

Christian Reflection Liturgy for Day of Private Reflection

“... whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6: 6)

A TIME TO REFLECT ON THE PRESENT

Be still and know that I am God (Psalm 46:10)

- Take a moment to sit quietly and to rest in God's presence.

A TIME TO REFLECT ON THE PAST

For there is no distinction, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

- Take a moment to reflect on your thoughts, your words and your actions in relation to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. How have you 'fallen short'...
 - in acknowledging all the deep hurt and loss caused by the conflict?
 - in remembering those who still live on a daily basis with the consequences of the conflict?
 - in maintaining or nurturing attitudes that have the potential for negative impact on others and society?

A prayer

Loving and gracious God, I have often failed you and others, with my attitudes, my words and my actions. I humbly ask for your forgiveness. Help me to see, hear, and act, with your love and compassion for all your creation. Amen

REFLECTIONS ON SCRIPTURE

From the Psalms – Psalm 46

¹ God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should
change, though the mountains shake
in the heart of the sea;
³ though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.
⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of
God, the holy habitation of the Most High.
⁵ God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.
⁶ The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.

⁷ The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.
⁸ Come, behold the works of the LORD;
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.
⁹ He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
¹⁰ “Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.”
¹¹ The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

- Take a moment to reflect on the words of this Psalm.
How is this Psalm relevant to your own personal attitudes, actions and experiences?

From the Old Testament – Isaiah 43: 16-21

¹⁶ Thus says the LORD,
who makes a way in the sea,
a path in the mighty waters,
¹⁷ who brings out chariot and horse,
army and warrior;
they lie down, they cannot rise,
they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:
¹⁸ Do not remember the former things,
or consider the things of old.
¹⁹ I am about to do a new thing;

now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.
²⁰ The wild animals will honor me,
the jackals and the ostriches;
for I give water in the wilderness,
rivers in the desert,
to give drink to my chosen people,
²¹ the people whom I formed for myself
so that they might declare my praise.

- Take a moment to reflect on the words of the prophet Isaiah to the people of Israel, enslaved & exiled in Babylon.
What could you choose to let go of, 'not remember' or 'consider,' from the past?
How are you open to God doing 'a new thing'?

From the Epistles – Romans 12: 14-21

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. ¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰ No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

- Take a moment to reflect on the words of Paul to Christians in Rome.
How are Paul's words relevant to your own personal attitudes, actions, and situation?

From the Gospels – Luke 10: 25-37

²⁵ Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶ He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" ²⁷ He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." ²⁸ And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."
²⁹ But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰ Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" ³⁷ He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

- Take a moment to reflect on this parable of Jesus.
How is this parable relevant to your own personal attitudes, actions and experiences?
Who is your neighbour?
Who has been left by the roadside?
Who has passed by on the other side?
How could you respond to Jesus' words at the end of the parable?

A TIME TO REFLECT ON THE FUTURE

- Take a moment to pray:
for all those you know who have suffered deep hurt and loss caused by the conflict
for those who still live on a daily basis with the consequences of the conflict
for those who provide support and care to those most adversely affected by the conflict
for those who are able to publicly influence attitudes and actions: politicians, the media, teachers, and community leaders
for leaders of our churches and faith communities
for those who work to uphold and enhance everyone's right to life and quality of life

The Lord's Prayer

A Prayer for the Day of Private Reflection

Loving and gracious God,
I offer to you all my thoughts and reflections.
I ask that you will
empower me to be a source of strength to those most affected by the conflict;
challenge me to continue to reflect on the past and its consequences;
increase my understanding of other people's hurts;
transform my attitudes that could perpetuate conflict; and
help me to make a positive contribution to healing those hurts and the hurts of our society
Amen

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:7)