



First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer – April 2017

When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.
John 19:30 ESV

Welcome to our April 2017 first Friday Call to Prayer. Our aim is to provide you with teaching that we trust will be an encouragement to you. We will also provide you with praise items and prayer requests coming from within ANiC, ACNA and the Anglican Communion.

We encourage you to set aside **the first Friday, April 7th**, as a day of prayer and fasting for the Church in these critical days, ideally gathering with other believers in your parish or region for corporate prayer at some point in the day.

Prayer Quotes

Converting our unceasing thinking into unceasing prayer moves us from a self-centered monologue to a God-centered dialogue.

Henri Nouwen (1932-1996)

Enter through the Torn Curtain

If you are a regular reader of these prayer monthly meditations, you may remember one from a number of years ago concerning the same subject matter – the torn veil of the temple. As I prayed about what the Lord would have me write for Easter 2017, I could not escape the sense that I was to use this vitally important message again, believing that it will find new open hearts and will lead to deeper intimacy with God.
G.V. Hunt

“And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.”
Matthew 27:51 ESV

It was enormous, and in its original design, was made of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen with decorative cherubim embroidered into the fabric. It was to be suspended with gold hooks on four posts of acacia wood overlaid with gold and standing on four silver bases.

To generations of God’s people, this curtain covering the Most Holy Place represented separation from the actual presence of God, caused by sin. Only the High Priest could enter behind this veil, and he only once a year on the Day of Atonement. The sacrificial system contained in the old covenant worship made people ceremonially “clean” but yet access into the very presence of God was withheld. The old system was merely a shadow of what was to come!

On the day that we call Good Friday, cataclysmic events took place and fundamental shifts were made in the spiritual world that are almost too vast to contemplate, yet alone comprehend. To try to describe these events seems almost trite because they are so far beyond my meager skills with language. But, on the basis of His covenantal love for the humanity He had created, Jesus, the only Son of God, allowed Himself to be put to death, an excruciating death, carrying on Himself the immeasurable weight and degradation of the total sum of our sin. The perfect sacrifice, the Lamb of God, satisfied the demands of the old system in one flawless act, making further ongoing sacrifices for sin obsolete. And the fate of the rebellious Lucifer and his fallen hosts was sealed for eternity.

For those disciples who were present at the scene, the unfolding events of the previous hours must have seemed so horrific that they would scarcely have noticed creation’s reaction to what was occurring. A deep, impenetrable darkness covered the land for three hours, somehow seeking to mask

humanity's darkest deed. Thunder, lightning, and massive earthquakes scattered the terrified onlookers. Giant rocks split in two, tombs opened and numerous "holy" people were raised from the dead and were witnessed in the city streets by many.

And then there was the temple veil, the curtain separating humanity from God's manifest presence and glory. With a piercing, ripping sound that perhaps no one heard, this giant curtain was torn asunder, from top to bottom, by the mighty hand of God ending forever the requirement of separation that our sin produced and ushering in a new possibility of fellowship and intimacy with God, totally unknown since the expulsion from Eden.

The writer of Hebrews puts it this way:

*Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the **new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain**, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.* Hebrews 10:19-22 ESV

And yet, sadly, some Christians remain in the Holy Place, the outer chamber, never daring to push through the torn veil into the Most Holy place, into intimacy with our God. Shame (remorse and embarrassment over the hidden decay in our lives) or Pride (sifting through the ashes futilely searching for some trace of our own righteousness) prevent us from dashing through the torn veil with a child-like joy and delight into the arms of a waiting, loving Father.

British author and Bible teacher, Roy Hession, writes in his study in Hebrews, *From Shadow To Substance*:

"Although historically the veil has been rent, something very much like it still seems to be there in our experience, excluding us from that more intimate fellowship with God. We had hoped that we would have found in our lives a much nearer place and a more real experience of His presence. Such an experience may have eluded us for so long that we are in danger of "settling for" the Holy Place, assuming that it is all there is in the Christian life. In that case, we might have to admit that the Christian life is hardly worth the enormous sacrifice that Jesus paid for it."

For those of us who believe in the power of prayer and are interceding on behalf of our Diocese, our Province and the Anglican Communion in these challenging days, it is increasingly imperative that we grasp the significance of the torn veil, and, as the writer of Hebrews exhorts, *"Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith"*. If we struggle with grasping this reality, let's ask the Holy Spirit to reveal it to us, moving it from simply head knowledge or mere theology to a central place of faith in our hearts.

