



Anglican Network in Canada

First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer – July 2013

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 July 2013 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 worldwide.

<p>We encourage you to set aside the first Friday, July 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</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Prayer Quotes</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Prayer changes not only people, situations and even the course of history, but it also changes those who pray!”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Operation World 7th edition, pg. xxii</p>
--	--

Lessons of the Snowball

The snowball sailed through the air and landed harmlessly wide of my target – the teenage paperboy who was riding his bike past my house. Not too many six-year olds can hit a moving target with a snowball, me included! But the paperboy took definite exception to my even trying. He dropped his bike in a snow bank, and tore after me, looking for vengeance.

Abject terror filled my heart as I raced towards the front door of my house. I felt like I was running in slow motion as a hundred questions raced through my mind. Would the door be unlocked? Would this kid, much faster than I, beat me to a pulp before I reached it? Were my parents still home? Would they help??

I reached the door handle and, mercifully, it turned. I burst through the doorway and crashed headlong into my father. When the paperboy caught sight of Dad, he retreated as fast as he could. I was safe, safe in Father’s presence.

Was my dad pleased with my behaviour? No, and he told me so. Did I deserve his protection based on my performance? Again, no, but his care for me was not based on my level of obedience, but on his unconditional love for his son.

This vivid childhood memory came flooding back to me as I reread Peter’s sermon in the third chapter of Acts. Peter and John have just healed the lame beggar, and the crowd is understandably astonished – a great time to share the Gospel! Peter concludes his challenge to them with these words:

“Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.” Acts 3: 19,20 ESV

There is a very definite connection here between times of refreshing and the presence of the Lord. Indeed, Peter sees this refreshing emanating directly from the Lord’s presence. It brings cool water to a thirst-parched tongue, peace to a guilt-racked soul, and security and belonging to the abandoned orphan.

Returning to my snowball story for a moment, it was not sufficient for me to believe that my dad existed, that he provided for the necessities of my life, or even that he loved me. At the moment of my

need, there was no substitute for his presence. Had he been out at a vestry meeting or visiting a shut-in, my story might have had quite a different ending!

Isn't the same thing true in our worship services, in our intercessory gatherings, even in our personal prayer times? At the risk of being too "experiential" in emphasis, may I propose that we do need to experience the real manifest presence of God in our lives, or we will dry up and wither away like the leaves of autumn. Proper theology, even conservative orthodox theology, is not enough. We all need *"times of refreshing that come from the presence of God"*.

A.W. Tozer, writer, teacher, and pastor, in the mid-twentieth century expressed it so clearly in his book, "The Pursuit of God". Let me quote from this profound document:

"The world is perishing for lack of the knowledge of God, and the church is famishing for want of His presence. The instant cure of most of our religious problems would be to enter the presence in spiritual experience, to become suddenly aware that we are in God and God is in us. This would lift us out of our pitiful narrowness and cause our hearts to be enlarged. This would burn away the impurities from our lives as the bugs and fungi were burned away by the fire that dwelt in the bush."

There is a hymn that we sometimes sing on a Sunday morning entitled, "Praise to the holiest in the height" by the noted preacher and hymn writer from the mid-nineteenth century, John Henry Newman. A particular verse struck me as very appropriate to my thoughts around this theme:-

*"And that a higher gift than grace
Should flesh and blood refine,
God's presence and His very self,
And essence all-divine."*

Would you have said that there was a higher gift than grace? Is there really anything we can receive from God that surpasses forgiveness? I believe that there is – God has given us the gift of His presence; He has given us Himself!

Much more could (and should) be said on this, but I am convinced that one of the reasons that we experience so little of the real presence of God is because we don't expect to. We've learned how to do "church" without Him. We can explain away the obvious signs of God's presence and power as recorded in Acts as a different dispensation while God launched the Church. But wouldn't it be breathtaking if God would regularly visit our worship services and prayer gatherings with His manifest presence, where healings took place and hearts were convicted of sin, the moment people walked into the sanctuary?

Intercessors, I so desire this month to broaden our scope of how we pray for our parishes. What if we began to pray earnestly for the manifest presence of God in our own parish services and ministries? What if we repented of settling for so much less? What if we cried out to the Lord that He would send us "times of refreshment that come from the presence of God" so that our awareness of His presence would be heightened? It won't come easily or automatically; we will need to really want it. But the fruit of our prayer would be refreshment and transformation, and I am convinced that God is just waiting for us to ask.

Let me conclude with the words of the psalmist, David, who truly understood the joy of being in the Lord's presence. May his words become our experience as never before. Amen.

"You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

Psalm 16:11, ESV

Garth V. Hunt+
prayer@anglicannetwork.ca

This article was first published under the title "Time of Refreshing in the Lord's Presence" in the AEC Call to Prayer, Sept 2008.



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 into the presence of Almighty God where we can delight in the joy of intimacy with Him.
- That we can depend fully and unreservedly on our loving Father for every aspect of our lives.
- 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...

- The times that we have settled for a lot less than times of refreshing in the presence of God.

Please pray...

- That each of us would **guard our hearts** more closely to maintain **our joy in the Lord**, no matter the circumstances.
- For a new visitation of the **Holy Spirit** upon our bishops and clergy, our parishes and our diocese. Pray that the fresh wind of the Spirit will bring renewal, healing and empowerment.
- For **Bishops** Donald Harvey, Charlie Masters, Stephen Leung, Trevor Walters, Ronald Ferris and Malcolm Harding (retired) – 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), 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 of our **ANiC clergy** and families, especially those experiencing spiritual and physical attack.
- That God would continue His work in and through the **Anglican Church in North America**
- For **Archbishop Bob Duncan** (and wife, Nara), especially for wisdom as he seeks to give godly leadership through any growing pains our province may encounter.
- **GAFCon Primates and Fellowship of Confessing Anglican (FCA) leaders** – Pray for the Lord’s courage and wisdom as they seek to guide the orthodox reformation and realignment that is taking place in the Anglican Communion. Pray for the second **GAFCon gathering** this October in Nairobi.
- **Southern Cone** – Pray for Presiding Bishop Tito Zavala in his primatial duties and for this province which includes much of South America.
- For the new Archbishop of Canterbury **Justin Welby**. Pray that the Lord will grace him with wisdom, courage and the faithfulness to follow the teachings of Scripture in his decision-making.
- 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. May they be filled with the joy of the Lord as they seek His guidance for more permanent worship facilities.
- For the Anglican Relief and Development Fund Canada (**ARDFC**) as it raising funds for a training and education centre in the **Diocese of Recife** (Brazil) and for those in the Anglican Church in North America who are working to bring relief to the **victims of the tornadoes in Oklahoma**.
- For the **flood victims in Calgary and other areas of Alberta**. Pray that the Christians in the flood zones will bring a message of hope to those who have lost so much.
- For **all the Christians in the Middle East** who are facing increasing pressure and persecution as many of their countries embrace a more aggressive and extreme form of Islam.