

## INTERCESSIONS for Sunday July 25<sup>th</sup> 2021

The problems of our world are overwhelming. As we look at them “en masse” it is so easy to feel outfaced and defeated, aware that our own sinfulness is the root cause of so many of them. But we are made in the image of our Creator and have within us the potential not only for great evil but also for great good; and so we pray today, not only that God would intervene in the problems of the world, but that we may discern how to play our part in it, bringing healing and restoration into its suffering in whatever ways we can.

“.....the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.....”.

Therefore:

*Made in the image of God*

***Let us dedicate our lives to serving Him***

So we bring before You, Lord, just some of the concerns that are uppermost in our hearts at this time.....

Thinking first of the scourge of racism, which pervades not only sport but so many other aspects of our society, we pray for all those who feel that they belong to minority groups and as such are despised and alienated. We think not only of those with a different skin colour, but of the increasing anti-Semitism around the world, evident in our own country, and of the many countries where different tribes and cultures are unable to live happily together, thinking of the Kurds, the Rohingya Muslims and the troubles in Northern Ireland as examples. Lord, help us to retrain our mindsets so that fear of difference is replaced with positive appreciation.

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As today's reading from Acts reminds us of the martyrdom of James, the brother of John, we call to mind the increasing persecution of Christians in our contemporary world. We pray that the light of Christ would penetrate the darkness of closed regimes such as North Korea and China and soften the hearts of individuals whose convictions about their own religions cause them to seek to eliminate Christians in so many countries - Iran and Northern Nigeria, to name but two. Lord, strengthen and comfort those who suffer for their faith and those who work to support them through organisations like Barnabas Fund and Open Doors.

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The Covid pandemic has brought the problem of poor mental health to the forefront. We thank You, Lord, that this is taking away the stigma that has kept the subject underground for so many years and enabling open discussion and admission of need, but we pray for more funding, provision of services, and support - not only for sufferers but also for those who work to relieve them. Lord, help us to be aware of incipient mental health problems in those we meet in our daily lives and how our friendship and time to listen may help to defuse them.

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We pray for our precious world and the environment as news of extreme temperatures and severe flooding hit our headlines, and warnings of environmental degradation are never far away. We pray that those charged with setting targets for change will have the conviction and sense of urgency to ensure that they are met; for those developing new, greener technology and, in our own West Midlands community, for the proposed new giant electric car battery plant in Coventry; and we pray for increasing awareness of how our lifestyles as individuals impact the earth and the willingness to make changes.

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We pray for the governments of all countries, of whatever political persuasion, that honesty and truth may prevail, and that they may be characterised by their single-minded desire to do the very best for those they serve. We recognise that the best of governments is continually faced with conflicting interests beyond human ability to resolve, so we pray for increasing openness to Your guidance, Lord, whilst thanking You for those prepared to take responsibility in leading their nations through difficult times. We pray that we may be strong in our support and wise in our criticism.

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Finally, we give thanks and pray for our family and friends, in the knowledge that it is strong and stable emotional ties that hold not only us as individuals together, but society too. May we rejoice together in each others' happinesses and successes and stand by each other in times of sadness and struggle. Let us pause for a moment to bring before God those we know who are struggling today, asking that they may be filled with His light and love.....PAUSE.....

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.....strong in the knowledge that, since the Son of Man has given His life as a ransom for many, the victory is already won!

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
Amen