



# Anglican Network in Canada

## First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer July 2016

*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 2016 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, July 1<sup>st</sup>**, 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

***On persevering prayer:*** "I look at a stone cutter hammering away at a rock a hundred times without so much as a crack showing in it. Yet at the 101st blow it splits in two. I know it was not the one blow that did it, but all that had gone before."

## Don't Quit!

Are you ever amazed, or perhaps perplexed, at the range of details that the biblical authors give in their description of certain events? Sometimes, even conversations are given in great detail. Other times, like in Acts 11: 26, a significant passage of time is given only one sentence; "*For a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.*"

This pattern particularly struck me in my daily reading a few days ago in Acts 12. Let me show you:

*About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword, and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread.*  
*Acts 12:1-3 ESV*

Now it's really easy to peruse familiar passages to get to the "good parts" (in this case, Peter being freed from prison by an angel!) while missing important details that are pertinent. For instance, in this passage, I want to say, "Whoa, wait a minute! Herod did what? He executed James, John's brother, one of the sons of Zebedee? You mean one of the three in the inner circle who was a witness to Jesus' transfiguration? Things had been going so well! The early church must have been devastated!"

What do we know about this Herod? Nicky Gumbel of Alpha fame in his commentary on this passage says, "The Judean King Herod Agrippa I (c.10BC – 44AD) had a cruel streak, which he inherited from his grandfather, Herod the Great (c.74BC–4AD), and his uncle Herod Antipas (21BC–39AD) who had executed John the Baptist and tried Jesus. He took to persecuting Christians. He was an unscrupulous politician who wanted to gain popularity with the people." Seeing that his murder of James pleased the Jewish religious leaders, he arrested Peter with the intent of doing exactly the same to him in a public execution!

*So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.* Acts 12:5 ESV

The fledgling church faced a seemingly impossible situation. James killed and Peter facing a similar fate? The future of their movement seemed to be in dire jeopardy. So they began to pray fervent, earnest, passionate prayers. But, although the biblical text doesn't say it explicitly, isn't it fair to assume that they also had prayed for James when he was arrested? There must have been some real disappointment when, despite their prayers, James was killed. Surely that wasn't supposed to happen! What went wrong?

We can imagine the heartfelt soul searching that might have gone on. “Is there any point in praying for Peter? Have we been deceived all along? Maybe we should just all go home . . .” Then, perhaps, James the brother of Jesus, stood up and said, “Brothers and Sisters, we have a clear decision to make – either to quit on the Master, continuing in our fear, doubt and self-pity, or to pour out our hearts to Him as we cry out for Peter’s deliverance.”

Well, we know what happened – they chose to pray and Peter was supernaturally rescued from an incredibly secure prison cell. They were so surprised that the servant girl left Peter standing outside the door because she thought he was a ghost! There was great praise offered to the Lord that evening, and their circumstances were dramatically changed. John Stott describes the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Acts this way: “The chapter opens with James dead, Peter in prison and Herod triumphing; it closes with Herod dead, Peter free and the word of God triumphing”; because they didn’t quit on Jesus.

There are some parallels here to our situation in the Anglican Communion. The launchings of ANiC and the ACNA, whereas not without challenging difficulties, have both been wonderfully fruitful and a blessing to many thousands of people who were wounded. They have also been an encouragement to Anglicans in other nations where the liberal agenda has been gaining significant ground within the church. There was great hope that the Primates’ Council that met in Canterbury last January might bring some corrective discipline to the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church in Canada leading to true repentance for their flagrant disregard of the Church’s historic teaching on human sexuality.

Yet, very little has changed as a result of the Canterbury meetings. The Episcopal Church and the ACoC continue on their chosen courses with no sign of repentance. The Anglican Communion looks even more fragile than before. And the message being heralded by our anti-Christian, humanistic society is one of unbridled lawlessness and rebellion against any Godly restraint or rule. To add further to world instability and angst, the UK referendum decision was to leave the European Union after 47 years of membership.

Like the early church after James was murdered, we too are faced with a challenge. Is there any point in further prayer? Does it really make any difference? The situation seems quite impossible! Again, Nicky Gumbel in addressing the situation of Peter’s arrest says;

“The choice was either to give up praying or to pray passionately. The Greek word translated here as ‘earnestly’ was used to describe a horse made to go at full gallop. It denotes the taut muscle of strenuous and sustained effort as of an athlete. The imperfect tense suggests that they prayed not as a one-off, but for a considerable length of time. They persevered.”



The Scriptures don’t tell us why God allowed James to be killed. The disciples (and we) had to choose to trust in the goodness of God alone. But we do have the benefit of knowing the result of the disciples’ passionate prayers for Peter –we can read the end of the chapter! For us 21<sup>st</sup> century disciples, I believe that our response to impossible situations should be the same, even if we have experienced disappointment in prayer before.

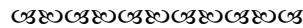
Over and over, God’s Word exhorts us to persist in prayer. Here’s one familiar example where the imperfect tense of the verb suggests genuine importunity:

*Keep on asking and it will be given you; keep on seeking and you will find; keep on knocking [reverently] and [the door] will be opened to you. For everyone who keeps on asking receives; and he who keeps on seeking finds; and to him who keeps on knocking, [the door] will be opened.*

Matthew 7:7-8 AMP

There are times in any move of God when the temptation to quit seems highly appealing. May I urge you, instead, to redouble your commitment to prayer for revival in our Church and in our nations, and may the Lord give us renewed grace to pray “earnestly” as the disciples prayed for Peter – as a horse made to go at full gallop! Amen.

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### Praise God ...

- 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. Especially we praise the Lord for the continuing faithful witness by the GAFCON primates.

### Please pray...

- For our primate **Archbishop Foley Beach** (& Allison) - Pray for great wisdom, discernment, courage and strength as he gives leadership to ACNA in the days and months ahead.
- For **Bishop Charlie Masters** (& Judy) – Pray for our diocesan bishop as he takes a short sabbatical over the summer months. May God grant him renewed courage, wisdom and vision. Pray also for spiritual protection over his time away, 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 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!
- For all **ANiC clergy** and families, especially those experiencing spiritual and physical attack.
- For the **Anglican Relief and Development Fund Canada** (ARDFC) as it raises funds for its current project – working with the Diocese of Muyinga of providing farming tools, seeds, goats and agricultural training to address malnutrition and extreme poverty in 3 villages in Burundi.
- For the **Christian doctors in Canada** as they seek God’s wisdom for their response to the recent legislation on assisted suicide. Pray that the voices speaking on behalf of Life rather than death will continue to be heard, voices such as the palliative care doctors. Pray that health care professional across Canada will have conscience rights to not be required to refer patients for euthanasia.
- For **Canon Andrew White** and his ministry team in the Middle East. Pray for continued 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 European nations reeling from terrorist attacks. Pray for the hundreds of thousands of refugees who are seeking safety and asylum in Europe and here in Canada. Pray for those churches and

communities that are welcoming refugees that they may be a witness to God's compassionate care, both by what they say and do.

- For the **leadership of Great Britain** and **the European Union** in the wake of the referendum that resulted in a majority for those who believed that Britain should leave the EU. Pray for great wisdom and guidance in the coming days and months, and grace to rebuild the bonds of trust both within the UK and abroad.
- 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 and African Christians who are brutally persecuted for their refusal to renounce their faith in Jesus.