



**First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer – December 2012**

*"I love the LORD because he hears my voice and my prayer for mercy. Because he bends down to listen, I will pray as long as I have breath!"* *Psalms 116:1-2 NLT*

Welcome to our December 2012 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.

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| <p>We encourage you to set aside <b>the first Friday, December 7<sup>th</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><i>"Our prayers may be weak, stammering, and poor in our eyes. But if they come from a right heart, God understands them. Such prayers are His delight."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>J.C. Ryle (1816-1900)</i></p> |
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**The Promises of Romans 8**

The eighth chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans has often been referred to as "the Christian's promised land". One can find twenty-one promises in this great chapter that are part of our inheritance as adopted children of the Father and joint heirs with Christ. Check out the following verses:

*For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.* *Romans 8:15-17 ESV*

When we take a few moments to reflect on the implications of this astounding statement, we can find great joy and a sense of true belonging that is clearly unattainable from any other source. Our real and eternal identity has been secured for us – we are adopted children of Almighty God, members of His most intimate family circle, and joint inheritors with His beloved Son, Jesus our Saviour and Lord! Part of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives is to convince us, to "bear witness" of this truth. If all that doesn't give you goose bumps and cause you to break out in worship, go back and read it again!

But that's not all – far from it. Romans 8 has some very specific things to say about intercession.

*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. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.* *Romans 8:26-27 ESV*

The Holy Spirit is deeply involved in the life of intercessors, showing us how to pray for specific situations in agreement with the mind of God, and interceding Himself for all Christian believers according to God's will with groanings that cannot be put into words. The Message puts it this way:

*If we don't know how or what to pray, it doesn't matter. He does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans.*

Ever felt like you just don't know how to pray for a person or a situation that seems too hopeless or complicated to continue? According to Paul, that's when the Holy Spirit can use our very sighs and

groans, interceding through us and on our behalf. May we never feel that God is remote or uninvolved in every aspect of life!

But what about those situations where bad things happen to good people? How can we pray according to the will of God when we see loved ones suffering with serious illnesses or the victims of tragic accidents? Is there a divine purpose behind these seemingly random and exigent events in our lives? Paul says that there is. Look at the two verses that follow immediately after the passage above:

*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*

Romans 8:28-29 ESV

It is worth noting here that both the New American Standard and the New Living Bible render the first sentence this way: “And we know that **God causes** all things to work together for good to those who love God,” This leaves no question as to who is causing all things to work together for good. God takes the initiative here. It is active, not passive.

Over the years, we’ve probably heard Christians use verse 28 as a kind of spiritual fatalism in an attempt to help people who were walking through difficult circumstances. It went something like this: “O well, it will all work in the end. After all, Romans 8:28 says that all things work together for good.” I may well have been guilty of doing this myself, but it never seemed to bring much comfort to the suffering. There was something just a little too trite about it, too much of a cliché.

But when we look at it in the light of verse 29 it begins to make more sense. You see, there is a “good” to the painful times we all walk through, and that good purpose is profound. It is to make us more and more like Jesus!

Here is what I believe that Paul is saying. For those who love him, God is able to take the very worst situations that our fallen world can throw at us and use it to progressively transform and conform us to the very image of Jesus himself who becomes then the firstborn of many brothers and sisters! Can you see it? God doesn’t cause the evil in this world, but he redeems that which the enemy of our souls intends to be destructive and uses it to shape our character, which is eternal, to be more Christ-like.

When it comes to intercession then, we can use this promise in our prayers for those who are going through hardship and pain. For example, if I had a sister named Susan, say, who had just lost her husband after a long battle with cancer, I might pray the following:

*Heavenly Father, I know this is desperately hard for Susan. She is broken-hearted and so lonely. Only You, Lord, can actually be her comfort. I don’t yet see how you can work this ultimately for her good, and I’m sure she can’t either, but I must believe that your Word is faithful and Your promises are true. Redeem the circumstances, O Lord, I ask. Use this tragedy to bring Susan even closer to You than she’s been, and give her the grace to embrace Your transforming power that she may become even more like You. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

The words are not important. What is important is that we are entrusting our hurting friends to an all-loving and merciful Father who not only **is** good, but who also is able to take the worst situation and **transform it into good** for those who love him. What a gift we are given – all life’s circumstances being used by the Lord to make us more like him! Amazing!

*May God’s rich blessings be with you and your family  
as you celebrate the wondrous birth of our Lord and Saviour this Christmas!*

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

- For the many wonderful promises given to us in Scripture, including the ones above in Romans 8, that form our inheritance as God's adopted sons and daughters.
- That even in the midst of trials and hardship, God is working all these circumstances to make us more like His Son
- For His faithfulness to us in the election of a godly coadjutor bishop, Charlie Masters, at our recent Synod in Ottawa
- For the work God is doing in the life of our diocese and province: cleansing, restoring, transforming, healing and equipping.
- 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 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 not trusted the Lord in the midst of difficulty.
- Our believing the devil's lie that God is not good and doesn't really have our best interests at heart.

### **Please pray...**

- That we would show our faith in God's goodness and sovereignty by cultivating **thankfulness**, **vigilance in prayer**, and by expressing **praise** in the midst of loss, adversity or injustice.
- 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, 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), Tim Parent (Ottawa Valley), 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.
- 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 throughout the Anglican Communion. Pray for the planning of the global gathering next fall.
- 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**.
- 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. Pray especially for St Aidan's (Windsor, ON) as the congregation is still embroiled in legal proceedings
- For the **Anglican Sojourner Fellowship** as it seeks to connect and encourage isolated Christians who live where there are no biblically faithful Anglican churches.
- For the faithful witness of the **Anglican Church in the war-torn Democratic Republic of the Congo** In the midst of extreme poverty and violence.

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