

Together We Pray

SUNDAY 29 October 2023, 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings: Deut 34:1-12; 1 Thess 2:1-8; Matt 22:34-46

Let us pray for the church, and for people of every faith; let us pray for peace.

Heavenly God, look down on our world, so full of danger and sorrow it is like a dark storm eclipsing our everyday joys. We pray for exiles and refugees, for people fleeing violence for peace and an end to hatred. We pray for the people of Israel and Gaza, and for Ukraine – for civilians and the young, entangled in wars they didn't choose and cannot escape. We pray for all mothers, all parents, and families of every kind; for villages torn apart, and relatives grieving. We pray for victims of earthquake in Afghanistan; and for violence in our own land, and damaged relationships. In the midst of this brokenness, we pray for the wounded and lost, forgotten and hurt. May the presence of Christ console all who suffer, and bless them.

God of hope

hear our prayer

Loving God, you have planted beauty and peace on these islands. We are so thankful. Remind us there are many who live a different reality: deprived of food, water or the chance to live. Let it be our task to share, to stretch our tents and include another; we think of all whose task it is to gather people together. We pray for our diocese and our bishop, +Justin. May we be like light on a dark day, and live not as spiritual exiles, but as followers of Jesus.

God of hope

hear our prayer

Enlarge our hearts, dear God; give us courage to enter a new territory, a place of shalom and welcome, one smile or gesture at a time. We share threads of a common story, one God; many of us meet this on the sidewalk or the grocery store line. Ours is the story of God's Son, born thousands of years ago in a faraway city, with its winding streets and fractured patchwork of religions. We pray for all in need of a saviour. We pray for ourselves.

God of hope

hear our prayer

God of all gentleness, unsettle our ordinary prayers, reach into our silence. Change our lives by love, until we only make sense as a prayer to you.* **Amen.**

*Sources: NZPB; NRSV Bible; *Stanley Hauerwas, Prayers Plainly Spoken; Anne Lamott, Almost Everything; Episcopal BCP; Janet Morley, All Desires Known; NEB Starr, prayers.*