

Bishops take the knee



On the 8th June, the Bishop of Coventry, the Right Reverend Dr Christopher Cocksworth, and the Bishop of Warwick, the Right Reverend John Stroyan 'took the knee' in front of the Charred Cross in the Cathedral Ruins to mark two weeks since the death of George Floyd in the USA and to support the Black Lives Matter movement.

Before kneeling for 8 minutes and 46 seconds (the length of time a US police officer knelt on George Floyd's neck), the Bishops recited the Coventry Litany of Reconciliation.

You can watch the full video on the diocesan website www.coventry.anglican.org/bishops-take-the-knee.php



Prayer Diary

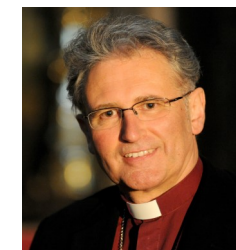
July 2020

'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.'

I've relied on the Lord's Prayer during this time of lockdown. It's sustained me in my own times of prayer and I've found myself leading others in praying the Lord's Prayer at almost every meeting that I've led on Zoom.

Every phrase has taken on a poignancy and power that seems to address the exact conditions in which we find ourselves. Now has most certainly been the time to pray for God's kingdom to come, for God's will for peace, healing and hope to be done on earth. When so many are suffering, and millions going hungry throughout the world because of the virus, praying for daily bread takes on a renewed urgency. And the same applies to every petition of the prayer, right through to its last, when, in the grip of an unseen enemy snaking through the world, wounding those who once seemed strong and killing the most vulnerable, our hearts are moved to plead that we are delivered from evil.

For me, though, it has been the first word that Jesus put upon our lips in prayer that has kept me going. Deprived of all those means of grace that have sustained the Church through the centuries since the earliest days when the first believers 'devoted themselves to fellowship and to the breaking of bread' (Acts 2.42), we have still been able to pray, 'Our Father'. Though separated in body, we are bound together in spirit by the Holy Spirit into the one Body of Christ – the Body that knows no boundaries through time and space, the Body that will for ever hallow God's name, the Body that puts its trust in the kingdom, the power and the glory of God that will prevail in every condition of human history.



Bishop Christopher

2020 Spirit Vision

At 6pm on Sunday 31st May, the Diocese of Coventry hosted a virtual Pentecost Praise service called 2020 Spirit Vision.

The service premiered on the diocesan YouTube channel and Coventry Cathedral's Facebook page and featured many different people from churches across the diocese.

The Dean of Coventry, John Witcombe introduced the service, with Laura Seago, churchwarden at St Mark's Fleknoe, and the Revd Alison Evans, Vicar of Holy Trinity, Attleborough, presenting.

There was worship led by Coventry Cathedral Chorus, St Mark's Coventry and a special rendition of Bethel Worship's 'Spirit Move' by churches from across the diocese. Bishop Christopher and Bishop John both spoke and prayers were led by the Offchurch Group.

2020 Spirit Vision was the diocese's first virtual celebration of Pentecost and so far the service has attracted over 1000 views.

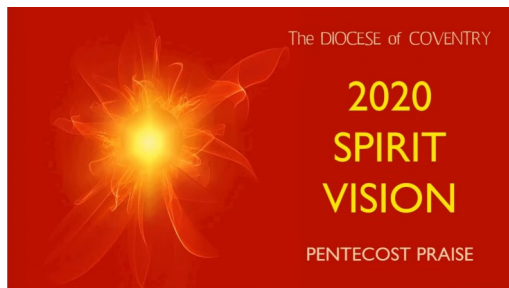
Commenting on the impact the service had on him, Bishop Christopher said:

"I had really felt the loss of the Church not being able to gather together today to celebrate our birth in the pouring out of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. But the service lifted me high in joy and deep gratitude for all that God is doing among us, and for the wonderful people the Lord is using for his purposes."

Archdeacon Missioner, Barry Dugmore also said:

"[My wife] Suzanne and I felt our hearts warmed with the fresh touch of the Holy Spirit and encouraged with the reality that the Spirit of God is a missionary Spirit whose love and presence cannot be contained."

If you missed the service you can watch it on the diocesan website.



I cannot breathe

by Oyin Oladipo

Strip me of this accursed Black skin, I want
to live in peace!
I watched this video with emotions I can't
describe.
But, American why? England, why?
I watched this fully aware that I am Black,
living in a White world.
I am Black, in a white college.
I am Black, in a white country.
I am Black – and to many I am wrong!
For this, I cannot breathe.

