



CHURCHES TOGETHER IN  
JARROW

PRAYER DIARY

*LENT 2010*

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#### **Ash Wednesday: 17 February**

*And your Father, who sees what you do in private, will reward you. (Mt 6:4)*

The spiritual life is meant to be an adventure between the soul and God.

Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness. In your compassion blot out my offence. Wash me more and more from my guilt and cleanse me from my sin.

#### **Thursday. 18 February**

*If you lose your life for my sake, you will save it. (Lk 9:24)*

To follow Jesus, to live a Christian life, costs.

Lord, may everything we do begin with your inspiration, continue with your help and reach perfection under your guidance.

#### **Friday. 19 February**

*The followers of John the Baptist came to Jesus, asking, "Why is it that we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples don't fast at all?" (Mt 9:14)*

The function of religion is not to make life miserable. It is to teach us to live life well.

Lord, with your loving care guide the penance we have begun. Help us to persevere with love and sincerity.

#### **Saturday. 20 February**

*Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting in his office. Jesus said to him, "Follow me."*

*Levi got up, left everything, and followed him. (Lk 5:27)*

To be a Christian is to be a Missionary.

Lord, help us to be missionaries in the place in which we live, to our families, to our neighbours, to our friends and all our brothers and sisters, showing by our patience and courtesy the grace of Christ.

### **Sunday. 21 February**

*Jesus answered, "The scripture says that human beings cannot live on bread alone". (Lk 4:4)*

Talents and skills have been given for service, sharing with others so God may be known.

We pray for the people of Haiti struggling with the devastating effects of the recent earthquake that, despite the destruction around them, they may not lose hope and may find the strength to rebuild their lives. Lord, please guide the world to help restore Haiti and we pray that you will guide us so that we may offer our service in whatever way possible.

### **Monday. 22 February**

*And who do you say that I am? (Mt 16:15)*

Coming to know who Jesus is for us the central task of the Christian life.

God our Saviour, bring us back to you and fill our minds with your wisdom. May we be enriched by our observance of Lent.

### **Tuesday. 23 February**

*If you forgive others the wrongs they have done to you, your Father in heaven will also forgive you. (Mt 6:14)*

Now is the time to ask ourselves who has hurt us. Who do we ourselves have yet to forgive?

Father, look on us, your children. Through the discipline of Lent help us to grow in our desire for you.

### **Wednesday. 24 February**

*On Judgment Day the people of Nineveh will stand up and accuse you because they turned from their sin when they had heard Jonah preach and I assure you that there is something here greater than Jonah.*

*(Lk 11:32)*

We keep wanting proof that God exists, that Jesus is the Son of God. Why, like the Israelites, do we too fail to hear?

Lord, look upon us and hear our prayer. By the good works you inspire, help us to discipline our bodies and to be renewed in spirit.

### **Thursday, 25 February**

*Seek and you shall find; knock and the door will be opened. (Mt 7:7)*

The spiritual life is a gift for the asking but does not come without effort.

Father, without you we can do nothing. By your Spirit help us to know what is right and to be eager in doing your will.

### **Friday 26 February**

*Snare your food with the hungry and open your homes to the homeless poor. (Is 58:7)*

Christ has no hands but your hands to do his work today.

Today is CAFOD's Annual Family Fast Day so let us pray for CAFOD's work in helping the poor. We pray that together we may continue to strive for a fairer world, bringing bread to those who are hungry and hope to those who are oppressed.

### **Saturday, 27 February**

*Why should God reward you if you love only the people who love you? (Mt 5:46)*

If our hearts are really open to the world so must our doors and our time.

Eternal Father, turn our hearts to you. By seeking your kingdom and loving one another, may we become a people who worship you in spirit and truth.

### **Sunday, 28 February**

*And Peter said, "Master, how good it is that we are here. We will make three tents". (Lk 9:33)*

It is easy to assume that by praying alone we will arrive at the pinnacle of the spiritual life. But it is exactly then that Jesus is calling us to leave our little mountaintops to care for the world as He cared for the world.

Father of light, in you is found no shadow of change but only the fullness of life and limitless truth. Open our hearts to the voice of your Word and free us from the original darkness that shadows our vision. Restore our sight that we may look upon your Son who calls us to repentance and a change of heart, for he lives and reigns with you forever and ever.

### **Monday, 1 March**

*The measure you use for others is the measure God will use for you. (Lk 6:38)*

God did not create us for ourselves alone. We are meant to be the spirit of Jesus here and now, knowing that God will then bless us to the very degree that we have been a blessing for others. God our Father, teach us to find new life through penance. Keep us from sin, and help us live by your commandment of love.

### **Tuesday, 2 March**

*Bring good news to the poor, heal the broken hearted. (Is 61:1)*

In the path of life you do not go forward to meet God, but you walk with God.

We pray for Christian Aid that they may continue to challenge the causes of poverty not just the symptoms. Please, Lord, give them the strength to continue to work for a more just society.

