



**First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer – December 2010**

*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 December 2010 1<sup>st</sup> 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 <b>the first Friday, December 3<sup>rd</sup></b>, 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;"><b>Prayer Quotes</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>We must pray not first of all because it feels good or helps, but because God loves us and wants our attention.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Henri J. M. Nouwen (1932-1996)</i></p>
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**Praying for the Grace to Forgive**

On November 15<sup>th</sup>, the Supreme Court of British Columbia brought down its judgment concerning the fate of the church buildings being contested by the ACoC diocese of New Westminster and the four now ANiC parishes that have continued to utilize their church homes. The judgment came to the same decision as the previous judgement, supporting the ACoC diocese’s claim to the buildings and property in question. The ANiC parishes were given 60 days to decide whether to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada.

As I read the news release concerning this judgment, I discovered some old wounds that I had hoped were dealt with were, once again, beginning to ooze puss and blood. *“Where is the justice in this land? They call themselves a Christian church – how Christ-like is this mean-spirited behaviour? How can those who a scant few years ago considered themselves cordial colleagues and partners in ministry treat us with such contempt?? ... etc, etc, etc.”*

Does this voice sound at all familiar? Did it catch you by surprise in an unguarded moment? Did you find yourself, like I did, composing an ultimately unwritten email or an unspoken diatribe containing all the injustices that you felt should have been made public long ago? My unrequited need for “fairness” lies just under the surface of my polite Anglican behaviour and was screaming to be heard! My theology knew better, but my self-righteous soul was incensed once again.

But the Lord is so graciously patient with the likes of me! I found myself being led to Matthew 18 and Jesus’ discourse on forgiveness. You’ll remember that Peter approached Jesus, somewhat smugly I surmise, and asked him about whether he should forgive his brother who had offended him not just the traditional three times, but a whopping seven times! Now I can relate to this. I’m sure I’ve managed at least three times to forgive, and maybe even seven times.

But this does not come even close to Jesus’ standard, does it. *Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven (Matthew 18:22 ESV).* Of course, Jesus didn’t mean 490 times either. Rather, he meant that a true disciple of his does not keep score and is to forgive without keeping count. Jesus then proceeds to tell the unsettling parable of the unjust servant who is forgiven a

huge debt, but is unwilling to forgive his fellow servant even the smallest of debts that was owed to him. Jesus concludes the parable with this serious admonition: -

*“Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”*

Matthew 18:32-35 ESV

Now the case here in this parable seems very clear cut, doesn't it? Obviously, the servant who was forgiven so much hasn't made the connection between his own need for forgiveness and that of his fellow servant. But our situation is surely different. I find myself saying things like, “But, Lord, don't you get it? This isn't just money we are talking about here? It's about losing our beloved church buildings, and the vindication of our ministries! And these guys aren't even asking for forgiveness – they still think they're right, and that we're the bad guys!”

O Church, please hear me! We've got to let it go... all of it! I cannot justify clinging to one vestige of my need for fairness. The Lord has forgiven me exceedingly more than he requires of me to forgive. Or have I forgotten from whence I came and the sin of which I am capable? My aching heart screams, “I can't!” And the Lord Jesus says, “I know! Ask me for the grace to forgive. Like everything else that really matters, you cannot do this in your own strength.”

*“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”* 2 Corinthians 12: 9 ESV

*“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”* Romans 8:26 ESV

Perhaps it will take groaning and weeping as we seek, with the efficacious help of the Holy Spirit, to wrestle these things to the ground. Too often I have wearied of the process and offered shallow forgiveness but have not asked Jesus for the grace to *“forgive my brother from my heart”*. May we not settle for *“false finish lines”*. Our movement will die if we are not relentless in our willingness to forgive!

As we grapple with these issues in our own hearts, I urge you also to pray for your rector and other clergy in your parish who have been particularly hurt by brother and sister clerics that they once called friends and allies. The cost for many of them has been very high, and the wounds have run deep. There is loneliness in leadership which our bishops and clergy face daily – and which most of us know little about. This loneliness makes them vulnerable targets for the assaults of the one Jesus called *“the Father of lies”*. Pray for our leaders, especially for the grace to forgive, at a new and deeper level, any who have injured them, so that no root of bitterness can take hold.