For how long will this injustice prevail?
Slavery, oppression, repression, murder...
genocide.
Does God ever curse the oppressors of His
people?
Or, does He simply look away?
If this is the God of the Exodus, isn't it time
he drowns Pharaoh?
Isn't it time he destroys Pharaoh's army of
brutal oppressors?
If only for a moment, to allow me to take the
breath of life.

But, nay – this white-washed, blue-eyed
Jesus
appears to side with the oppressors – is He
the oppressor!
They have changed the hew of his skin,
changed His hair and changed the colour of
eyes.
He belongs to them, and they are His op-
pressors.
How can I believe when I cannot breathe?

I cry at the death of my people.
I weep beneath the weight of hopelessness
of being brown, labelled black, somehow –
being born wrong.
Strip me please, strip this accursed melanin
off of me;
for a chance to live in peace,
I'll willingly shed this skin,
for a chance to breathe.

But, I cannot breathe,
my life is like a wobbly, fluttering flame to
be snuffed out.
I have no power, I cannot breathe;
I die daily at the hands of those who hold
the guns,
who hold the power, who hold the wealth,
who hold the Bible.

I cannot breathe, because I am Black,
this White man's knee remains ever con-
stant on my neck,
blocking my airways, stifling my screams,
ignoring my pleas,
I cannot breathe.

I cannot breathe, I cannot breathe.
God of my ancestors – where are you?
God of the heavens where are you?
As for this blue-eyed Jesus,
He and his comrades, they are silent,
And, their eyes have looked away.

I...cannot...breathe.

Fri 24

Mappleborough Green C of E Primary School. Headteacher: Alex Finch. We pray for God's blessing upon all the children, teachers, staff, governors and the wider school community.

Sat 25

James the
Apostle

Two months after George Floyd was murdered by police officers in the United States, we pray for the Black Lives Matter movement. We pray for an end to racism in this country. We ask God to help us, as the Church, to learn from past mistakes to be a people who are welcoming to all.

Sun 26

Seventh
Sunday after
Trinity

We pray for the Archdeacons team under the leadership of Archdeacon Pastor, Sue Field and Archdeacon Missioner, Barry Dugmore.
*Anne and Joachim, Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Mon 27

Beaudesert with Henley-in-Arden and Ullenhall. Clergy: John Ganjavi. Readers: Malcolm Aldridge, Warwick Rogers. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.
*Brooke Foss Westcott, Bishop of Durham, Teacher of the Faith, 1901

Tue 28

Heart of England Benefice. Clergy: Peter Walker, Michael Godfrey, Fritha Middlemiss. Reader: Judith Meehan. Link Worker: Sarah Folkes. We thank God for online services, Messy & Traditional Worship, and for last year's numerical growth at Bidford. Please pray for wisdom moving out of lockdown and the right appointment for a House for Duty priest at Salford Priors

Wed 29

Arden Valley Parishes. Clergy: Richard Mutter. Readers: Judith Cox, Joan Wilkinson. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.
*Mary, Martha and Lazarus, Companions of Our Lord

Thu 30

On World Friendship Day, we thank God for the gift of friendship and pray for our friends. We remember those people who struggle to make friends or who have lost important friendships recently. We pray for new opportunities for friendships to begin, develop and flourish.
*William Wilberforce, Social Reformer, 1833

Fri 31

The Alcester Minister Parishes. Clergy: Adrian Guthrie. Sue Henwood. Readers: Julie Lindsay, Gill Laughlin, Pat Newbold. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.
*Ignatius of Loyola, Founder of the Society of Jesus, 1556

Cycle of Prayer - July 2020

With a focus on parishes and schools in Alcester Deanery

Wed 1

We thank God for the eleven deaneries in our diocese and the positive impact Deanery Synods have.
*Henry, John, and Henry Venn the younger, Priests, Evangelical Divines

Thu 2

This month is Plastic Free July. Plastic Free July is a global movement that aims to encourage millions of people to be part of the solution to plastic pollution - so we can have cleaner towns, cities, countryside and oceans. Many people will be choosing to refuse single use plastic through July. We pray for this initiative.

Fri 3

Thomas the
Apostle

Coughton C of E Primary School. Headteacher: Adam Walsh. We pray for God's blessing upon all the children, teachers, staff, governors and the wider school community.

Sat 4

As we approach the end of the academic year, we thank God for Linda Wainscot as she retires from her position as Diocesan Director of Education. May God bless her in her retirement.

