



First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer – August 2009

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 August 2009 1st 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, August 7th, 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><i>When a Christian shuns fellowship with other Christians, the devil smiles. When he stops studying the Bible, the devil laughs. When he stops praying, the devil shouts for joy.</i> Corrie Ten Boom</p>
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Some Prayerful Thoughts on “Retirement”

The 30th of June of this year marked the conclusion of almost 17 years of my employment in a “secular” job. It was a position that I held with pride because I knew that I was exactly where God wanted me to be for those years, and because I was serving a Christian family that seeks to build their enterprise on biblical principles. For many reasons it was a great fit for me. But, over the past few years, there has been a growing sense of God’s call on my life once again. My ordination as a deacon in June 2008 and my role as national prayer coordinator for ANiC have both played a part in this call.

So now comes “retirement”, and I have found myself asking the Lord what that should look like. Our North American society says, “It’s time to live like a kid again. Be free to do whatever you feel like (and can afford!).” On the other hand, the financial gurus have been crying for months, “O don’t retire now! The market is way down; you won’t be able to live a “retirement” lifestyle until it recovers!” Apparently, retirement is about continuous self-indulgence, and that’s expensive. There is a huge bubble of baby boomers following close on my heels, almost ready to take to the golf courses and spas in record numbers. Country clubs and cruise line companies can hardly wait!

But retirement of that sort just doesn’t sound like a biblical concept, does it. I can’t find any of God’s servants in Scripture who retired. Did Moses, Joshua or Gideon retire? Did Peter, John or Paul live out their last years in relative ease and comfort? Did the pursuit of God’s will and purpose wane in their old age? I don’t think so. Look at Paul’s description of his last days in this correspondence to his dear disciple, Timothy:

“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.”

2 Timothy 4: 6-8 ESV

As I have looked for examples of what retirement should look like in the Kingdom, I have not had to search for long. Right within our ANiC community, there are wonderful role models for me in Bishops Don Harvey, Malcolm Harding and Ron Ferris. These are devoted men of God who are labouring on behalf of the Lord and His church, sometimes at great cost to reputation, family, finances and personal comfort. Ron Bales, ANiC's business manager, tirelessly serves in numerous ways in the areas of finance and administration. Ron has "retired" several times before, and yet continues to make his energy and the spheres of his expertise available to his Lord. For all of these men, and there are many others, God has proven Himself completely faithful in His promise, "*My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.*" (2 Corinthians 12:9 ESV)

Recently a dear lady in our parish of St. George's, Lowville gave me a small booklet by John Piper entitled "Rethinking Retirement" which I found quite beneficial. Piper shares some excellent insights as to what is behind the secular thinking about retirement which he calls, "*the world's substitute for heaven since the world does not believe there will be a heaven beyond the grave. The mindset of our peers is that we must reward ourselves now in this life for the long years of our labour.*" If there is no hope of heaven or eternal glory, then retirees need to grab all they can now before their health fails them.

But what an incredible joy we Christians possess knowing that heaven and "the crown of righteousness which the Lord will award" await us at the close of our days! As a result, *finishing strong* becomes a most important life goal. As intercessors, we also know that, even when our bodies ultimately let us down, the privilege of prayer is still ours to exercise. What greater use of the days that remain to us could there be than in spending lots of time in the Lord's presence and interceding on behalf of His bride!

Personally, being released from my job will afford me significantly more time to devote to my role as national prayer coordinator, and I look forward to having more opportunities to visit ANiC parishes, encouraging intimacy with God and growth in the experience of prayer. As I prepare for this next chapter in my life, several scriptures have become especially precious to me. Let me close with these passages from the Word:-

*O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.
So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me until I proclaim your might to
another generation, your power to all those to come.* Psalm 71:18 ESV

*The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God.
They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green,
to declare that the Lord is upright; he is my a rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.* Psalm 92:12-15 ESV

*"Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel,
who have been borne by me from before your birth, carried from the womb;
even to your old age I am he, and to gray hairs I will carry you.
I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save."* Isaiah 46:3-4 ESV

Praise God ...