*“See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled.”* Hebrews 12:15 ESV

And, for all of us, may the same Spirit who gave sufficient grace to the martyr, Stephen – such that he could cry out as he was pelted with rocks, *“Lord, do not hold this sin against them.”* (Acts 7:60 ESV) – fill our hearts with the grace that we need in order to be willing to forgive those who have wounded us. Amen.

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### **Praise God ...**

- For His past faithfulness – that gives us the confidence to face an uncertain future.
- That He is our Abba Father and delights in us and in hearing and responding to our prayers.
- For the privilege of conversing with our Heavenly Father 24/7.
- For the privilege of engaging in spiritual battle through prayer.

- 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 His blessing on ANiC, for how He has led, and for the future He has planned for us.
- For our churches, for the Anglican Network in Canada (ANiC) and for the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA).
- For the many ANiC “projects” and church plants – the small, but growing congregations of faithful Anglicans – He is adding to our number.
- For faithful Anglican 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.
- That ultimately justice will come from our God.

### Confess if needed...

- For an unforgiving spirit.
- For holding on to old hurts and slights.
- For looking to man for justice rather than to God. (*Prov 29: 25-26 The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe. Many seek the face of a ruler, but it is from the Lord that a man gets justice.*)
- For failing to be persistent in prayer.
- For not encouraging and prayerfully supporting our clergy and church leaders.
- For not regularly praying for our leaders and those in positions of authority and influence.
- For not upholding each other and bearing one another’s burdens.

### Please pray...

- That we would learn to forgive others as God has forgiven us.
- That we would pray for those who have hurt and wronged us.
- That we would see God’s leading and loving hand in events as they unfold.
- That we would grow in our love for our Lord and learn to delight in communing with Him in prayer.
- That we would have a passion for those around us who need our Lord.
- For the ministries of our churches; that we would become more intentional in reaching out to 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 Ven Ron Corcoran (Vancouver Island), Ven Dan Gifford (BC), Ven Paul Charbonneau (Ontario), Ven Desiree Stedman (Ottawa region), Ven Paul Crossland (Prairies), Ven Michael McKinnon (New England, USA), and Ven 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 those in our congregations who are ill and in pain.
- 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 now facing the possible loss of their buildings. May they demonstrate love to those who persecute them.
- For the Vancouver area parishes – as well as parishes involved in legal disputes elsewhere in Canada – which are seeking to discern God’s leading in light of the recent court decision.
  - For St Aidan’s in Windsor, ON in its dealings with the Diocese of Huron.

- For St George's (Burlington, ON), Good Shepherd (St Catharines, ON) and St Hilda's (Oakville, ON) in negotiating with the Diocese of Niagara.
- For St George's and St Alban's in Ottawa involved in negotiation with the Diocese of Ottawa.
- 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 parishes currently seeking to discern whether God is leading them to stay in the Anglican Church of Canada or join ANiC.
- 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 (ACoC).
- 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 the new Presiding Bishop of the Southern Cone, **the Most Reverend Hector "Tito" Zavala** in his many new responsibilities. And for **Bishop Gregory Venables** as he leads the GAFCon Primates.
- For God's blessing on the **Province of the Southern Cone** which graciously provided a temporary "home" for ANiC when we needed Primatial oversight.
- For God's blessing on the **Anglican Church in North America (ACNA)**:
  - For **Archbishop Bob Duncan** (and wife, Nara)
  - For the other ACNA dioceses.
- For the 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 awareness of the **Anglican Relief and Development Fund Canada (ARDFC)**; for churches and individuals to commit to being regular donors; for the ARDFC's malaria prevention work in partnership with the Diocese of Maseno in south-west Kenya.
- 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 **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, drought, famine, flooding and poverty – especially those in Muslim countries who face discrimination and violence.
- 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.
  - For judges in our court system who are charged with interpreting and applying laws;
  - For officers of the law and emergency response personnel who daily risk their lives for our protection; and
  - For those who selflessly serve our country in the military as well as for their families at home.



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