

Thursday Prayers October 21st 2021

The link to join zoom is:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81975691267?pwd=ZS9EU284Y3piZlQ3b2c4c1NXSzk4Zz09>

(Passcode: 336639)

Topic: Ely Diocesan Prayers for Peace

Time: Oct 21, 2021 10:30 AM London

Women and peace Ely Diocese MU Prayers for October 2021

In conflict and war, the effects on women, however brutal, are frequently unrepresented and women's voices ignored in formal peace processes but the role that women play in both building and maintaining peace is vital. Many are members of the Mothers Union. This has recently been recognised by the appointment of Sheran Harper, Worldwide MU President by Archbishop Justin Welby to represent Anglicans on the board of Religions for Peace.

We start our prayers with our Thursday Prayer

Heavenly Father, you have called us apart to share in the world wide 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

This next prayer comes from: *Mothers Union 'Prayers and Recipes'*

Lord God,
Speak peace to the heart of Your world.
May Your Peace be commended of all the places of the world
where violence, war and injustice abound.

In the midst of all tumult
May Your World find peace and calm which passes all
understanding and which only You can give.

That by peace and justice,
the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
will have room in the hearts of all people.
To the honour and glory of Your name. Amen

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

Bible readings on peace:

While we all know the words from the Sermon on the Mount of 'Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons and daughters of God', there are some other verses not as often used:

Hebrews 12:14

14 Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

James 3:18

18 Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

Romans 12:17-18

17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. **18** If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

These, too, give us direction on why peace is so central to the life of a Christian.

Talk

Women can be powerful drivers of peace. Studies show that when women are included, the chance of a peace agreement lasting at least 15 years increases by 35%.

Evidence indicates that **women** participants in peace processes are usually focused less on the spoils of the war and more on reconciliation, economic development, education and transitional justice – all critical elements of a sustained peace

Women do ground-breaking work for justice, peace and security. Yet, they continue to be side-lined in formal peace processes. As conflict continues to affect every region of the world, urgent action is needed to ensure that women are part of peacebuilding, and their contributions are visible and valued.

Between 1992 and 2018, women were only 13 per cent of negotiators, 3 per cent of mediators and only 4 per cent of signatories in major peace processes.

However, women have played a role in peacemaking throughout history. Eighteen have been honoured with the Nobel Peace Prize. These include some well-known - Malala Yousafzai, Betty Williams, Mairead Corrigan but others including Tawakkol Karman of Yemen and Leymah Gbowee of Liberia less so. And we have just learned that one of the recipients of this year's Award is Maria Ressa a very brave journalist from the Philippines.

There have been millions of women whose lives have been committed working for peace, but remain unknown or forgotten. I would like to share with you the stories of two women who have done much to develop peace, but that I only learned about earlier this year.

BETTY BIGOMBE.

UGANDA had been ravaged by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and Joseph Koni forcing 80,000 children to become soldiers. As a young government minister BETTY BIGOMBE went unarmed 15 Km into the Northern Uganda bush to meet Koni's deputies. She said "You cannot start trusting your enemies overnight. You need time to build trust and work behind the scenes." After two years she met Koni himself. This led to a lull in fighting in Uganda and initial peace talks. Her courageous initiative and patient perseverance are an example of the goodwill that breaks down the enmity and prepares for mediation.

Betty went on to focus on gender and conflict, disarmament and child soldiers.

DARLENE KEJU

Darlene Keju, was a Marshallese activist. She was born on Ebeye Island in the Marshall Islands group in 1951. The Northern Islands where she grew up were downwind from Bikini and Enewetak atolls where the United States tested 67 nuclear weapons. She witnessed the evacuation of Regalap and Utirik Atolls after they were contaminated by radioactive fallout. Darlene is credited with bringing to the attention of the world the suffering of the Marshall Islanders as a result of the nuclear testing and that many more people were affected than acknowledged by the U.S. government.

When Darlene addressed the Pacific Plenary of the World Council of Churches Assembly, it was reported that *"Her impressive speech tore up the curtain of silence around the nuclear legacy in the Pacific (and) caused a wave that went as far as Europe, where it landed on the fertile ground of the anti-nuclear movement."* Darlene died at the age of 45 from cancer.

While our lives may not bring us into situations like those Darlene and Betty found themselves in, there are times when reacting in a peaceful way is important. Maybe it is in a family situation or in our parish or community.

It is important that we educate our children and grandchildren to also 'practice peace'. I will end with this poem, written by 12 year old Sheila Sakala of Zimbabwe

There is power in forgiveness
If you fail to forgive
You contaminate every relationship in your life
Watch out!
Others can initiate events or behaviour
But it is you who chooses how to react
Acknowledge history
Without being controlled by it
Be committed to resolve
Rather than perpetuate hatred
There is power in commitment to a peaceful world.

We will now have the **Lord's Prayer** followed by 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.

<p>Beauty for brokenness Hope for despair Lord in the suffering This is our prayer Bread for the children Justice Joy Peace Sunrise to sunset Your Kingdom increase</p> <p><i>Chorus: God of the poor Friend of the weak Give us compassion we pray Melt our cold hearts Let tears fall like rain Come, change our love From a spark to a flame</i></p> <p>Shelter for fragile lives Cures for their ills Work for the craftsman Trade for their skills Land for the dispossessed Rights for the weak Voices to plead the cause Of those who can't speak</p> <p><i>Chorus: God of the poor Friend of the weak Give us compassion we pray Melt our cold hearts Let tears fall like rain Come, change our love From a spark to a flame</i></p>	<p>Refuge from cruel wars Havens from fear Cities for sanctuary Freedoms to share Peace to the killing-fields Scorched earth to green Christ for the bitterness His cross for the pain</p> <p>Chorus</p> <p>Rest for the ravaged earth Oceans and streams Plundered and poisoned Our future, our dreams Lord, end our madness Carelessness, greed Make us content with The things that we need</p> <p>Chorus</p> <p>Lighten our darkness Breathe on this flame Until your justice burns Brightly again Until the nations Learn of Your ways Seek Your salvation And bring You their praise</p> <p>Chorus</p>
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We finish with this prayer and the Grace

Lord God, we thank and praise you for the gifts which you bestow upon your women peacemakers . From your Spirit flows the patience, energy, discernment, intuition, wisdom and vision which are required to do this work well. We ask for a continued strengthening of all these gifts for your women peacemakers in all parts of your world, and that each woman gifted in this way would reflect the glory of your reconciling power back to you. Amen.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen

Sue Claydon