

A COVENTRY COMPLINE

A candle is lit.

*We light a candle in the night
And pray for Coventry.
Hope lights our way, we hope and pray
For Coventry.*

For all who lived here, worked and prayed
And loved and sang;
For we have lived with you down all the years.
We give you thanks.

For those who came from mining towns,
Toiled in the dark with coal-grimed hands,
Who came in hope and shared their songs and smiles
We give you thanks.

For all who came from northern lands
From broken towns and silent mills
With hopeful hearts and longing for a home
We give you thanks

For all who came from Scotland, Ireland,
Worked, and made their home here
We give you thanks.

All built their hopes on Coventry,
But much more,
They trusted you, O faithful God,
Your never-changing, loving ways
And in your guiding light.

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But hope means lighting candle small
To push back darkness, fear and grief.

We thank you, Lord, for lights that blazed
All night in factories hard at work.

And when the city was on fire,
For men who crawled through broken bricks
To rescue families.

And as the eerie moonlight played
On city ruins, we give you thanks
For nurses, mothers, all who never
Gave up hope.

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When war was done the beacon shone
Undimmed from Coventry,
A kindly light in nation's gloom
That beckoned many people here
From Caribbean and Indian shores
To make their home, and work, and build.
For all who came from Africa
And many, many places more
We give you thanks.

Then our Cathedral rose from flames
And ashes, phoenix-like with cry
Of "Reconciliation!" "Peace!".
Still lights of many hues lead on
Past rock, rough-hewn from Bible lands
As guiding lights lead children on their way;
And there's a shining angel waits
To solace with her cup our pain.
In Unity's chapel still our prayers are raised
For warring nations, and by sinful men
And ever from that holy place a voice
Cries "Reconciliation!" "Peace!"

We thank you for the headlights' beam
From million cars we built right here
Those fruitful years.
Did God prepare a city for us?
We blossomed here.

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Then Motor City's day was done
As Coventry wandered in the dark
But still your face shone on us, Lord.
Your guiding light brought others here
To share one continent with us.
They came in hope, for them we give you thanks.

And as the Christ-light shone from hearts
We opened doors to war-torn lands,
To frightened children, damaged minds.
We give you thanks.

And now the skyline's all lit up
With little rooms, in beehive cells.
Thank you for all who study here
And build good lives.

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And yet, surrendered knives once gleamed
As clothing for an angel form.
Lord, may we now surrender hate,
Division, violence, drugs and crime
That she stands witness to.

For we have known the city streets
Fall silent, empty shops and pubs
Fear in the eyes, and masks on every smile
Our homes were lonely and we lived our lives
Six feet apart.
We waited for a wave
Of sickness, death and blight

We could not sing, we could not speak.
We felt so lonely, scared and weak
As virus raged on, totally unseen.

Those lines, shown nightly on a chart
Were people dearest to our hearts:
Six hundred loved ones, may they rest
In light divine.

Six hundred, walking Coventry's streets
And going down town on the bus
To shop, or work or have some fun,
From Canley, Holbrooks, Keresley Green.
They're not here now.

But still we lit a candle small
To push back darkness, fear and grief
And still we prayed that Coventry would pull through.

O faithful God! You heard our prayer!
Christmas was cancelled, then, as we
Trudged on through dreary days at turn of year,
The light broke through, hope was renewed
The vaccine came!
So now we open doors a chink
To marvel at the springtime sun
And wonder, can we venture out?
What kind of world awaits us there?
How can we build anew?

The only thing that we can know
And build our hopes on, Lord, is you;
For you have brought us here to work,
Raise families and worship you.
You saw us through the years of war,
The years of boom, the years of blight,
The year of pestilence.
He, who has promised, faithful is.
We don't build castles in the air.
We hope, we trust, because of who you are.

What shall we build? We must have jobs,
And proper jobs, not slaves on bikes
Boxes on backs, laden with zero hours,
Working all hours and still can't make ends meet!

Let's build electric cars and see
The lightning flash of electricity
Light up our path;
Electric taxis, buses, vans
And charging points, and batteries!
O let's develop technology
And show the way!

Thy kingdom come, O Lord thy will be done!

We must have homes we can afford,
Where we can raise our families.
Help us rebuild society
In righteousness.

The righteous city, wisely governed,
That cares for children missing school
And families needing homes,
For workers needing decent jobs,
That cares for homes and hospitals
And does it properly,
Rewards all those who care for others
And does it generously,
Cares for the planet you have given
And does it wisely

The faithful city, long foretold
In pages of Isaiah's vision,
Where people of all faiths, and none
Can praise the God who brought them through
Those cold, dark times.
For some can name the God they serve
And some find hope in Nature's ways,
While others trust in human strength.

But all of us have watched the flame
As our own candle pushed back night.
We give you praise.

O let us in compassion's light
And in your wisdom make all new
A wisdom pure and peaceable,
Not politics, or playing games,
No scoring points, O let us work together!

Thy kingdom come, O Lord thy will be done!

Three hundred families sleep tonight
In shoddy B & B's, no space to move;
No internet while schools are closed
Nowhere to even wash the clothes!
God help us, this should never, ever be!

And what of those who slept outside?
We "kindly" took them off the streets
And found them somewhere warm and safe where they
Could eat, and sleep, and get the help they need
To rebuild lives.
So - shall we now just turn them out?
We haven't anywhere for them? No way!
Lord of the Universe, who tramped
The dusty roads for gospel's sake,
Now make a way!
And shine a light that we may lead them home.

Let's rise and build, regenerate
The city wastes. O what a vision!
The River Sherbourne flows
Through city centre, sparkling bright,
The river whose streams make glad the city of God!
Our city is your holy place.
You dwell with with us; the city shall not be moved.
The blackest night is gone, and dawn
Creeps o'er the city skies. O help us see
That you refresh us in its healing streams.

Thy kingdom come, O Lord, thy will be done!

Some of us thought our end was near
And some thought endtimes now were come;
For we destroy the earth, forgive us Lord.

So let us harness wind and wave
And bounteous sunlight for our power
And your creation we'll despoil no more.

Thy kingdom come, O Lord, thy will be done!

So now we stand at break of day
And still we hope, and still we pray
This is our prayer:

That you will help the place we love
To rise, and shine out once again,
To celebrate all that we are
In Culture Year.

For battle-weary hospital staff
And cancers that have not been found,
For thousands waiting surgeon's knife
We pray.

O Daystar, after blackest night
Pour on us all thy healing light.
Bring lasting health.

Light of the world, show us the way
To rise and build, to care and pray.
Restore prosperity.

*Save us Lord while waking
And guard us while sleeping
That awake we may watch with Christ
And asleep may rest in peace*

And God bless Coventry

Amen