



Anglican Network in Canada

First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer – June 2011

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. Philipians 4: 6 ESV

Welcome to our June 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, June 3rd**, 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

Some people, having been dealt with by God, live before Him in weakness and trembling. They have not the slightest tinge of pride for they have touched the Lord and are fully fed. They are in possession of a satisfaction in the presence of God, and this satisfaction is their strength.

Watchman Nee 1903-1972

Coming Home

This month, we are delighted to have a guest contributor to our First Friday Call to Prayer meditation: the Reverend Mike Stewart, rector of Saint Matthew's, Abbotsford. Recently, Mike began a new feature on their church website, a prayer blog entitled House of Prayer Reflections. Mike has graciously agreed to share some of these reflections with all of ANiC through this publication. Thank you Mike+ for your sensitive and profound insight into prayer.

Garth V Hunt

It is my hope that these reflections will provide some encouragement and nourishment for you in your prayer journey. I also hope that these reflections will open up some discussion, comments and reflections that we may enter into conversation with one another as we share our experiences and insights concerning this great gift of prayer.

A parishioner sent me a wonderful definition of prayer last week which I have found particularly helpful;

"To pray is to be vulnerable. To pray is to seek God's care, guidance and encouragement and peace –even when it feels ridiculous, when others look at us strangely, or when it feels like no one is listening or responding. Prayer is an act of trust; it's placing faith in the fact that God is real, that God is love and that God responds to our cries. It's trusting – even when we feel like we are perishing – that God is with us, hears us and cares about our need. It's trusting that somehow God is making a way, even when we feel swallowed up in fear. In prayer, I learn to trust God is moving through all the unfeeling, uncaring bystanders that live around me and within me. Prayer is trusting, despite the present hurt and anxiety, that God hears me, holds me and is gently working to bring me to dry land."
– Mark Yaconelli

Like the prodigal son in Jesus' parable, for too long we have been in a far off country. God continually calls out to us to come home. Coming home to God will also mean coming home to our true selves. This homeward journey is the contemplative journey that we are all called to make. It is not a well

worn path, but others have walked before us and we are not called to walk this path alone but in community.

Prayer in essence is about being loved by God. It demands a relationship in which we allow the Other to speak to us, to address us and to touch the sensitive core of our being which we would rather keep in darkness. This prayer journey is taking up the invitation of Jesus to go where we would rather not go within ourselves in order that we may discover our true and often hidden identity as the beloved of God. Indeed, as Mark Yaconelli states, “to pray is to be vulnerable”. Brother Lawrence reminds us that what we often neglect to see is “God painting Himself in the depth of our soul”.

“Coming home” is a great theme in Christian spirituality and central to this is the call to stay at home inwardly with God whatever our business. Let us think again of Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son found in Luke's gospel chapter 15. In verse 17 we find a wonderful phrase concerning the wayward son, “*when he came to his senses*” or “*when he came to his right mind*” and then verse 18 goes on to tell us that he said to himself, “*I will go set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.*” So he got up and went to his father.” We all know what kind of reception was waiting for him when he got home! Prayer is how we come to our senses. In prayer we come home to our Father and begin to come home to our true selves.

Our Heavenly Father's sorrow lies in our refusal to approach Him. We like to dwell in a far off country much of the time. If the truth be known we are often afraid of God, afraid of life and afraid of what we might find within ourselves. Our fear can keep us stuck. It takes courage to go on a path that takes us home. The late Trappist monk Thomas Merton once penned these words; “*In prayer simply surrender your poverty and acknowledge your nothingness to the LORD. Whether you understand it or not, God loves you, is present in you, lives in you, dwells in you, saves you and offers you an understanding and a compassion which are like nothing you have ever found in a book or ever heard in a sermon. So quit keeping score altogether, surrender yourself with all your sinfulness to God who sees neither the score nor the scorer, but only His child redeemed by Christ.*”

It has been said that the spiritual life begins with the acceptance of the broken self. It is this self that God loves and this self that He calls home. God continues to come out to meet us on bended knee. Much of what happens in prayer is simply allowing ourselves to be loved by God. Author Brennan Manning reminds us that Jesus Christ is the greatest love in history because He knows what hurts us. He is fine-tuned to our brokenness.

Of all the spiritual disciplines prayer is the most central because it ushers us into the presence of God and ultimately, perpetual communion with God. In prayer we both come home to God and stay at home with God and He makes His home within us. To pray is to change and is the central avenue that God uses to transform us. Whenever we have a desire to pray this is a reflex action of God's own initiative upon our hearts. It is the beginning of our response to His call to come home to Him. Prayer is the means He uses to draw us close to Him. This is the loving Father calling us and drawing us into His embrace.

I close this reflection with a prayer that you may wish to use from Thomas Merton;

“O LORD, you know my soul. You know all that needs to be done there. Do it in your own way. Draw me to you, O my God. Fill me with pure love for you alone. Make me never go aside from the way of your love. Show me clearly that way and never let me never depart from it: that will be enough. I leave everything in your hands. You will guide me without error and without danger and I will love you all the way. I will belong to you. I will not be afraid of anything for I shall remain in your hands and never leave you.”

Mike Stewart+
Rector, St Matthew's, Abbotsford, BC
mikes_stmatts@telus.net
www.stmatthewsanglicanchurch.com



Praise God ...

- That God knows our sinfulness and brokenness – and still loves us unconditionally.
- That He wants to know us and be known by us – intimately.
- That the Creator and Ruler of the universe is also our Friend, Redeemer and Lord.
- For the work God is doing in our lives – cleansing, transforming, healing, restoring and equipping.
- 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 allowing God into the dark depths of our souls.
- For now making our home in God – and not abiding in that home.
- 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 truly make God our dwelling place
- 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 facing the possible loss of their buildings. May they demonstrate God’s love to those who are taking them to court.
- For parishes involved in legal disputes.
 - For the Vancouver parishes and their application before the Supreme Court.
 - For St Aidan’s (Windsor, ON) in its court case with the Diocese of Huron – concluding June 13.
 - For St George’s (Burlington, ON), Good Shepherd (St Catharines, ON) and St Hilda’s (Oakville, ON) in dealings 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** and for God's blessing on the **Province of the Southern Cone**.
- That God would continue His work in and through the **Anglican Church in North America**
 - For **Archbishop Bob Duncan** (and wife, Nara)
 - For the other ACNA dioceses.
- For **Anglican1000** and those engaged in **church planting** throughout ACNA.
- For 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. Praise God for the recent, encouraging statement from these Primates which gives hope for a strong, Biblically faithful, global fellowship within the Communion.
- For growing support of the **Anglican Relief and Development Fund Canada (ARDFC)**. For the ARDFC's new project in the Diocese of Kindu, Congo, focused on peace-building and restoring lives and livelihoods devastated by years of war.
- 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 upcoming gatherings – in 2012 and 2013 of orthodox global Anglicans.
- 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, famine, flooding and poverty – especially those in Muslim countries who face discrimination, violence and war.
- For those in **areas recovering from natural disasters** – both in North America and globally.
- For the people of **North African & Middle Eastern countries** where fighting and political unrest are causing suffering and fear – especially for the persecuted minority Christian populations.
- For the **Sudan** and a peaceful separation of the South from the North.
- 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 & emergency response personnel** who risk their lives for us
 - For those who selflessly serve our country in the **military** as well as their families at home.



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