

Prayers of the People

April 26, 2020

Holy God, we offer you our praise for the natural world suddenly bursting forth with life and renewal from the death-grip of winter. A welcome relief from the dark nights, cold earth, and biting winds of our lenten journey and the spiritual hard-scrubbing that left behind layers of grime beneath our feet. And yet, as ashes have given way to the verdant green of palm branches, it seems as though lent's finish line has been extended indefinitely. Lord Jesus, like those whom you accompanied on the Emmaus Road, these fearful and uncertain times have left us walking with our heads down. Stay by our side, Risen Christ, as we journey in between shadow and light, cross and empty tomb, despair and hope. Today, we proclaim: 'Christ is risen', and we admit we are afraid and disillusioned.

Christ our Comfort, we are reminded that, in flesh and bone, you took up residence in the hard places of human life. You experienced agony and loneliness in the garden and on the cross. In your passion, you conquered sin and death while demonstrating a love unfathomable for all of your creation. We pray now for all who suffer that they would encounter the weeping Christ in their midst:

For the people of Nova Scotia suffering through unspeakable horror and grief
For healthcare workers stretched beyond physical and emotional limits
For those breathing their last breath alone
For those left vulnerable in long-term care homes
For those unable to hold their grandchildren
For those who cannot hug their parents
For those who have lost a loved one and cannot plan their funeral
For parents juggling work and their children's daily education
For children missing their teachers, classmates, and playgrounds
For children who are unsafe in their own homes
For women who are unsafe in their relationships
For those missing their graduation ceremony and facing an uncertain future
For those suffering unemployment, loss of meaning and purpose, and financial hardship
For those faced with laying-off their employees or shuttering their business
For those who are pregnant and worried for their children's future
For those whose retirement plans are suddenly in doubt
For those with underlying health conditions
For those who are falling through the cracks
For those who cannot sleep
For those who are hungry
For those who are lonely
For those worrying about the 2nd wave

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Loving God, help us to lament with emotional honesty and to recognize when that feeling in our stomach is the Holy Spirit who groans with compassion for all of creation. Empower us, by your Spirit, to also live in the truth and power of the resurrection. Open our eyes to the mission you have given us to bring your shalom to a trembling world and to embody the healing and presence of Christ. We lift our hearts in praise for these signs of resurrection that surround us:

For the return of birdsong to our neighbourhoods
For the budding of leaves
For the beauty of our river freshly unwrapped from a blanket of ice

For the coming return of bees and flowers and produce
For windows cloaked in messages of hope and inspiration
For new demonstrations of kindness
For the gifts of relationship
For those uncovering what is most important
For women, once deprived of voting, now leading the world through crisis
For those placing the love of neighbour above individual liberty
For those fighting for economic justice and a more fair society
For those who serve in women's shelters and soup kitchens
For the donating of ventilators and PPE to those who need it most
For scientific discoveries that await
For ingenuity forged out of necessity
For the availability of technology to maintain connection
For the restoration of dignity to forms of labour that were once over-looked
For threadbare parents who make it through one more day
For the courage, compassion, and expertise of health care providers
And, for Christ who walks with us, feeds us, and imparts to us His very own life

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.
Amen.