

Prayers of Intercession

Eternal God, in our Gospel reading today, we notice that the crowds seemed compelled to follow Jesus and during his time amongst them many people asked the question ‘Who is this man?’ A great teacher, a healer they wanted to reach out and touch and a leader with compassion and understanding. Jesus had a strong connection with people and they were drawn to him and felt a sense of belonging.

Let us pray for our world today where many people seek a sense of belonging with frequent feelings of disconnection from others and where the issue of displacement is an enormous problem. Help those who have no permanent sense of belonging to look beyond people and places to a relationship with Jesus who welcomes everyone no matter who they are or where they come from.

Let us pray for ourselves and the life we share as followers of Jesus and the sense of belonging to Jesus and each other that imparts strength in our weakness and comfort in our moments of loneliness.

We take a moment to reflect on Paul’s words in Romans Chapter 8, verses 38 to 39: “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

Emily: Creator God, let us pray together for our natural world.

Evelyn: For the wonderful colours of the flowers and butterflies.

Emily: For the smell of the meadow and summertime and for the clouds that float by. We thank you.

Isabelle: We pray that we may be guided on all of our journeys and we pray that we may always be kind to others especially when they turn to us for help. **Emily:** We pray for all children who are about to begin their summer holidays. We pray for fun and sunshine and lots of time outdoors exploring your wonderful world. Amen.

We pray for the world you created and for the efforts being made to conserve its beauty. The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference is being held in Glasgow at the end of this year. Let us pray that leaders of all nations present will come together at this summit and beyond to protect our planet and commit to the crucial changes that are so vital for the future.

Let us reflect quietly on the words of **Isabelle’s poem: Belonging on our planet**

Belonging on a planet
 That is the home we all share.
 People and animals living together
 With incredible wonders everywhere.

 In which we see around us,
 Lovely, wide, open landscapes.
 Large, tall, green forests and scorching hot deserts
 And as the sun sets the mountains make dark shapes.

 We see the mighty oceans
 With the green sea turtles’ shell,
 That shimmers in the crystal clear, blue waters.
 With glistening fish and singing whales as well.

In which we see around us,
Colourful creatures of every kind.
A peacock's feathers and butterfly's wings
Are some of the details that I call to mind.

Belonging on a planet
That is the home we all share.
We can choose to live happily together
BUT we must remember the world's in our care!

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

Lord God, we give thanks that we belong to a nation where we are able to access healthcare. As more of our family, friends and neighbours receive their Covid-19 vaccinations, we give thanks that our loved ones have been offered some protection against this disease. Let our prayers go out to the poorest and most vulnerable communities across the world where there is little hope of a vaccine rollout. These people already face a lack of water, food, and healthcare and some are homeless. We pray for those who work with them offering their practical help, energy and vision.

We hold in our prayers those who are in need of your healing at this time in body, mind or spirit and especially those we know of. Heavenly Father, we pray for all those who have died in the faith of Christ. Give to their loved ones the strong comfort which no one else can offer and let them know the comforting power of the resurrection of your Son.

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

Loving God, we pray this morning for those who belong to other parts of our world and are struggling with war, poverty and despair. Over 30 million people in 20 countries are on the brink of famine. We pray for aid charities such as Christian Aid who are working tirelessly in some of the world's most vulnerable countries including South Sudan, Ethiopia and Afghanistan. These charities work with communities to prevent famine by delivering life-saving food and support to these people whose situation has deteriorated due to the international pandemic, violent conflict and the climate crisis. We pray for all those who have lost their lives in the violence in Israel and those who live in fear even in light of the recent ceasefire as airstrikes have renewed. We pray for longstanding peace for these peoples.

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

Lord, We pray for all those who suffer from loneliness. In light of the distressing fact that almost half a million older people in this country go up to a week without seeing or speaking to anyone remind us that we belong together and do not thrive in solitude. Many of these people are separated from loved ones by bereavement or distance. Help us to notice and show love to all of our neighbours remembering the importance of a warm smile or a friendly phone call.

And finally, let us listen to **Emily's acrostic prayer** about belonging:

Dear God,

Being beside Jesus always
Each one of us has your love.
Look upon us and let us know you are there.
Open our hearts to fill them with hope.
Never let us forget that you care.
Give us peace in our hearts. Amen

Merciful Father,

***Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.***