



Anglican Network in Canada

First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer – May 2011

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 May 2011 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, ACNA and the Anglican Communion worldwide.

We encourage you to set aside **the first Friday, May 6th**, 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

...True prayer is measured by weight, not by length. A single groan before God may have more fullness of prayer in it than a fine oration of great length."

C. H. Spurgeon 1834-1892

Ascribe to the Lord

As I write this meditation for May, I am sitting on a 5th floor balcony overlooking the Atlantic Ocean at Ormond Beach, FL. The breakers are crashing on the beach, and the shrill squeal of children tells of their delight at jumping in the remnant of the waves that actually reach the edge of the dry sand. As my wife, Margaret, and I strolled along the beach last evening, we were struck once again with the awesome power of the sea and its relentless motion. One of us commented, "I guess that's as close to something eternal as we'll ever experience this side of heaven." It caused us to quietly contemplate the eternal nature of our faithful and unchanging God. The Psalms contain various references to the seas in comparison to the awesomeness of our Lord. Here's just one:-

Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, the LORD on high is mighty!
Psalm 93:4 ESV

On vacation, it is perhaps easier to take some reflection time on "things eternal", but in the hectic pace that our culture seeks to impose on us, it is more difficult to regularly carve out time to meditate on who God is and what He is like. But I want to suggest this month that as we prepare for a specific time of intercession, like the first Friday for example, we spend some time in quiet meditation on one of God's amazing attributes.

Please understand my intent here. I am not seeking to impose some sort of religious rules on our prayers. Scripture encourages us to pray at all times, and to pray without ceasing. We are urged to be in constant communication with the Lord, even when we are doing mundane chores or standing in a queue at the grocery store. Over the centuries, believers have found helpful the repetitive recitation of simple prayers like Brother Lawrence's, "*Thank You, Father*", or what has been called the Jesus Prayer: "*Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me a sinner*". The free, easy flow of prayer, both spontaneous and recited, throughout the day is a vital component in our growing in intimacy with God. But equally so is a deliberate time to contemplate and delight in one of God's character traits.

The English word that the Bible uses to describe this process is "Ascribe". It probably doesn't pop up in your everyday speech, but it can be of help to us as we examine and "attribute" to God certain aspects of His nature. Here are a couple of examples from the Psalms:

Ascribe power to God, whose majesty is over Israel, and whose power is in the skies. Awesome is God from his sanctuary; the God of Israel—he is the one who gives power and strength to his people. Blessed be God!
Psalm 68:34-35 ESV

Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength! **Ascribe** to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts! Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth!
Psalm 96:7-9 ESV

Can't you just sense the delight that the psalmist is experiencing here in "ascribing" certain attributes to the Lord? Like any other activity that has Almighty God as its primary focus, this is an act of pure worship. When we ascribe, say, faithfulness, to God we are in essence saying, "Lord, You are the Source of all faithfulness. It all flows from Your nature. There is no other source of faithfulness beside You!" Or perhaps we might ascribe beauty to the Lord. "Jesus, You are the creator of all that is beautiful and magnificent in this world. Yet, You are more beautiful by far than the most spectacular of Your creations! Thank You, that You are the Source of all beauty!"

One of the books that I have enjoyed during our time away is a small volume on worship, *The Air I Breathe*, by Louie Giglio. You may be familiar with the DVD series that Louie has released that features a message entitled, *How Great is our God*. I would highly recommend both the DVD and the book. Louie is a man with a passionate heart for worship and a remarkable understanding of both the intimacy and the awesomeness of God. He has traveled extensively, ministering primarily to young adults with his *Passion* conferences.

In his book, Louie recommends what he calls "A Thirty Day Worship Journey" where the reader is encouraged to take a blank journal, and each day for 30 days read a portion of the Psalms, asking the Lord to reveal a certain aspect of His nature through the Word. He suggests writing down the verses and the character trait that has become clear. Then he advises us to spend some time thinking about how the trait has impacted our life and to write down or "journal" our thoughts. For instance, it might be how God is faithful, how He is a shepherd to us, how He is our healer.

