent and the ensuing Holy Week are more significant for me because they convey two evocative themes - the ultimate cost of my rebellion and sin and God's astounding propitiation for that sin through the sacrifice of my beloved Lord. How deep is the Saviour's love for you and me!

One of the most poignant scenes in the unfolding passion of our Lord is his time of agonizing prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. You know the story (check out Matthew 26:36-46, Mark 14: 32-42 and Luke 22: 40-46 for specific accounts). Jesus has just spent the evening with his disciples, washing their feet and sharing the Passover meal with them. He has challenged Peter's typical bravado with the withering prophecy that his well-meaning disciple will deny even knowing Jesus three times before the dawn. They have gone out to a garden on the Mount of Olives where Jesus deeply desires to spend time with his Father in prayer and longs for the human support of his dearest friends.

Leaving the majority of disciples, Jesus takes Peter, James and John a little further into the garden and shares with them the anxiety and stress that he is experiencing. "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch." The disciples have never seen Jesus like this. He has always seemed confident and peaceful, despite angry mobs, outraged Pharisees or violent demoniacs. Their jaundiced view of Jesus' mission and purpose begins to crack like an eggshell. The physical and psychological toll of their own stress over what is happening is too much for them. They retreat into sleep on three separate occasions, despite the Lord's admonition to watch and pray with him.

Can you imagine yourself in that position – being asked to provide prayer support for the Messiah while he prepares himself for the most horrendous ordeal ever experienced on this planet? Undoubtedly, I

would have fallen asleep too. Jesus' only encouragement to them is to pray for protection from temptation. Desperately confused, scared and shaken, sleep becomes very appealing for all of us

What is happening in the heart of Jesus through this whole scene? Now abandoned even by the closest of his friends, he is alone with his Father. The pressure upon him is so great that Luke suggests that he may even have shed drops of blood from his brow, mingled with his sweat — “a medical condition known as *hematidrosis*, where extreme anguish or physical strain causes one's capillary blood vessels to dilate and burst, mixing sweat and blood” (ESV Study Bible).

We will never understand all that Jesus goes through on that night as he contemplates carrying upon himself all the sin, sickness and pain of the human race throughout the ages. Just the weight of my own accumulated sin is more terrifying than I can bear to conceive of. But Jesus is working through something that each of us also needs to settle, once and for all – the issue of God's sovereignty and the supremacy of his will over ours. ““Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” (Mark 14: 36 ESV). In essence, “Father, is there no other way to accomplish my mission? But my will is submitted to yours, no matter what!” My heart breaks as I contemplate the fact that I caused that anguish. Not single-handedly, of course, but my sin and rebellion made it necessary.

As we pray about difficult situations in our lives, families and churches, are we equally as prepared as Jesus was to say ‘Not my will, Lord, but Yours be done’? When healings don't seem to be coming, when downsizing costs us our job of twenty years, when our courts and governments make decisions that are ungodly and anti-scriptural, can we trust in the sovereignty of God and submit to his will? Can God really be trusted to know what he's doing? My theology says, “Of course! How can you even ask such a question?”

But when my heart is breaking over my friend's potential loss of a loved one through cancer, and I struggle to know how to pray, I take great solace in looking for Jesus in Gethsemane. Despite the Father's immense and perfect love for his Son, he did not allow him to bypass the cross. The implications of such an act were too catastrophic to entertain for a moment. In the same way, there are times when the Father won't let us bypass hardship or difficulties either, because they are a part of his larger sovereign plan conceived before the beginning of the world. It is only in submitting our hearts to his will that we will ever find the heart-rest for which we so deeply yearn. I find myself praying, “Lord Jesus, on the night before the most infamous day in history, you wrestled with this issue that now confronts me. O Jesus, please help me to lay down my agenda that's mostly driven by personal comfort and freedom from pain in the same manner that you did. Thank you that you will never fall asleep on me as your disciples did on you. Give me your strength to joyfully submit to the Father's perfect will.”

The Irish composer and worship leader, Robin Mark, captures this surrender, this personal Gethsemane, so profoundly in his song, *Jesus, All for Jesus*;

*All of my ambitions, hopes and plans
I surrender these into Your hands.*

*For it's only in Your will that I am free,
For it's only in Your will that I am free,*

*Jesus, all for Jesus,
All I am and have and ever hope to be.*

Lord, may it be so in my life and in my intercession for others. Amen.

