

ST. PHILIP'S MILFORD PRAYER CIRCLE



Prayers for Freedom - the end of Human Trafficking

Thursday, February 09, 2023

“Because you are precious in my sight, and honoured, and I love you.” (Isaiah 43:4)

Elizabeth: Human trafficking is the recruitment or movement of a person by deception or coercion for the purpose of exploitation. People are bought and sold for sexual exploitation, forced labour, street crime, domestic servitude, or even the sale of organs and human sacrifice. Human trafficking denies basic human rights to millions of women, children and men globally.

Let us centre our hearts and minds in preparation to pray for victims, perpetrators, and all God's children effected by human trafficking.

READER: **Our Psalm today is number 22, from the Resources for Freedom Sunday¹:**

The following is a paraphrase of Psalm 22. It is meant to be recited by either one female voice or, preferably, several diverse women's voices representative of oppressed communities and populations, however at St. Philip's, each individual voice is considered equal in influence, authority and capacity, therefore we will recite this in the round.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me and are so far from my cry for help? O my God, I cry by day and by night, but you don't hear me. I can't sleep. But you are the Holy Creator.

*(Pause)...***Lord, have mercy.**

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

READER: Our ancestors put their trust in you; they trusted, and you kept them safe and guided them. They cried out to you and you helped them; they trusted in you and had no reason to feel any shame. But as for me, I am a worm and barely human anymore, cast aside by the system and despised by society. Those who see me laugh at me cruelly; they move to the other side of the street and say, "You trusted in the ways of the Creator; hah! Let that God rescue you. You already get enough government help." You're the one who took me safely out of my mother's womb, and kept me safe at her breast. My grandparents entrusted me to you when I was born; you were my Creator even before I was born.

¹ <https://www.anglican.ca/issues/human-trafficking/freedom-sunday/resources/>

*(Pause)...***Lord, have mercy.**

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

READER: Stay close to me... I am in trouble and nobody – Nobody – is here to help me. Night after night, it's like beastly monsters fencing me in, stalking me, following me at night. They sneer and they salivate and they cat call and catch me and violate me and hurt me and threaten me and leave me poured out like water; all my bones have been beaten out of joint; my heart within my breast is melting wax. My mouth is dried out like clay; my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; and it's like you've put me in into a dusty grave. Gangs of men close in on me and abusers circle around me; they pierce my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones while they stare and gloat over me. They strip me of my clothes and toss them about among them, my best things going to the highest bidder.

*(Pause)...***Lord, have mercy.**

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

READER: Be not far away, Strong Creator; you are my strength; hasten to help me. Save me from the fist, the knife, the gun, the stranglehold, the spirits of despair and depression that rule our lives. Save my life, my body and my soul from the power of these spirits of evil. I will declare your name to all my relations; in the midst of the whole community, I will praise you. Praise the Creator, you that fear God; stand in awe of God, O children from seven generations into seven generations. All peoples. Because you, Great Spirit, do not hate or abuse the poor in their poverty; you don't turn away from them; when they cry to you, you really do hear them.

*(Pause)...***Lord, have mercy.**

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

READER: I will offer you my praise and gratitude before the whole community. The poor shall have a huge feast and be satisfied, and those who seek you shall give praise: "May your heart live for ever!" All four directions of the earth shall remember and turn to you, and all the relations of all the nations shall bow before their Creator who sets the teachings for all the nations. Even the dead who now sleep in the earth will bow down in worship. My soul shall live for God; my descendants shall serve God; they shall be known as the Creator's forever. They shall come and tell the story to the next generations how God has saved us.

*(Pause)...***Lord, have mercy.**

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

ALL **Father, your tortured Son felt abandoned, and cried out in anguish from the cross, yet you delivered him. He overcame the bonds of death and rose in triumph from the grave. Do not hide your face from those who cry out to you: feed the hungry, strengthen the weak, and break the chains of the oppressed, that your people may rejoice in your saving deeds. This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour.**

AMEN

READER: **Our Gospel is from Luke, Chapter 14, verses 14-20:**

ALL: **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him.

This is the Gospel of Christ.

ALL: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

READER: Lord, we uphold to you these prayers appointed for Freedom Sunday:

These prayers lend themselves to reflection on loving and praying for those who mistreat; on mercy and forgiveness for those involved in the trafficking and exploitation of children and young people. We are called to be forgiving and merciful, and also resilience against slavery and oppression in all their forms.

As the sin of condemnation and judgement separates us from one another, and God, so does it perpetuate the conditions in which racism, commodification, and greed grow and have influence over love. God calls us to be good and merciful toward our enemies, to give to them as we wish to receive for our sins, and to be generous in good measure.