### **Wednesday, 3 March**

*If one of you wants to be great, you must be the servant of the rest - like the Son of Man who did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life to redeem many people. (Mt 20:26)*

All around us people are in bondage to poverty, to persecution. To really follow Jesus we, too, must go where these people are and redeem them from their isolation and pain.

Lord, give us a generous heart, for whomever sows sparingly will reap sparingly; and whomever sows generously will also reap generously.

#### **Thursday. 4 March**

*If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets they will not be convinced even if someone were to rise from the dead. (Lk 16:31)*

The life of Jesus, who says to all of us, "Come follow me," is a life of service and resurrection for many. What more do we need to convince us that we ourselves must do the same for the poor of our time?

God of love, bring us back to you. Send your Spirit to make us strong in faith and active in good works.

#### **Friday. 5 March**

*"And so I tell you," Jesus said, "the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce the proper fruits." (Mt 21:43)*

Union with God means that we must come to see the world as God sees the world and we must respond to it with the same care, the same commitment to justice for the poor and persecuted as Jesus did.

Merciful Father, may our acts of penance bring us your forgiveness, open our hearts to your love, and prepare us for the coming feast of the resurrection.

#### **Saturday. 6 March**

*This man welcomes outcasts and even eats with them. (Lk 15:2)*

One of the signs that we are really following Jesus is that we find ourselves in places and with people we consider spiritually inferior - but maybe spiritually more honest - than we are. Then the grace of God is most at work, in ourselves as well as in them.

God our Father, by your gifts to us on earth we already share in your life. In all we do guide us to the light of your kingdom.

### **Sunday. 7 March**

*If the tree bears fruit next year, so much the better. If not, you can have it cut down. (Lk 13:9)*

The patience God shows with us as we make one mistake after another, as we ignore His call and forget His love, we are called to give to one another. Who needs your patient love right now?

Father, you have taught us to overcome our sins by prayer, fasting and works of mercy. When we are discouraged by our weakness, give us confidence in your love.

### **Monday. 8 March**

*Prophets are never welcomed in their hometown. (Lk 4:24)*

It is difficult to see the work of God in the familiar, it is hard to hear the word of God in the voice of those we know but it is only in the immediate that we can come to know God at all. It is time to find God in what is in front of us.

Lord, we thank you for your presence with us. Help us to know that in ignoring others we ignore you; that in serving others we serve you.

### **Tuesday. 9 March**

*If my brother keeps sinning against me, how many times do I have to forgive him? Seven? (Mt 18:21)*

The mercy of God is unlimited, eternal, unending. It has but one criterion in order to earn the mercy we need ourselves: that is the mercy we are meant to show to others. We are not meant to judge one another; we are meant to love one another.

Lord, you call us to your service and continue your saving work among us. May your love never abandon us.

### **Wednesday. 10 March**

*Do not think that I have come to do away with the Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets.*

*(Mt5:17)*

The will of God has come to humankind across the centuries and from age to age. What we have learned from our spiritual ancestors we are called to make present for our own generation as well.

Lord, during this Lenten season nourish us with your word of life and make us one in love and prayer.

### **Thursday. 11 March**

*Anyone who is not for me is really against me; anyone who does not help me gather is really scattering. (Lk 11:23)*

Those who do the will of God - from whatever nation or tradition or race or gender - are God's beloved and our companions on the way. We must not divide the family of God through religious prejudices.

Lord, help us to understand that when we have pity on the poor, we lend to you and when we give to the least, we give to you - a sweet smelling spiritual sacrifice.

### **Friday, 12 March**

*It is more important to obey these two commandments than to offer on the altar animals and other sacrifices to God. (Mk 12:33)*

Performing religious rituals while we make other things beside God the real gods of our life and loving no one but ourselves is far from what it means to be a religious person.

Merciful Father, fill our hearts with your love and keep us faithful to the gospel of Christ. Give us the grace to rise above our human weakness.

### **Saturday. 13 March**

*People told this parable to people who were sure of their own goodness and despised everyone else. (Lk 18:9)*

Only when we admit to ourselves our own weakness can we really come before the Lord of Mercy with confidence that mercy will be ours.

Lord, make this Lenten observance of the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ bring us to the full joy of Easter.

## **Sunday, 14 March**

*While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. (Lk 15:20)*

The Jesus who welcomes us with all our secret failures, all our lukewarm hearts, into the Kingdom expects us to do the same for those around us.

Father of peace, we are joyful in your Word, your Son Jesus Christ, who reconciles us to you. Let us hasten toward Easter with the eagerness of faith and love.

## **Monday, 15 March**

*None of you will ever believe unless you see miracles and wonders. (Jn 4:48)*

God sends us the miracles of life - love and joy, security and beauty - so that we might see behind those things. It is up to us to realise that these things are signs of the presence of God even here, even now.

Lord, we give praise and thanks to you for you redeemed us with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. Help us to live this day in your footsteps.

## **Tuesday, 16 March**

*And Jesus said, "Do you want to get well?" And the man said, "Sir, there is no one to carry me down." (Jn 5:6,7)*

Like Jesus, we are put here on earth to "carry one another down" through the hard parts of life, to heal one another's hurts, to fill one another's hearts with love.

