

Prayer points – April 2020



Resurrection journey

In this time of stress, we give grateful thanks for the sustaining message of Easter and for all that our Saviour has done for us and for our world: “For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.” We see reminders of his resurrection power in the beauty of the natural world all around us. As we look towards Easter in these troubled times may we find new spiritual depths within our readings and reflections.

“The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” John 14:26

Prayer for this time of Corona Virus

Creator Lord, on this earth, all things are made by you, and for you, including ourselves.

Be near to us now in our hour of need.

We pray your restraining hand on this virus – disturbing our land; our world.

To people of science – give clear guidance, and the ability to assess accurately all information.

To politicians and world leaders – bestow insight and discernment that they may be guided to make right judgements.

To those who worry about their loved ones – grant loving trust and your peace. Encircle all of us Lord.

To those who bear the responsibility of caring for others – bless them with health and necessary strength.

To overstretched doctors, nurses, and all who care for the sick – keep them well, and uplifted in spirit.

To those especially vulnerable to the virus attack, grant resilience and strength of body to resist undue harm.

To many today who are anxious and alarmed about the present, and the future - for whatever reason - bring quietness of mind and spirit, freedom from fear, and the practical help they need.

And for those currently suffering the disease, we pray for healing, and easing of symptoms and worry.

Amen.

Sylvia Walker

UN Climate Talks and National Commitments

The next major UN climate talks, known as COP 26, are due to take place in Glasgow this November. But will they – and should they – go ahead on that date? Or would it be better, in view of the pandemic, to postpone them until next year? That’s the question currently facing organisers. Some public figures [are calling for the meetings to go ahead, fearing loss of momentum](#). Others are suggesting that [it would be better to postpone](#), as countries trying to deal with coronavirus don’t [have the time to undertake the intensive environmental negotiations](#) and diplomacy that would help to produce successful talks. We pray for all involved with the decision-making process, asking God to give them wisdom to make choices that will be best for climate action.

Whether or not the COP talks go ahead, [a number of key Paris Agreement deadlines are set for 2020](#). One is the deadline for countries to upgrade their commitments to cutting carbon emissions by 2030. 2020 is also the target date by which countries are committed to raising \$100 billion a year in climate finance for developing countries. These commitments will be coming under heavy pressure because of the economic blows from the pandemic. Japan, the first major economy to submit its 2030 plans, has offered a submission that analysts [rated ‘highly insufficient’](#). We pray that despite current pressures, countries will understand that we cannot let fighting one crisis keep us from fighting another – and will make the commitments needed to address the climate emergency.

Psalm 57: 1-2

Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge;

in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, until the destroying storms pass by.

I cry to God Most High, to God who fulfils his purpose for me.

A haven – Reflection from Isabel Carter

During these strange, disconnected and troubling times, I give thanks for the nature that is close by. In normal times, I visit various different places to carry out bird, butterfly and invertebrate surveys as well as leading a busy life. Now I put my energies into what I see just where I am. As I see bumble bees or passing birds, now I have time to find out exactly what every insect actually is; time to watch each bird's behaviour for clues about whether it is nest building nearby. I've begun a nature diary, and while there is sometimes reference to what's going on in the outside world, it provides a haven to record all the hitherto 'unimportant' but amazing wildlife that live right next to me. Last week I learned about *Bombus terrestris* and Dark Winged bee flies, among various other treats. Thank you Lord for this opportunity to appreciate the truly local wonders of your creation, wherever we are.

Rebuilding well

The scale of change to our lives in the past few months has been unprecedented, and for many very difficult—we pray for the millions of people worldwide who are struggling to make ends meet as economies contract, and livelihoods are threatened. It's clear that as the crisis recedes, there will be an enormous need to rebuild. But will we simply be going back to old ways of doing things? Scientist Meehan Crist [notes](#): *"The efforts to revive economic activity — the stimulus plans, bailouts and back-to-work programs being developed now — will help determine the shape of our economies and our lives for the foreseeable future, and they will have effects on carbon emissions that reverberate across the planet for thousands of years"* Could this be an opportunity to move towards ways of living and working that are more climate friendly and foster a just transition to a healthier world?

What the past few months have shown us is that when a crisis is recognised as such – when people perceive the danger that threatens them and their neighbours - change is possible. Governments have instituted large-scale plans to protect their people, and citizens have taken action themselves to protect those who are vulnerable. We pray that as we consider the future, lessons learned during this crisis – about how to reduce travel, increase community, and value workers whose contributions are often ignored – will inform our thinking. We pray that the importance of early action to meet crises, and the opportunities for investment in clean infrastructure will be clear to individuals, businesses and governments, and will be at the heart of their thinking and financial planning. And we give thanks that some of this is already happening – as seen in the EU's commitment that [recovery plans will be consistent with plans for the green transition](#), and in the UK's [plans to emphasise low-carbon transport](#).

Part of a [meditation from Pope Francis](#)

For weeks now it has been evening... We find ourselves afraid and lost. Like the disciples in the Gospel we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm. We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other...

"Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" Lord... in this world, that you love more than we do, we have gone ahead at breakneck speed, feeling powerful and able to do anything. Greedy for profit, we let ourselves get caught up in things, and lured away by haste. We did not stop at your reproach to us, we were not shaken awake by wars or injustice across the world, nor did we listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet. We carried on regardless, thinking we would stay healthy in a world that was sick. Now that we are in a stormy sea, we implore you: "Wake up, Lord!"

"Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" Lord, you are calling to us, calling us to faith. Which is not so much believing that you exist, but coming to you and trusting in you. This Lent your call reverberates urgently: "Be converted!", "Return to me with all your heart" (*Joel 2:12*). You are calling on us to seize this time of trial as a *time of choosing*. It is not the time of your judgement, but of our judgement: a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others...

The Lord awakens so as to reawaken and revive our Easter faith. We have an anchor: by his cross we have been saved. We have a rudder: by his cross we have been redeemed. We have a hope: by his cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love.