

Prayers of Intercession, 21 June 2006

In the power of the Spirit, and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father.

Lord God, we pray for your holy Church throughout the world. Forgive us when we become like the branches that boasted of their own position. We confess that we often treat the Church as the tree itself, rather than a grafted shoot, sustained only by your grace. Remove all spiritual pride from our hearts. Help your Church to be a place of radical welcome, where divisions of left and right, east and west, insiders and outsiders, do not merely vanish, but are held together in tension by your grace. Teach us to lean into our differences with curiosity instead of fear, discovering your image in the very people we find it hardest to understand.”

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.** (Pause)

Almighty God, we look out at a world fractured by ideology, politics, and borders. We split ourselves into competing camps, each side convinced they are the chosen ones, the ones in the right. We pray today for world leaders and for ordinary citizens across the globe. Where nations and factions view each other as enemies, we ask you to break down the walls of hostility. Remind us that the boundaries we draw are invisible to you, and that every culture, nation, and people bears your divine likeness.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.** (Pause)

Creator God, we bring before you our own community, our workplaces, and our neighbourhoods. It is easy to love those who think like us, vote like us, and live like us. Give us the courage to follow Jesus’s directive to love those we call our enemies and to pray for those who oppose us. Help us to listen before we speak, to seek understanding across the divides in our own town, and to treat every person we encounter this week with the dignity due to someone made in your image.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.** (Pause)

Compassionate Father, we pray for all who suffer today, especially those whose pain is magnified by human division—refugees fleeing conflict, strangers facing anger and rejection, families torn apart by political strife, and all those who feel isolated or rejected by society.

Pour out your healing mercy upon them all.

In the stillness of this room, we lift to you those individuals known personally to us. Either aloud or in the quiet of our hearts, we name those who are sick, anxious, heavy-hearted, or grieving...

(Leave a generous, unhurried pause here, to allow time for names to be called out from the congregation. Once the room falls quiet again, continue...)

...Lord, we join our prayers for each person named here today, whether out loud or silently. Hold each one in your love, and use our hands, hearts and minds to bring comfort to all who feel discarded or forgotten.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.** (Pause)

Merciful God, we remember those who have died, who have passed beyond the artificial divisions of this earthly life into your eternal presence. We pray for those who have died recently, and those whose anniversaries fall at this time. Teach us to live our own short lives on this earth with eternity in view, knowing that your calling is irrevocable, and that your ultimate desire is to welcome us into your presence.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.** (Pause)

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who taught us to love without borders.

Amen.