READER: God of our salvation,
your bow in the clouds
proclaims your covenant with every living creature.
Teach us your paths and lead us in your truth,
so that by your Holy Spirit,
we may remember our baptismal vows
and be keepers of your trust with earth and its inhabitants.

ALL: AMEN.

READER: God of the wilderness,
your Son battled with the powers of darkness
and grew closer to you in the desert:
help us to use these forty days
to grow in wisdom and prayer,
so that we may witness to your saving love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

ALL: AMEN.

READER: Creator God, accept all we offer you this day:
our prayers for your vulnerable children;
our grief for your beloved Indigenous women and girls;
our hope in your healing love and cleansing justice.

Through your mercy, work the healing of our souls
That we can be strengthened in your mission,
For all your creatures to flourish in peace and joy.
We ask this in the name of Jesus,

ALL: AMEN.

READER: Eternal God,
You comfort the afflicted and heal the broken.
You have fed us this day by your Word of grace, freedom, and hope.
Teach us to walk the ways of gentleness and peace in your world.
Keep your people from callous indifference
To racism, sexism, and violence,
That your children from all four directions
May flourish in the beautiful life that is your intention for creation.

ALL: AMEN.

READER: God of all compassion, we ask you to grant eternal rest to these your beloved women.
May light perpetual shine on them. Give rest, O Christ, to your children with your saints,
where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting. Give comfort to
their families and communities, to mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunties, uncles and
children of those missing and murdered.

ALL: And we ask all this in the name of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

AMEN

READER: Lord, we uphold to you in prayer, the Litany for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and 2S LGBTQ QAI Youth:

God of the forgotten, we remember before you all who are vulnerable to human trafficking. We remember before you all the Indigenous girls and very young women who have suffered abuse, rape, and violence. All those from the East of our land who are missing or have been confirmed to be murdered, for their communities and families and all who mourn. Come, Holy Spirit, and turn our hearts, minds, souls and bodies to care, to advocate, and to seek justice.

All: Come Holy Spirit, come.

READER: We remember before you all the Indigenous women, who, coming into the greening and beautiful springtime of life have been violated, beaten, and cut down. All those from the South of our land who are missing or murdered, for all their families and communities and all who mourn. Come, Holy Spirit, and lead us to seek ways to support the children and families of these women, with true nurture and care.

All: Come Holy Spirit, come.

READER: We remember before you all the Indigenous women, who, as mothers of girls and women who have been brutalized are seared with the burning pain of grief. For all those from the West of our land who are missing or murdered, for all their families and communities and for all who

mourn. Come, Holy Spirit and with fierce comfort protect that all who mourn that they may find healing, truth, and justice.

All: Come Holy Spirit, come.

READER: We remember before you all the Indigenous women Elders who bring the wisdom of their lives to guide the younger generations. We give thanks for their strength and courage, for those who have shared their healing journeys. We pray for continued healing and relief for them for the grief they carry for their grandchildren, Indigenous girls and women missing or murdered, as they near the end of their days. Come, Holy Spirit, and help us to honour these Elders that their stories of survival and healing from violence may guide us and teach us deeply.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, come.

This we pray in the power of the Holy Spirit, through Jesus, our Saviour and Friend.

ALL: AMEN.

READER: Lord, we uphold to you The Prayers for the Four Directions²:

There are many versions of prayers for the Four Directions. When used and when possible, local Indigenous people should be consulted to ensure appropriateness. The first prayer shared in this resource is taken from a liturgy developed by Indigenous people in the Episcopal Church and then modified by a group of Indigenous women at the 8th Sacred Circle of Indigenous Anglican people. The shorter prayer is written from a Lakota Sioux perspective. These are considered to be authentic because they were written by Indigenous people.

Come Great Spirit, as we gather in your name. We face East (*all turn and face east*):

To your symbol colour – Yellow for the morning star. To your animal sign – the Eagle which can soar ever upward in praise of God and calls us to do the same. To your lessons calling us to balance of Mind in the Spirit of Humility. To treasure the newborn and children and young people in our communities. Help us love you and one another with our whole heart, our whole mind, and our whole soul, we pray.

All: Come Holy Spirit, come.

READER: We remember before you all the Indigenous girls and very young women who have suffered abuse, rape, and violence. All those from the East of our land who are missing or have been confirmed to be murdered, for their communities and families and all who mourn. May we turn our hearts, minds, souls and bodies to care, to advocate, and to seek justice.

