

Mothers' Union Thursday Prayers, 17th August 2023

Topic: Ely Prayers

Time: Aug 17, 2023 10:30 AM London

Join Zoom Meeting

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Following in Christ's footsteps

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Welcome everyone to our Thursday prayers here in the Cathedral and those joining from home via the internet.

Introductory Prayer.

St Paul writes to the people of Ephesus 'Each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's Gift. **Amen**

We say together the Mothers' Union Prayer

Loving Lord,

We thank you for your love so freely given to us all

We pray for families around the world.

Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life.

Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship and in love and service reach out as your hands across the world.

In Jesus' name . Amen

and the Monthly Prayer

Your children come to you, loving God, confident of your goodness and mercy.

May the sacrifice of Christ, and his service among us teach us to live as servants to all.

As stewards of your generous gifts, may we bear witness to your goodness in our lives by the good we do as servants of all your children.

Blessed are you, God of all goodness. May our service give you glory as we pray now and always through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Our Reading Today is taken from the First letter of John chapter 2

Reading: 1 John 2: 3-6 – the focus on v6. From the Contemporary English Version

When we obey God, we are sure we know him. But if we claim to know him and don't obey him, we are lying and the truth isn't in our hearts. We truly love God only when we obey him as we should, and then we know we belong to him. **If we say we are his, we must follow the example of Christ.**

Reflection 'Following in the footsteps of Christ'.

A moment to think about what following in Jesus footsteps means to you.

Having been invited to lead this time of prayer and reflection, I too took a moment, several moments, indeed a couple days trying NOT to think about the poem Footsteps. If that thought came to you, try and lay it aside for the next five minutes.

The invitation in the letter is to follow the example of Christ, and to live the same kind of life he lived. And as we try, we are faced with the challenges in fulfilling that example. The writer goes on to remind the reader that there is nothing new here. The commandment to love one another is as old as the book in which Moses wrote about it and God's love for the Hebrew people. The writer is further putting the point that here is another way of looking at what Jesus was teaching. The question asked, is this a new commandment or a fresh way of looking at it and applying it to the new readers' life. Surely isn't that what we are encouraged to do every time we open the Bible or hear a lesson in church. What is God's word saying to me today?

Familiar themes of light and dark are introduced with the latter attracting a violent word hate for one who walks in darkness, stumbling unsure of which direction to go because total darkness is what blindness means. It doesn't have to be that way because the light, the true light is already shining, forcing out the darkness from our lives. Our challenge is found at the beginning of the reading. The writer addressing the hearers as children in the new Revised Standard version is most concerned that you, we, me, may not sin. The word may suggest a choice; the contemporary version demands that you, we, me won't sin. The choice is yours and mine. We know what is right and wrong. Right leads to light; Wrong takes us into the darkness of the abyss.

But all is well. Especially for those on the rocky road in the dark. There is someone to help who is ever present with God the Father and he is Jesus the Son. And through his death and resurrection our sins have been forgiven for all who believe in him. Not just for the community of the new Christian church but as the writer reminds us for the sins of the whole world. The love of God is best expressed through our lives, the way we live, the words we speak, the time we share with family and friends. Following in the footsteps of Jesus will need patience and example. In the beginning of Jesus ministry, he called twelve men from all walks of life to follow him and in the case of the fishermen to make them fishers of men; Inclusively it's now all people and as Jesus prepared to depart the earthly life, those same people were commanded to go out into the world to bring everyone into the faith of the Father Son and Holy Spirit. In the Message Bible it says 'the one who keeps God's word is the person in whom we see God's mature love. This is the only way to be sure we are with God. Anyone who claims to be intimate with God ought to live the same kind of life Jesus lived'. Following in the footsteps of Christ can perhaps be thought of in that fresh interpretation - The darkness is passing away and the light is already shining.

Time for prayer

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father, you have called us apart to share in a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer. Take our prayers we humbly ask, fill them with your love and power, and use them in the cause of your glorious kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

In our Intercessions today we pray for –

The Worldwide work of the Mothers' Union and our worldwide president Sheran Harper, our chief executive Bev Julian and all who work in Mary Sumner House. Our province of Canterbury and Kathryn Anderson, our Provincial President. For our Diocesan President Hazel Williams and Trustees and all task group leaders and MU members and all Clergy within the Ely Diocese.

In our Worldwide Links of the Mothers' Union we pray for:- Lusaka in Zambia; Shyogwe in Rwanda; Sokoto and Ikka in Nigeria; Karimnager in India; plus diocese to diocese with Kigali and Velore.

Our Wave of Prayer. Kasai in DR Congo; Shyira in Rwanda; Ijumu & Egba West in Nigeria; Liverpool in England and Sambalpur in India.

God our Father, be with us on our pilgrimage of Faith; be a companion for us along our journey, a guide at crossroads, a strength in our weariness and our defence against all our dangers, physical, mental or spiritual. Give us shelter on our travels, shade from the heat and be a light in our darkness.

Open our eyes to see your face in all we meet and open our ears to hear those crying silently in the wilderness. May we please you when we look upon your face on the day of Judgement. **Amen**

Praying in confidence as Jesus taught his disciples to say

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 trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us,
And lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
The power and the glory,
For ever and ever. Amen

We are a pilgrim people and our destiny is Heaven, as we travel towards the light of Christ, may we encourage one another through life's rough seas and stone filled paths.

All Stand for our Hymn, please join in at home:

He who would valiant be
'gainst all disaster,
let him in constancy
follow the Master.
There's no discouragement
shall make him once relent
his first avowed intent
to be a pilgrim.

Who so beset him round
with dismal stories,
do but themselves confound—
his strength the more is.
No foes shall stay his might,
though he with giants fight;
he will make good his right
to be a pilgrim.

Since, Lord, Thou dost defend
us with Thy Spirit,
we know we at the end
shall life inherit.
Then, fancies, flee away!
I'll fear not what men say,
I'll labour night and day
to be a pilgrim.

Closing Prayers

Go now and know that the Lord walks before you. Let him lead you each day into the quiet place of your heart, where he will speak with you. Know that he loves you and watches over you. Know that he listens to you in gentle understanding. Know that he is always with you leading the way. In hope and trust with the living God. Amen

We close by saying The Mary Sumner Prayer together:

All this day O Lord, let me touch as many lives as possible for thee, and every life I touch, do thou by thy spirit quicken, whether through the word I speak, the prayer I breathe or the life I live. Amen

Seeking God's blessing on our work today

As we step forth from this place, give us the Grace to be authentic witnesses to your love by our lives and proclaim you on our lips with joy. Help us to walk in newness of life with your blessings upon us, this we ask of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

We bid farewell until we meet again in this place or in our homes as we say the **Grace together:**

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forever more. Amen