Lord, we struggle with our broken and divided hearts. Bless us with your peace as we strive to look and act in honesty about ourselves. Strengthen in us the glimpse of the glory you hold in store for us.

## **Wednesday, 17 March**

*Love your neighbour as you love yourself. (Mt 22:29)*

It is time we stopped talking of despair and started living in hope. It is this hope that will bring about a new and better world.

We pray for people who are homeless throughout the world. We pray for the healing of our world so that the provision of a safe place to call home is a priority. Please help the Key Project in South Tyneside to continue with their practical application of loving our neighbour and reaching out to those in need.

### **Thursday, 18 March**

*Jesus said, "What I do speaks on my behalf and shows that the Father has sent me." (Jn 5:36)*

There is nothing we do that does not say something about who we are and what we want to be in life. The world is waiting for us, too, to be signs of the love of God.

Merciful Father, may the penance of our Lenten observance make us your obedient people. May the love within us be seen in what we do and lead us to the joy of Easter.

### **Friday, 19 March**

*On the third day they found him in the Temple, sitting with the Jewish teachers, listening to them and asking questions. (Lk 2:46)*

By listening and asking questions, by giving ourselves to the conscious pursuit of the spiritual life, we too grow in wisdom, age and grace. Then we are ready to do God's work God's way.

O Lord Jesus, I have received so much more than I could ever give. I am a debtor in great need of your grace, of your forgiveness, of your friendship and of the support of others.

### **Saturday, 20 March**

*Have you ever known one of the authorities or one Pharisee to believe in him? (Jn 7:48)*

In the end, we are all responsible for our own decisions, our own insights for our own decisions, and our own insights about Jesus.

O Lord Jesus, I have received so much more than I could ever give. I am a debtor in great need of your grace, of your forgiveness, of your friendship and of the support of others.

### **Sunday, 21 March**

*Whichever one of you has committed no sin may throw the first stone. (Jn 8:7)*

Everything is meant for our good: even sin. Once we confront the sin in ourselves there is no room for arrogance anymore, no room to be judgmental of others.

Lord God, your mercy triumphs over our justice and your divine justice reveals your kindness, mercy and love. Help us to be like you, in our dealing with others today.

### **Monday, 22 March**

*Whoever follows me will have the light of life and will not walk in darkness. (Jn 8:12)*

We all follow someone or something. The only question is whether or not we become better or worse for it, more full of light or mired in darkness.

Father of love, source of all blessings, help us to pass from our old life of sin to the new life of grace. Prepare us for the glory of your Kingdom.

### **Tuesday, 23 March**

*He who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone (Jn 8:29)*

To feel that we are alone in the dark places of life, to feel helpless in the face of what is happening to us is a frightening experience. But it is not a real one. The God who made us is in us and with us always.

Lord, bless us with true insight. Help us to look with clear eyes at all the ways in which we fudge our duty and avoid the truth about ourselves.

### **Wednesday, 24 March**

*I am telling you the truth: everyone who sins is a slave of sin. (Jn 8:34)*

It takes a lot of living to finally discover that each of us is in bondage to ourselves. It is our desires, our angers, and our arrogance that enslaves us, not anyone else.

Father of mercy, hear the prayers of your repentant children who call on you in love. Enlighten our minds and sanctify our hearts.

### **Thursday, 25 March**

*If I am doing the Father's work at least believe in the work I do. (Jn 10:37-38)*

Each of us is called to follow Jesus, to do the will of God. It is often unclear, often not easy, always a mystery.

Yet God is with us, blessing us, giving us strength, to do what we are being called to do.

Lord, come to us: free us from the stain of our sins. Help us to remain faithful to a holy way of life, and guide us to the inheritance you have promised.

### **Friday, 26 March**

*"John never worked miracles." the people said. "but everything he said about this man is true."*

*(Jn 10:41)*

It takes courage to speak our truths in the face of hostility and disdain. It takes strength to challenge public opinion. It is easier to be silent than to speak when speaking stands to isolate us.

Lord, grant us your forgiveness, and set us free from our enslavement to sin.

### **Saturday, 27 March**

*The chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where Jesus was, he must report it, so that they could arrest him. (Jn 11:57)*

Conscience formation is a profound and a necessary part of life. It enables us to distinguish holiness from expedience. When we turn our consciences over to authority - any authority - just because it is an authority, we run the risk of betraying Jesus for personal gain.

God our Father, you always work to save us, and now we rejoice in the great love you give to your chosen people.

### **Sunday, 28 March**

*He set free the man they wanted, the one who had been put in prison for riot and murder, and he handed Jesus over for them to do as they wished. (Lk 23:25)*

The ultimate Christian act is to risk our own comfort, convenience or even life for the sake of others. We recognise it when we see it in service personnel. We too often forget that we are called to do the same thing ourselves everyday of our lives.

Lord Jesus, you died for everyone, past, present and still to come. You did this that we might enter into the new justice of God and receive the forgiveness of our sins. We praise you for your love. We thank you for this gift. Amen.