SUNDAY, 11 February 2024, 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings: 2 Kings 5:1-14; 1 Cor 9:24-27; Mark 1:40-45

*Let us pray for the church and the world, giving thanks for God’s goodness*

O God, you send us over the earth to flourish; to make places of exile, a promise of home. May we celebrate our beginnings. Some of our stories reach back generations, and others have tender roots; many made this journey as exiles, refugees, tossed by uneasy winds, struggling to reach freedom’s shore. But we share a common story, and we meet it on the sidewalk, in church or the grocery store line. We find we’re no longer strangers but friends. We pray for cities, that all nations might dwell in peace; for Aotearoa and its people: for the lessons we have learned, and all that remains for us to do. We pray for families, for those rich with friends and those who live in poverty or alone. May we live not as spiritual exiles, but as followers of Jesus, whose life lives in us.

God in your mercy
**hear our prayer.**

O God, your Son embodied compassion, and walked among the sick and abandoned, the children in their innocence, and those exiled from their communities by fear of their differences. Help us not to burden one another. Bring down that same healing love that calls doctors and nurses, artists and builders, childcare workers and teachers, farmers and landscapers; architects and healers of the soul. Help us create a fair and just society. With gratitude, we pray for all who care for others, and the earth. May they serve with kindness and integrity. We pray for +Justin our bishop, for discernment in naming a new assistant bishop, giving thanks for the willingness to serve.

God in your mercy
**hear our prayer.**

“You who work by Christ’s side and share his great love, you who touch with his hands and feel with his heart, his blessing is yours, his joy to the end. Take it. Hold it. You are his friend.”\* We pray for those helping the desperate and neglected, for the war-torn in unending danger; and for any whose work seems invisible, that they may be watched over, protected, safe. We pray for women in childbirth; may they welcome their child with joy; for parents grieving, that they may find resilience and hope. We pray for those nearing the end of their days, that their lives will reveal bright threads of love and meaningfulness, for no soul sinks below God’s horizon. Name us, heal us, gentle God; release us from our pain. Blaze in our hearts, you who are Love itself.

God in your mercy
**hear our prayer. Amen.**

*Sources: NZ Prayer Book; NRSV Bible; \*G Kernewek, in P Robson, A Celtic Liturgy; J Morley, All Desires Known; J Pritchard, Intercessions Handbook; A Prayer Book for Australia; NEB Starr, prayers*.