



Anglican Network in Canada

First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer April 2015

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.”

John 16:23-24 ESV

Welcome to our April 2015 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.

We encourage you to set aside **the first Friday, April 3rd**, 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

“God has no greater controversy with His people today than this, that with boundless promises to believing prayer, there are so few who actually give themselves unto intercession.”

A. T. Pierson 1837-1911

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

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This meditation was originally published in the April 2010 First Friday Call to Prayer



Thoughts on Revival Prayer – The Five Priorities

This month, Bishop Charlie Masters' cross-Canada tour will draw to a close. This intensive excursion, visiting every region where there are currently ANiC parishes, has been the means of introducing his Five Ministry Priorities to our congregations, priorities which he first presented to ANiC Synod in November 2014. His heartfelt desire is that we would “*pray that God will make these five priorities a transformational reality in the life of every ANiC congregation.*”

In order to keep them prayerfully before us, we will feature one of the five priorities each month in this box as a visual reminder to pray fervently for these urgent concerns.

1. **Bold Witnesses**

“It is my keen desire and conviction that we need to set our minds and our hearts towards training and equipping one another to know and be ready to share the good news of the gospel in a way which our family members and friends, our colleagues and our neighbours can understand.”

+Charlie's 2014 Charge to Synod

Almighty God, you have lavished such love on us that we can scarcely find words to express our thanks. We ask you to give to each of us a deepened zeal to spread the Good News to those around us who do not yet experience your love for them. We have been praying over the past few months that you would “Rise Up” and bring a powerful awakening in our day. Now we sense, Lord, that you are asking us, too, to rise up, to overcome our timidity with the boldness of the Spirit. We deeply desire to respond to your call! Give to the leadership team around this priority effective training resources and the wisdom to know how best to apply them. Give to every ANiC church member the grace to see those around them with your eyes of compassion and sacrificial love. And may we see a glorious harvest in the days ahead. In Jesus' mighty name we pray. Amen.

Praise God ...

- **That He reigns supreme.** Despite the chaos and evil in the world, God is working out His purposes for His glory and our good!
- **That He rose from the dead on the first Easter,** and brings resurrection life to each believer!
- For the **incredible gift** that God has given us in prayer – immediate access to our Father at any time of day or night. Thank Him for the incredible privilege of participating with him through prayer in his grand redemption plan.
- 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...

- 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...

- For our primate **Archbishop Foley Beach** (& Allison) - Pray for great wisdom, courage and strength as he gives leadership to our province. May God glorify Himself through the ACNA.
- For **Bishop Charlie Masters** (& Judy) – Pray for our diocesan bishop as he leads ANiC. May God grant him vision, spiritual protection, and spiritual and physical renewal.
- For **Bishop Don Harvey** (& Trudy) – Pray for Bishop Don in his roles as ANiC's episcopal vicar and senior chaplain to the ACNA College of Bishops.
- For **ANiC's suffragan bishops:** Stephen Leung (& Nona) and Trevor Walters (& Dede). Pray for discernment, energy and grace as they care for their clergy and congregations. Also pray for Bishops Ron Ferris (church planting in Langley, BC) and Malcolm Harding (retired in Brandon, MB).

- For our **Archdeacons**: the Venerables Ron Corcoran (Vancouver Island), Dan Gifford (BC), Bruce Chamberlayne (Alberta & BC Interior), Paul Charbonneau (Ontario), Tim Parent (Ottawa Valley), Paul Crossland (Prairies), Michael McKinnon (New England, USA), and Darrell Critch (Atlantic Region & Quebec) – and our Dean of Multicultural Ministries, the Very Rev Dr Archie Pell.
- For all **ANiC clergy** and families, especially those experiencing spiritual and physical attack.
- For the **ANiC congregations** that have lost their places of worship and are meeting in temporary facilities. May God comfort and pour out His blessing on them. Pray especially for the rector, Canon Tom Carman, the leadership, and the people of **St Aidan's, Windsor, ON**, as they work through the financial implications of their unfavourable legal decision.
- For the **Anglican Relief and Development Fund Canada** (ARDFC) as it raises funds to drill three deep wells to provide clean and safe water for communities in the Diocese of Wau, South Sudan. Pray also for peace in that troubled country.
- For **Canon Andrew White** and his ministry team in the Middle East. Pray for courage, safety and the provision of basic needs for them and the people that they serve.
- For **those who serve us and are in authority over us** – our police forces, our armed forces, our emergency responders, our municipal elected officials, our provincial MLAs, MPPs and premiers, and our federal MPs and Prime Minister.
- For **God's wisdom for world's leaders** with regard to the Ukraine, Syria, Iraq and other troubled nations. Pray that the evil one's agenda for violence, hatred and bloodshed would be averted.
- Pray for **protection of innocent civilians** – adults and children – who so often are the victims in today's warfare. Pray especially for the many Middle East and African Christians who are brutally persecuted for their refusal to renounce their faith in Jesus.