- That He allows us to participate with Him in His Kingdom-building work no matter what our age or stage of life.
- That, through the work of prayer, we can participate in the unfolding of His purposes.
- That He hears and responds to our cries and prayers, when we pray in submission to His will – and answers in His way and in His time.
- That we have an advocate with the Father, Christ Jesus.
- For the recently formed Anglican Church in North America – of which ANiC is a diocese.
- For faithful Anglican bishops, clergy and laity who are taking a stand for truth – even when their stand for Christ and His Word makes them targets for attack.
- For the courage of global orthodox Primates.
- For the reformation God is working out in global Anglicanism. In the midst of chaos, He is building His Kingdom and refining His bride, the Church.
- For God's blessing on ANiC and for all He has planned for the future.
- For the congregations of faithful Anglicans He is adding to our number.
- For the growing unity of orthodox Anglicans in the Communion.

Please pray...

- That we would resist the lure of self-indulgent leisure and retirement, focusing our hearts instead on heaven and working for our heavenly Master.
- That God would teach us to be faithful in prayer.
- That we will learn to desire God – and communion with Him – above everything.
- That we would fall deeper in love with Jesus, growing more like our Saviour each day.
- That we see as Jesus saw, love as He loved, serve as He served, and die to ourselves as He died to Himself.
- For Bishops Donald Harvey, Malcolm Harding and Ronald Ferris, and their families – as well as for bishops-elect Trevor Walters, Stephen Leung and Charlie Masters. Pray for spiritual and physical protection and for a daily closer walk with God.
- For those suffering under the attack of the enemy, especially spouses of clergy and leaders. Pray for victory in Christ and physical healing, if that is God's will.
- 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 congregations that have lost their places of worship as well as for those forced to appeal to the courts and facing the possible loss of their buildings. May they demonstrate love to those who persecute them.
- For the court proceedings, for the judges considering the cases, for parish wardens, trustees and clergy who have put so much on the line, and for generous donations to ANiC's legal defense fund to cover the costs of supporting threatened parishes.
 - For Mr Justice Stephen Kelleher who is now reviewing and weight the evidence form the three-week court case in Vancouver involving four ANiC parishes.
 - For the case involving St Aidan's in Windsor, ON.
 - For St George's (Lowville, ON), Good Shepherd (St Catharines, ON) and St Hilda's (Oakville, ON) in their dispute with the Diocese of Niagara.
 - For a change of heart on the part of the dioceses pursuing ANiC parishes. May they relent and work with parishes to reach amicable settlements.
- For those who feel called to remain in the Anglican Church of Canada to pray and work for reformation and for a renewed commitment to Jesus Christ and His inspired Word.
- For the recovery of a lively orthodoxy in the Anglican Church of Canada (ACoC).

- For 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 leaders of Anglican Essentials Federation, Anglican Essentials Network and Anglican Essentials Canada as they provide support for orthodox Anglicans in the ACoC.
- For Archbishop Gregory Venables (and his wife, Sylvia) who graciously provided a temporary “home” for ANiC members when we needed Primatial oversight.
- For our new province, the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA):
 - For Archbishop Bob Duncan (and wife, Nara)
 - For the other 27 dioceses and the bishops giving leadership – especially those in Canada: the Anglican Coalition in Canada and the Reformed Episcopal Church.
- For the orthodox Primates – including the GAFCon Primates – and bishops who are courageously standing for the Truth. Pray for spiritual and physical protection and for discernment, grace and strength as they lead in a torn Communion.
- For the Covenant process. May the Lord clearly lead and may His will be done.
- 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 and poverty.
- For Christians in drought-stricken areas of east Africa where famine is now beginning to kill many. Pray also for the Church working in those areas and for funds needed to supply aid.
- For those in authority over us in government; for judges in our court system; for officers of the law; and for those who serve our country in the military. Pray for wise decisions that honour the Lord and promote the welfare of Canadian citizens. Pray also for protection for those who are in “harms way” as they serve our country.
- That God would revive us, our church and, ultimately, our nation.



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