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Praise God ...

- That He walks through suffering with us.
- That He uses suffering to draw us closer to Him, to shape our character, and refine our hearts.
- That Jesus Christ was obedient, even unto death.
- That through His death and resurrection, He won victory over sin and defeated the enemy of our souls.
- For our churches, for the Anglican Network in Canada (ANiC) and for the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA).
- For the many ANiC “projects” and church plants – the small, but growing congregations of faithful Anglicans He is adding to our number.
- For His blessing on ANiC, for how He has led, and for the future He has planned for us.
- For faithful Anglican 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.
- For those who are providing leadership to the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans around the globe and for the growing unity of orthodox Anglicans in the Communion. .
- For the reformation God is working out in global Anglicanism – and Christianity in general. In the midst of chaos, He is building His Kingdom and refining His bride, the Church.

Confess if needed...

- Our unwillingness to let go of our agendas and submit to His will.
- For “sleeping” when we should be “watching” with Him in prayer.
- For our joylessness during times of suffering.

Please pray...

- That we would joyfully and willingly surrender to Him our ambitions, hopes and plans.
- That we would hold everything we have in an open hand, recognizing that it is all His to do with as He chooses.
- For those in our communities who need the Lord; that many would come to church services during this holy season; that many would be brought into relationship with the Saviour.
- For Bishops Donald Harvey, Stephen Leung, Charlie Masters, Trevor Walters, Malcolm Harding and Ronald Ferris, and their families. Pray for spiritual and physical protection, for wisdom, and for a daily closer walk with God.
- For those suffering under the attack of the enemy in our congregations and families. Pray for victory in Christ and healing where needed. Pray especially for clergy and their family members who are experiencing spiritual and physical attack.
- 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 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 Anglican Relief and Development Fund Canada and for generous contributions to both the Chile earthquake appeal as well as the malaria prevention project in Kenya.
- For the legal team and parish leaders involved in court proceedings.
 - For the Vancouver-area parishes which have filed an appeal of the disappointing decision from the BC Supreme Court.
 - For the case involving St Aidan’s in Windsor, ON.
 - For St George’s (Burlington, ON), Good Shepherd (St Catharines, ON) and St Hilda’s (Oakville, ON) in their dispute with the Diocese of Niagara.
 - For a change of heart on the part of the dioceses pursuing ANiC parishes. May they relent and work with parishes to reach amicable, mutually beneficial settlements.

- For the recovery of a lively orthodoxy in the Anglican Church of Canada (ACoC) and for those who feel called to remain in the ACoC to pray and work for reformation and for a renewed commitment to Jesus Christ and His inspired Word.
- 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 witness.
- 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 (ACoC).
- For the work of the Anglican Communion Alliance (ACA) at the ACoC's General Synod in June and for the pre-synod ACA-sponsored cross-Canada speaking tour of Canon George Kovoor.
- 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 Archbishop Gregory Venables (and his wife, Sylvia) who graciously provided a temporary "home" for ANiC members when we needed Primatial oversight.
- For our new province, the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA):
 - For Archbishop Bob Duncan (and wife, Nara)
 - For the other ACNA dioceses, especially those with congregations in Canada: the Anglican Coalition in Canada and the Reformed Episcopal Church.
- For the orthodox Primates and bishops who are courageously standing for the Truth. Pray for spiritual and physical protection and for discernment, grace and strength as they lead in a torn Communion. Pray especially for the meeting of Global South leaders in Hong Kong in April 19-23.
- For the Covenant process. May the Lord clearly lead and may His will be done.
- 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, drought, famine and poverty – especially:
 - For those facing persecution in Muslim countries hostile to Christianity, such as Pakistan, Iran, northern Nigeria & Iraq.
 - For those in the Congo who are terrorized by the ruthless "Lord's Resistance Army".
- For those in authority over us. Pray for wise decisions that honour the Lord and promote the welfare of Canadian citizens. Pray also for protection for those who are in "harms way" as they serve our country. Specifically, pray:
 - For those in government – both for members of Parliament creating laws and for civil servants in positions of responsibility;
 - For judges in our court system who are charged with interpreting and applying laws;
 - For officers of the law who daily risk their lives for our protection; and
 - For those who selflessly serve our country in the military.
- That God would revive us, our church and, ultimately, our nation.



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