Through no merit of our own, Jesus has opened the way for us into the very presence of God. As Ray David Glenn, the rector of St. George's, Burlington said in a sermon recently, *"God's love for you is so deep that He would rather die than spend eternity without you."* The torn veil is such a clear symbol of that reality. No longer need sinful humanity remain separated from a loving God!

As we meditate on His sacrifice this Good Friday, let's choose to not let anything stand in the way of our embracing all that He accomplished for us in His death – indeed, as our Communion liturgy so eloquently states, *"that we and all thy whole Church may obtain remission of our sins and all other benefits of His passion"*. And may your Easter celebration this month be filled with great joy and a fresh revelation of Christ's victory over even death itself. Amen!

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Praise God ...

- For the ultimate sacrifice that Jesus made upon the cross of Calvary for you and for me.
- For the incredible privilege that we can come boldly through the torn veil into the presence of Almighty God where we can delight in the joy of intimacy with Him.
- For the work God is doing in the life of our diocese and province: cleansing, restoring, transforming, healing and equipping.
- For the reformation God is working out in global Anglicanism – and the entire Christian Church. In the midst of chaos, He is building His Kingdom and refining His bride, the Church.
- For faithful Anglican Primates, bishops, clergy and laity – throughout the Communion – who are standing for truth even when their stand for Christ and His Word makes them targets of attack.

Confess if needed...

- For times where we have taken Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for granted.
- For losing sight of the cost of our own sin – the death of the Son of God.
- For not fully embracing the access that we have to the Father because the veil is torn.

Please pray...

- For our primate **Archbishop Foley Beach** (& Allison) – Pray for great wisdom, discernment, courage and strength as he gives leadership to ACNA and participates with other GAFCon primates from across the Communion.
- For **Bishop Charlie Masters** (& Judy) – Pray for our diocesan bishop as he provides guidance and leadership of ANiC. May God grant him renewed courage, wisdom and vision. Pray also for physical protection and good health in the midst of his heavy travel schedule.
- For **Bishop Don Harvey** (& Trudy) – Pray for Bishop Don in his roles as ANiC's episcopal vicar and senior chaplain to the ACNA College of Bishops.
- For **ANiC's suffragan bishops**: Stephen Leung (& Nona) and Trevor Walters (& Dede). Pray for discernment, energy and grace as they care for their clergy and congregations. Also pray for Bishops Ron Ferris (retired in Langley, BC) and Malcolm Harding (retired in Brandon, MB).
- For our **Archdeacons**: the Venerables Ron Corcoran (Vancouver Island), Dan Gifford (BC), Terry Lamb (Alberta & BC Interior), Paul Charbonneau (Ontario), Tim Parent (Ottawa Valley), Paul Crossland (Prairies), Michael McKinnon (New England, USA), and Darrell Critch (Atlantic Region & Quebec).
- For all **ANiC clergy** and families, especially those experiencing spiritual and physical attack.
- For **a major awakening**, a sovereign move of God in our churches and across our nations like has not been seen in our lifetimes. **Rise Up, O God** we pray. Intervene, O Lord, in the midst of our decaying culture and society! Raise up **an army of intercessors** who will call out to you for a mighty visitation of your power and presence! Send out **labourers into the harvest**, O Lord!
- Pray for God's anointing on the Ven Ron & Deirdre Corcoran's ministry, **Wounded Healers**, launched recently on the West Coast. May Christ's healing power flow to the hurting. Pray also for other ANiC-associated ministries, including **Anglicans for Life Canada** and the upcoming **March for Life** in Ottawa and provincial capitals.
- For the **Anglican Relief and Development Fund Canada** (ARDFC) whose project is helping the ACNA church plants in Cuba purchase a van. This van will meet transportation needs and provide a means of revenue generation to reduce dependence on external financial support.
- For **those who serve us and are in authority over us** – our police forces, our armed forces, our emergency responders, our municipal elected officials, our provincial MLAs, MPPs and premiers, and our federal MPs and Prime Minister.

- For those who are to be (or have been) ordained this month: **Patricia Brewin** (permanent deacon, April 2 in Marlborough, MA) and **Vince Otten** (permanent deacon, April 9 in Sarnia, ON).
- For **God's wisdom for world leaders** with regard to conflicts in the Ukraine, Syria, and Iraq, and European nations struggling to absorb refugees. Pray for the hundreds of thousands of refugees who are seeking safety and asylum in Europe and here in North America. Pray for those churches and communities that are welcoming refugees that they may be a witness to God's compassionate care, both by what they say and do.
- Pray for **protection of innocent civilians** – adults and children – who so often are the victims in today's warfare. Pray especially for the many Middle Eastern, Asian and African Christians who are brutally persecuted for their refusal to renounce their faith in Jesus.