We turn to face South (turn)

To your symbol colour –Red, the hue of revelation. To your animal symbol – the Buffalo, strong and nurturing. To your lessons calling us to the balance of our Spirit in Harmony with brothers and sisters. To the young bursting into adulthood with vigour. To invoke your wisdom and grace and the goodness of the ages, we pray,

² Written by The Ven. Paul Sneve, Lakota, Diocese of South Dakota

All: Come Holy Spirit, come.

READER: We remember before you all the Indigenous women, who, coming into the greening and beautiful springtime of life have been violated, beaten, and cut down. All those from the South of our land who are missing or murdered, for all their families and communities and all who mourn. May we seek ways to support the children and families of these women, with true nurture and care.

We turn to face West (*turn*)

To your symbol colour – black, still and quiet. To your animal symbol – the Bear. To your symbol, the Thunder mighty and purposeful. To your lessons calling us to balance our Emotions in the Spirit of Gentleness and Honesty. To those in the strength of the middle of life. To invoke your Spirit of Introspection – seeing within. Give us your strength and the courage to endure, we pray,

All: Come Holy Spirit, come.

READER: We remember before you all the Indigenous women, who, as mothers of girls and women who have been brutalized are seared with the burning pain of grief. For all those from the West of our land who are missing or murdered, for all their families and communities and for all who mourn. May their fathers and mothers find healing in memory, and the hope for justice into which are called into partnership.

We turn to face North (*turn*).

To your symbol colour – White of clarity and brightness. To your animal symbol – the Quetzal which brings us in touch with earthiness and growing things. To your lessons calling us to balance of our Body in the Spirit of a good sense of humour. We turn to the elders in our midst and in our memories, to invoke your Spirit of Wisdom, Trust, and Love. Help us to open our eyes to the sacredness of every living thing, we pray,

All: Come Holy Spirit, come.

READER: We remember before you all the Indigenous women Elders who bring the wisdom of their lives to guide the younger generations. We give thanks for their strength and courage, for those who have shared their healing journeys. We pray for continued healing and relief for them for the grief they carry for their grandchildren, Indigenous girls and women missing or murdered, as they near the end of their days.

May we so honour these Elders that their stories of survival and healing from violence may guide us and teach us deeply.

READER: We come back to the centre, which is our place of prayer today.

May all who inhabit this sacred space today, in body, soul, mind and heart, be drawn even more deeply through compassion into love for our Indigenous sisters and all their relations; may they be renewed in your hope; and may they be strengthened to serve along the pathways to which they are called.

This we pray in the power of the Holy Spirit, through Jesus, our brother.

ALL: AMEN.

READER: Lord, we uphold to you in prayer, those who have asked for our prayers;

Almighty and everlasting God, the comfort of the sad and the strength of those who suffer, hear the prayers of your people who are ill, suffer, or are in any trouble. Grant to everyone in distress mercy, relief, and refreshment.

We hold before you those who have requested our prayers:

...

And we name, either silently or aloud, others we know who are in need of prayer....

Loving God, we pray that you will comfort all who are suffering, lend skill to the hands of their healers, and bless the means used for their cure. Give them such confidence in the power of your grace, that even when they are afraid, they may put their whole trust in you. We ask this in the name of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

ALL: AMEN

READER: In closing, an Act of Commitment prayer:

Creator God, Great Spirit, Brother Jesus, community of the Holy Trinity, we give you thanks and praise for the gift of prayer, in our grief and solidarity and yearning for justice. You are with us in spirit, love, and truth. We thank you for receiving into your heart our prayers, our grief, our confusion, our questions, our anger, our pain, and our hope for the healing of all who suffer abuse and grief. May this day humble us to the needs of the world, especially to the suffering of vulnerable Indigenous women.

(Bell rings)

READER: We ask you to grant eternal rest to these your beloved women. May light perpetual shine on them. Give rest, O Christ, to your children with your saints, where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting.

(Bell rings)

READER: Give comfort to their families and communities, to mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunties, uncles and children of those missing and murdered.

(Bell rings)

READER: Strengthen us as we seek to serve your mission of healing of your beloved creation. As you cradle the world and all its creatures in your love, help us to trust in the firm and gentle hold of that embrace.

(Bell rings)

READER: That we might commit ourselves with steadfast faith and persistent hard work to pursue justice, to speak truth in the light where violence hides in the dark.

(Bell rings)

READER: Sustain and guide us as we seek to heal the festering conditions that breed violence and hatred. Be our teacher in the ways of compassionate care.

(Bell rings)

READER: Make firm and longstanding our commitments.

ALL:

AMEN

READER: Unite us in the Lord Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the life, and who has taught us to pray, saying:

**TOGETHER: Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever,**

AMEN