If you were to pursue this suggestion, you might focus on His majesty, His extravagance, His justice or His holiness. You will be amazed at how many attributes you will discover! Let the one you find for each day permeate your thoughts and prayers throughout the entire day. Celebrate that aspect of God's nature. Ascribe it to Him!

For over seven years, some of the saints from St. George's Lowville (ANiC) in Southern Ontario have been gathering for intercessory prayer on the first Friday of each month throughout the year. We begin with some musical worship and then take twenty minutes or so to do what we have been just discussing above. We will look at some Scriptures that point us to a particular aspect of God's character, and allow the Word to reveal it to our hearts. Sometimes we share with one another what we believe we have been shown in the Word. Frequently, this is a great time of encouragement, and helps prepare our minds and hearts for the time of intercession that follows immediately.

Dear brothers and sisters, **anything** that we can do to deepen our appreciation of God's nature will increase our intimacy with Him, and thereby deepen our effectiveness in intercessory prayer. Let me encourage us all to choose to spend time in "ascribing" to the Lord His great and wonderful attributes. It will be well worth the effort. Amen.

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Praise God ...

- That we worship a God of beauty, holiness, strength, splendor, majesty...
- That everything good is rooted in His character.
- That this inimitable God is our Father, our Creator, our Comforter, our Hope.

- 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 our churches, for ANiC, and for the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA). For His blessing on us, for how He has led, and for the future He has planned for us.
- 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 not worshipping God as He deserves.
- For not having grateful hearts overflowing with thanksgiving to our God.
- For not being a people of prayer.
- For not encouraging and regularly praying for our church, pastors, government leaders and all for those in positions of authority and influence.

Please pray...

- That we would grow in our love for our Lord and learn to delight in communing with Him in prayer.
- That we would have a passion 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), Desiree Stedman (Ottawa region), 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 many **ANiC congregations** that have lost their places of worship or are now facing the possible loss of their buildings. May they demonstrate God’s love to those who persecute them.
- For parishes involved in legal disputes.
 - For the Vancouver parishes and their application before the Supreme Court for leave to appeal.
 - For St Aidan’s in Windsor, ON in its dealings with the Diocese of Huron – especially the court case beginning on May 9 in London.
 - For St George’s (Burlington, ON), Good Shepherd (St Catharines, ON) and St Hilda’s (Oakville, ON) in negotiating 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 fellowship and spiritual nourishment.
- For the recovery of a lively orthodoxy in the **Anglican Church of Canada (ACoC)** and for those who believe they are 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 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 witness.
- For strength and wisdom for the new Presiding Bishop of the Southern Cone, **the Most Reverend Tito Zavala**, in his increased responsibilities. For God's blessing on the **Province of the Southern Cone** which graciously provided a temporary "home" for ANiC when we needed Primatial oversight.
- For God's blessing on the **Anglican Church in North America (ACNA)**:
 - For **Archbishop Bob Duncan** (and wife, Nara)
 - For the other ACNA dioceses.
- For **Anglican1000** and those engaged in **church planting** throughout ACNA.
- For the 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 growing support of the **Anglican Relief and Development Fund Canada (ARDFC)**; for churches and individuals to commit to being regular donors; for the ARDFC's malaria prevention project in partnership with the Diocese of Maseno West in south-west Kenya.
- For the **Covenant** process and the realignment underway in the **Anglican Communion**. May the Lord clearly lead and may His will be done.
- For the orthodox **Primates** in the Anglican Communion – especially the GAFCon primates – as they prepare for an upcoming gathering of orthodox Anglicans from throughout the Communion.
- 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, flooding and poverty – especially those in Muslim countries who face discrimination and violence.
- For the people of **Christchurch, New Zealand** and **Japan** who are struggling to recover from terrible earthquakes.
- For the people of **North African and Middle Eastern countries** where fighting and political unrest are causing suffering and fear – especially for the persecuted minority Christian populations.
- For the **Sudan** and the peaceful separation of the South from the North – especially for the equitable drawing of the border, agreement on the division of oil revenue, and the creation of a new government.
- 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. Pray in particular for the newly elected members of Canada's parliament.
 - For judges in our court system who are charged with interpreting and applying laws;
 - For officers of the law and emergency response personnel who daily risk their lives for our protection; and
 - For those who selflessly serve our country in the military as well as for their families at home.



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