

St Nicholas Church, Sighthill
9th May 2021

christian
aid
week
10-16 MAY

‘In times of extreme challenge, community is born when we stand together.’ Christian Aid began in response to the refugee crisis following WW2. In a time of weakness and crisis, the churches in the UK did not retreat into themselves and their own recovery but saw a wider need and responded.

For 75 years, Christian Aid has lived out the challenge to stand together with sisters and brothers across the world – one global family. As they look ahead to the next chapters and challenges, they invite us to join them in celebration, reflection and recommitment to the cause.

Christian Aid writes, ‘Coronavirus has brought our inter-relatedness into stark relief. The myth of ‘them and us’ truly shattered. These are lessons learned that we must take into our current and future work. With the backdrop of COVID and the climate crisis, the time for recommitment is now. Embrace the moment and build the movement!’

Short Film: ‘You are the Light’
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_RvP62ZRB8&t=61s

Opening Prayer: Love never fails

Even in the darkest moments, love gives hope. Love compels us to fight against coronavirus alongside our sisters and brothers living in poverty. Love compels us to stand together in prayer with our neighbours near and far. Love compels us to give and act as one.

Now, it is clear that our futures are bound together more tightly than ever before. As we pray in our individual homes - around the nation and around the world - we are united as one family. So, let us pause and find a moment of peace, as we lift up our hearts together in prayer. Amen

A prayer in times of isolation

‘For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come... will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.’ (Romans 8:38-39)

God of heaven and earth, during this time of declining isolation, but still apart from loved ones, distant from friends and away from our neighbours, thank you that there is nothing in all of creation, not even coronavirus, that is able to separate us from your love.

And may your love that never fails continue to be shared through our acts of kindness. Empower and use us to help your people, near and far and in all ways we can, to know the gift of a full and healthy life. Keep us all in your care and use us for your glory. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.

Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

Parable of the Sheep and the goats (Matthew 25:34-40)

Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

“Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

Vilia's Prayer 16 9

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hAhvuoDob50>

Brief reflection/ prayer points

Our reflection takes the form of five prayer points.

- First, join me, in prayer, to allow the words 'I was ... and you' in this parable to speak to us. Jesus says, we visited Him in prison, we fed Him and we clothed Him. The words, 'I was... and you' invite us to see and sense Jesus in others, whose needs we have been privileged to meet.

All: May we continue to open the door to Jesus Christ, in everyone we meet.

- Secondly, note that the people (mentioned in the parable above) on the King's right hand have in their lifetime, provided for the most basic of human needs in God's family. Furthermore, they have done it for 'the least'- not for the mighty and powerful, but for the least. One question we should ask ourselves as individuals and indeed as a community of faith is, are we selective in our giving of time, money, material or spiritual gifts? Prayers or even faith without action is not enough. As the counter-reformer and founder of the Society of Jesus, St Ignatius of Loyola said,

All: 'Love is found in deeds rather than in words.'

- Thirdly, this parable calls us all reach out to our sisters and brothers (in church and community) who are vulnerable or in need. In and with Jesus, we look at our lives and ask, how can we, the people of God, enhance the way we share our faith, gifts and time with others? We listen, in this portion of scripture, to way Jesus is spurring us on unmistakably to deeper faith,

All: greater compassion and the respectful sharing of His gospel, in word and through our actions.

- Fourthly, Jesus' identifies with the needy (referred to in the parable as 'the least') and asks us to imitate Him. As one man said, 'Christians exist to love God and to love all the people Jesus loves and for whom He died'. We may not be able to do much for others, especially those in need. But we can pray for them (or with them), reach out to them through acts of loving kindness, treat them with respect and help to promote their dignity.
- Lastly, during times like this of trouble and uncertainty, people often ask, where is God? How do we find him? With this parable Jesus provides the answer. He is everywhere and with everyone around us, especially those in need. He is with all

His brothers and sisters in suffering, grieving, hunger, prison and other locked places. We see Jesus in and through others and whatsoever we do to or for others in need, we do it unto Him –

All: for His glory and in a way that qualifies us to be for Him and with Him, here and hereafter. Amen

Christian Aid Song – Kingdom Come
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBCu_yGLC2o

Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession

Lord, we thought the human world had turned a corner in the pandemic, so we watch and listen with despair at the news from India and pray and hope the same will not happen in Papua New Guinea.

We name especially Yemen, Haiti, Syria, South Sudan and Tigray, Ethiopia but recognise that a quarter of the human world, the part which relies most on humanitarian aid, is being plunged into greater need and greater famine as the pandemic exacerbates shortages and stockpiling. Help each of us to understand our role during this second year of COVID19 pandemic and the SarsCoV2 variants.

We wait the outcome, as the G7 foreign and development ministers meet in London, after elections held here in the UK and continuing in India. Lord, we also watched in horror the bridge in Mexico collapse, the fatal stampede and crush of worshippers on Mount Meron, Israel, the flash flooding in Tarim, Yemen.

O God, you come to us wherever and however we might be. No matter how much we may not believe it, we are worthy of your love and grace. Therefore, we uplift to you all of our raggedy and incomplete prayers to you—the ones that fall from our lips, the ones that remain hidden within our hearts, our prayers for our loved ones, friends and community and the ones that we might not know how to articulate yet. Dwell within us, Holy One, and speak to us from that place where the deep calls to deep.

Final Hymn: Take My life and let it be...
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sss-g50Dw1Q>

Sending

Give us, Lord God, a vision of your Kingdom as your love desires, a world where the weak are protected, and none go hungry, a world where life is shared, and enjoyed by all, a world where all races, nations and cultures live in tolerance and respect, a world where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love. Give us the inspiration and courage to build your Kingdom here and now.



<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/give/ways-to-donate>