



First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer – May 2017

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
I Thessalonians 5: 16-18 ESV

Welcome to our May 2017 first Friday Call to Prayer. Our aim is to provide you with teaching that we trust 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.

We encourage you to set aside **the first Friday, May 5th**, 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

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.

Oswald Chambers (1874-1917)

Coffee and the Gospel

My family and I like coffee. We're not particularly connoisseurs, but we know what we like and are learning about what makes for a good, dark roasted flavour including the grinding of our own beans and the use of a French press. It was not always so with our two sons. Both Scott and Bryan were well into their thirties before they would even consider having a cup of java, but since their "conversion", in typical fashion, they have researched the various ways that coffee is harvested, roasted, marketed and sold in our culture.

So, it was not inconceivable that last Saturday we should drive 35 minutes away from home to visit a small café in Dundas, ON that sells its own brand of coffee. Like craft breweries, smaller independent roasteries are popping up in some unexpected places. All of which are fun to explore.

The sounds and aromas that we encountered as we entered the café were quite appealing. We were seated fairly quickly, and a young female server appeared to take our order. When she learned that we were not locals, but were first-timers there to discover their various coffees, she lit up and began to enthusiastically share about their various blends, but even more importantly, their commitment to business integrity in how they go one step beyond even "fair trade" to corporately ensure that even the farms in Costa Rica or Columbia from which they buy their beans are paid appropriately for their product, and that their treatment of their farm employees is up to a high standard. She spoke of her roastery with a confidence, enthusiasm and personal conviction that we found remarkably compelling. We saw an ambassador, not just a "waitress". As well as having lunch there, we walked out with a bag of coffee beans.

On the drive home, we found ourselves discussing what we had just experienced and wondered whether there were very many Christians who could present the Gospel of Jesus with such ease, competency, and passion. The young woman was remarkably fluent in her knowledge of their coffees and company core values.

Immediately, I was drawn to a memory of Bishop Charlie Masters speaking to ANiC synod in November 2014 about his Five Priorities, the first of which was Bold Witnesses. He said; "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.” Putting it another way, Bishop Charlie’s deep aspiration is that we would all be fluent in the Gospel message and eager to share it.

Over the years since that synod, we have been reminding each other in this publication to pray that this priority (and the other four) would become “**a transformational reality** in the life of every ANiC congregation.” This month, I want us to intensify our prayers for this priority of being bold witnesses to the Gospel because it really is the key to fulfilling our role in the Great Commission (Matt 28: 19-20). The Lord is looking for a host of passionate, compelling, winsome men and women, boys and girls, who are eager to share their faith in Jesus and who are comfortably fluent enough in the Gospel to overcome any fear or embarrassment. Sounds like a tall order, doesn’t it!

So, how should we pray to this end? Here are a few suggestions to get us started:

1. Pray that your parish leadership would more and more **catch the importance of this priority** and would look for a multitude of new ways to train parishioners in “Gospel fluency”. That young café waitress didn’t walk into work her first day with that knowledge. She was taught both the content and intrinsic value of what she shared. Many ANiC churches have been using the new catechism as a means of training. But people have various learning styles. Pray that the Lord will provide us with many different means of growth in Gospel fluency.
2. Pray that our leadership **will not make the assumption** that, as regular church attenders, we all know the Gospel in its fullness. Often we may need to go back to basics and ask, “What exactly *is* the Gospel? Do I really know all that Jesus accomplished on the cross for me? Is it more than just head knowledge or is the truth and power of the Gospel informing my everyday life?” Pray that each adult and child in your parish would have **a full knowledge of the Gospel and a vital experience of the saving power of Jesus Christ!**
3. Pray that the fear of offending others by sharing the Gospel would be replaced by **an urgency for the salvation** of those on a road to perdition. Pray that the Lord would refresh our clear understanding of just how high the stakes are! Pray that the lies and disqualifying accusations of the enemy that hold us back from sharing would be finally silenced, and that our joy and delight in the Gospel would be attractive and infectious.
4. Pray that in each ANiC parish there would be **a fresh release of the Holy Spirit** who is the only One who can make any of this possible. Human zeal and enthusiasm will not accomplish this monumental task. Only the Holy Spirit can convey the heart of the Father towards His people as revealed in Scripture and bring it to transforming life in the hearts and minds of a desperately needy humanity.

The world increasingly thinks of Christians as angry, bigoted, against everything, unpleasant people who are to be caricatured but personally avoided at all costs. And yet, that young gal who served us in the café was anything but, and much more importantly, the life of Jesus within us will produce attractive, compassionate, joy-filled believers who truly care about a dying world because He does.

Being Bold Witnesses is not an option reserved for the spiritually mature and ordained clergy. May the Lord give to each of us a new heart for the lost and a fresh motivation to do all that we can to become fluent in the Gospel for the sake of those who yet do not know Him. Amen.

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Praise God ...

- For the ultimate sacrifice that Jesus made upon the cross of Calvary for you and for me.
- For the incredible privilege that we can come boldly through the torn veil into the presence of Almighty God where we can delight in the joy of intimacy with Him.
- For the power of the Gospel to transform lives, including mine.
- 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.

In addition to the prayer points in the Meditation (above), please pray...

- For our primate **Archbishop Foley Beach** (& Allison) – Pray for great wisdom, discernment, courage and strength as he gives leadership to ACNA and participates with other Gafcon primates from across the Communion.
- For **Bishop Charlie Masters** (& Judy) – Pray for our diocesan bishop as he provides guidance and leadership of ANiC. May God grant him renewed courage, wisdom and vision. Pray also for physical protection and good health in the midst of his heavy travel schedule.
- 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 (Langley, BC) and Malcolm Harding (retired in Brandon, MB).
- For our **Archdeacons**: the Venerables Ron Corcoran (Vancouver Island), Dan Gifford (BC), Terry Lamb (Alberta & BC Interior), Paul Charbonneau (Ontario), Tim Parent (Ottawa Valley), Paul Crossland (Prairies), Michael McKinnon (New England, USA), and Darrell Critch (Atlantic Region & Quebec).
- For all **ANiC clergy** and families, especially those experiencing spiritual and physical attack.
- For **a major awakening**, a sovereign move of God in our churches and across our nations like has not been seen in our lifetimes. **Rise Up, O God** we pray. Intervene, O Lord, in the midst of our decaying culture and society! Raise up **an army of intercessors** who will call out to you for a mighty visitation of your power and presence! Send out **labourers into the harvest**, O Lord!
- That God would make our Diocese's **Five Ministry Priorities** a transformation reality in the life of every ANiC congregation: Bold Witnesses, Biblically Grounded, Loving Children, On Mission, and Planting & Growing Churches.
- For the **Anglican Relief and Development Fund Canada** (ARDFC) which is raising funds so ACNA church plants in Cuba can purchase a used van. This van will meet transportation needs and provide a means of revenue generation to reduce dependence on external financial support.
- 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 leaders** with regard to North Korea, the Middle East, and famine-stricken countries in East Africa, northern Nigeria and Yemen. Also for European nations struggling to absorb refugees. Pray for the hundreds of thousands of **refugees** and internally displaced people who are seeking safety and asylum. Pray for churches and communities that are welcoming refugees. May they be a witness to God's compassionate care, by what they both say and do.
- 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 Eastern, Asian and African Christians who are brutally persecuted for their refusal to renounce their faith in Jesus.