



Anglican Network in Canada

First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer – August 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 August 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 and the Anglican Communion worldwide.

We encourage you to set aside **the first Friday, August 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

When thou prayest, it is better that thy heart be without words than thy words be without heart.

John Bunyan 1628-1688

The Faithfulness of God

Reports continue to come in of ANiC parishes that are having to leave their beloved church buildings, processing to new facilities where they will continue Sunday worship services and other ministry activities. Some of these new quarters are temporary, and some are permanent new homes. The reports have a plaintive air to them because they are mixed with both grief and the joy of being worthy to suffer for the sake of the Gospel. Much prayer has gone up to the Lord concerning the various court cases over property ownership, especially for the churches in the Vancouver area whose courageous clergy and lay leaders began the overt fight for orthodoxy and the transforming power of the Gospel by walking out of a diocesan synod that was endorsing the blessing of same-sex unions in June 2002. What happened to all that prayer we may ask. Didn't God hear us?

There have been, and continue to be, grave illnesses amongst us. Once again, significant prayer has been offered on behalf of those who are ill. Yet we have lost loved ones; some at a young age. Was the prayer not enough? Should we have fasted longer? Was our faith level too low?

Now I am fully aware that I am raising questions to which I do not have many of the answers. Christians have laboured over these issues since the beginning of the Church. Paul and Silas were supernaturally rescued from a prison in Philippi (Acts 16). But not all imprisoned disciples were delivered in miraculous ways. Many were martyred for their faith, even though there were many praying for their release.

My desire here, dear friends, is to help us to simply draw a line in the sand that states irrevocably the following: *"Despite how circumstances may appear, our God is faithful!"* He can be no other way. Faithfulness is an attribute of His divine character. I know that our mind and our theology know this to be true, but I'm after our hearts where we may be aching over loss and apparent unanswered prayer. Allow the following verses to wash over you, reminding us all of the faithfulness of God:

Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God. Psalm 31:5 ESV

I will also praise you with the harp for your faithfulness, O my God; I will sing praises to you with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel. Psalm 71:22 ESV

But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. Psalm 86:15 ESV

These are strong statements, written by real, live people who had seen more than their share of pain and loss. These verses are not written in denial of the psalmist's circumstances but in facing them head on by clinging to the faithfulness of God.

The question before us, then, is – how is God's faithfulness expressed? What is He faithful to do? From reading the book of Acts, it becomes patently clear that God's faithful commitment is not to our comfort or freedom from tragedy or loss. The apostle Paul himself wrote to the young Corinthian church; "*For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death*". (2 Cor. 1:8-9). The scope of this brief meditation prohibits a full analysis of all of God's covenant promises and His faithfulness in keeping them. But let me share one that I hope will help us to keep our eyes firmly fixed on the Faithful One.

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.
1 Thess. 5:23-24 ESV

Paul says that God is faithful to the process of "sanctification" in each believer. That may sound like so much theological verbiage, but here is what it means: each of us is being made holy, made to be more and more like Jesus; and **everything** that happens to us is part of that process, including the painful things. Paul explained it to the Romans this way:

*We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. For God knew his people in advance, and **he chose them to become like his Son**, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.*
Romans 8: 28-29 NLT

This is the journey that we are on. The destination is "*to be conformed to the image of his Son*" (ESV). What an amazing revelation! And He who called us is absolutely faithful; He will surely do it! Our God is up to the task! He is the very One whom John saw in his incredible vision on Patmos:

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.
Revelation 19:11 ESV

John, who walked with Jesus through His entire earthly ministry, makes the following statement about answered prayer in his first letter:

*This is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything **according to his will** he hears us.*
1 John 5:14 ESV

There is a qualifier to answered prayer, isn't there – "*according to His will*". That's why we pray regularly, "*Your will be done, on earth as in heaven*". Jesus Himself prayed in Gethsemane, "*Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.*" (Luke 22: 42 ESV). Even if it is not God's will to always answer our prayers in the way we desire, yet this does not negate His faithfulness. Rather it strengthens it because His commitment to our becoming like Jesus sometimes must take us through some difficult and painful places we would much rather avoid, and He loves us too much to allow us to take the bypass! Personally, I am grateful that it's all about His will, not mine.

In 1988, a young Canadian worship leader and friend, Robert Critchley, wrote the following song that I personally find a great comfort, especially in times of difficulty. May the lyrics bless you as they have me.

*Lord, I come before Your throne of grace
I find rest in Your presence,
And fullness of Joy
In worship and wonder,
I behold Your face
Singing what a faithful God have I*

*Lord of mercy, You have heard my cry
Through the storm You're the beacon
My song in the night
In the shelter of Your wings
Hear my heart's reply,
Singing what a faithful God have I*

*What a faithful God have I; What a faithful God
What a faithful God have I; Faithful in every way.*

*What a faithful God have I; What a faithful God
What a faithful God have I; Faithful in every way.*

*Lord, all sovereign
 Granting peace from heaven
 Let me comfort those who suffer
 With the comfort You have given
 I will tell of Your great love
 For as long as I live
 Singing what a faithful God have I
 What a faithful God have I; What a faithful God
 What a faithful God have I; Faithful in every way*

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Praise God ...

- That He is faithful; and He is sovereign over the events and circumstances in our lives.
- That He is a good and loving God who is working everything together for our ultimate good.
- That the Creator and Ruler of the universe loves us unconditionally and walks with us through the hard times – and the happy times.
- For the work God is doing in our lives – cleansing, transforming, healing, restoring and equipping.
- That He has deemed us worthy to suffer for the Gospel.
- 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...

- Bewilderment at how He is leading; and our reluctance to go where He is leading.
- Desiring our comfort more than His glory.
- Not being able to see our circumstances from God’s perspective.
- Not having grateful hearts overflowing with thanksgiving to our God.
- Not being a people of prayer.
- Not encouraging and regularly praying for our church, pastors, government leaders and all for those in positions of authority and influence.

Please pray...

- That our wills will be increasingly **yielded to His**; and that our desires would be conformed to His.
- That God would show us any bitterness that lingers in our hearts.
- That we would demonstrate our faith in God’s goodness and sovereignty by cultivating **thankfulness** and expressing **praise** in the midst of loss, adversity or injustice.
- That we would have a **passion for souls** – 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 **ANiC congregations** that have lost and are losing their places of worship. May they be filled with the joy of the Lord. That God would comfort and pour our His blessing on them.
- For **parishes involved in legal disputes**.
 - For the judge's decision in St Aidan's (Windsor, ON) case with the Diocese of Huron.
 - 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 repentance and the recovery of a lively orthodoxy in the **Anglican Church of Canada (ACoC)**; for those who believe they are called to remain in the ACoC to pray and work for reformation and 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 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** in Canada and 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.
- 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 reestablishing 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 of orthodox global Anglicans in 2012 and 2013.
- 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 suffering from famine and natural disasters** – especially in East Africa.
- 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 God's protection of **Israel** as it is surrounded by those who seek its destruction.
- For peace in **Sudan** and in **South Sudan**.
- 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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