Sun 5

Fourth Sunday
after Trinity

Arden Marches Group. Clergy: Kate Mier, Dan Corlett. Readers: Sue Ludlow, Joy Holland, Joan Lock, Alan Greathead. We thank God for significant numbers of people gathering for live online worship, and for a service of healing prayer in June. We pray for boldness, imagination and love as we reach out and witness to our faith in our communities.

Mon 6

Temple Grafton C of E Primary School. Headteacher: Sarah Hendry. We pray for God's blessing upon all the children, teachers, staff, governors and the wider school community.
*Thomas More and John Fisher, Reformation Martyrs, 1535

Tue 7

Alcester St Nicholas' C of E Primary School. Headteacher: Adam Walsh. We pray for God's blessing upon all the children, teachers, staff, governors and the wider school community.
We pray for the Bishop's Council which meets today.

Wed 8 We thank God for the provision of the Mission Fund and for the support it has offered to many churches and deaneries in their projects and efforts in mission. We pray for continued access to support, and enthusiasm for making new disciples in all areas of this diocese.

Thu 9 Dunnington C of E Primary School. Headteacher: Fiona Templeton. We pray for God's blessing upon all the children, teachers, staff, governors and the wider school community.

Fri 10 Salford Priors C of E Primary School. Headteacher: P Dhugga. We pray for God's blessing upon all the children, teachers, staff, governors and the wider school community.

Sat 11 Wilmcote C of E Primary School. Headteacher: Liz Banyard. We pray for God's blessing upon all the children, teachers, staff, governors and the wider school community.
*Benedict of Nursia, Father of Western Monasticism, c.550

Sun 12 We pray for the Cathedral's work with children: for more ways to explore faith with our young choristers and for all those children who visit as part of our schools' programme and for those who will come with families during the school holidays.
Fifth Sunday after Trinity

Mon 13 We pray for clergy who are currently taking a sabbatical, and for those who are planning one during the next twelve months. We pray that these sabbaticals will bring refreshment, renewal and a re-focus of ministry.

Tue 14 Wootton Wawen C of E Primary School. Headteacher: Marion Jones. We pray for God's blessing upon all the children, teachers, staff, governors and the wider school community.
*John Keble, Priest, Tractarian, Poet, 1866

Wed 15 July is the Samaritans' 'Talk to Us' month. The aim is to raise awareness that the Samaritans are available 24/7 to listen to people talk over the phone on 116 123. We thank God for the life saving work of the Samaritans.
*Swithun, Bishop of Winchester, c.862
*Bonaventure, Friar, Bishop, Teacher of the Faith, 1274

Thu 16 Studley St Mary's C of E Academy. Headteacher: M Ireland. We pray for God's blessing upon all the children, teachers, staff, governors and the wider school community.
We pray for the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches.
*Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury, 1099

Fri 17 Claverdon, Preston Bagot and Wootton Wawen. Clergy: James Holden. Reader: Norrie Moore. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.

Sat 18 This week is Love Parks Week 2020. We thank God for local parks and the joy they bring, particularly during this period of lockdown. We pray for park keepers, gardeners and cleaners who work hard to maintain and protect parks.
*Elizabeth Ferard, first Deaconess of the Church of England 1883

Sun 19 We pray for safe travel for all those going on holidays this summer. Please give care and wisdom to all responsible for carrying passengers on public transport.
Sixth Sunday after Trinity
*Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, and his sister Macrina, c.394 and c.379

Mon 20 Aston Cantlow. Clergy: David Benskin, James Holden. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.
*Margaret of Antioch, Martyr, 4th century
*Bartolomé de las Casas, Apostle to the Indies, 1566

Tue 21 Wilmcote with Billesley. Clergy: David Benskin. We give thanks for the working of the spirit in fostering links between church and school. Children and staff have now come see the church as their spiritual home. We pray for new ways of being church in the future. We pray for encouragement when trying new ways and that these initiatives be received with wisdom.

Wed 22 Henley-in-Arden C of E Primary School. Headteacher: Adam Walsh. We pray for God's blessing upon all the children, teachers, staff, governors and the wider school community.
Mary Magdalene

Thu 23 Bidford on Avon C of E Primary School. Headteacher: Andy Simms. We pray for God's blessing upon all the children, teachers, staff, governors and the wider school community.
*Bridget of Sweden, Abbess of Vadstena, 1373