

PRAYER FOR OTHERS 14 MAY 2017

O Jesus, I have promised to serve Thee to the end;
Be Thou forever near me, my Master and my Friend;
I shall not fear the battle if Thou art by my side,
Nor wander from the pathway if Thou wilt be my Guide.

O God, we know that by ourselves we are often weak and lack direction. We thank you that Jesus left so many signposts to show us how to live and how to treat others: he taught us to accept all manner of people, to see and understand their differences. Jesus met with rich and poor, men and women, the exalted and the despised, the virtuous and the fallen. Jesus healed the sick in mind and body. He taught his disciples and he preached to crowds hungry to know how to live in your way.

Because we have decided to serve you and follow Jesus, we pray that you will help us to do it. We pray for our families and those we work with or meet day by day, that they may see your love in us. We pray for our congregation – such a mixed bag of people, but all seekers after your truth. We pray for our neighbours and our communities – that they will see you in us and will see love and tolerance in us and not bigotry and pride. We pray for our country, led by individuals and institutions, many of whom do not know and follow you, but who, because our tradition is based on a more Christian past, by and large promote acceptance and the rights of others, sometimes better than we do.

We pray for the church around the world, with all its divisions and faults, and ask that you will guide its leaders so they will all, like Pope Francis, encourage their flocks to become the servants of one another and of the poor, the downtrodden and the sick. We also pray that you will help us to be like the city “built on a hill, which cannot be hid”. Help us to work through the next few months to find our future direction as a church in the Birkenhead community and the wider North Shore.

Let us pray now for those we can show our love to: our members who are becoming frail, sick or less independent, and we particularly pray for Tony Green, John Wadams and others known to each of us; we pray for those in our families who are not worshipping with us; for Hilary as she packs and prepares for a new chapter in her own life and ministry; for Martin Fey as he helps us manage our vacancy; for our hospital Chaplains like Michelle Chin and those who need their ministry; for the staff of Yakkum and the Rehabilim centre in Yogyakarta; for the work of the Missionary Aviation Fellowship in Arnhem Land and other places; for the projects around the world funded by our donations to Christian World Service; for the many who through no fault of their own are refugees from their own homes and countries; for the people we rarely see on television, but are coping or not coping with war, drought and starvation. May our donations help others to help them on our behalf and in Jesus’ name.

Only too well aware of our helplessness to do more than pray and give money in the face of so much need, we pray as Jesus taught his disciples:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen.