

St. John's and St. Columba's Strathpray

Let us pray for one another and for the world ...

Sunday October 10th

'Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise, be thankful to Him and bless His name.' Psalm 100.

Blessing God is not a self-help technique we can simply turn on but a way of life commended to us from saints who have gone before. (Russ Parker)

We pray for the congregations of Holy Trinity, Elgin; Burghead Mission; St. Margaret, Lossiemouth; Tembu Rongong, Jenny Sclater.

.. for the blessing of God on each other this week.

I bless the name of Jesus, He is the King and Saviour. I bless the Lord with all my heart for He alone is mighty to save. I bless the God of my salvation, His praises will garrison my spirit. I bless my heavenly Father for He has brought me home to myself. I bless the Lord because He stays by my side and is the light in my darkness. I bless Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.



Monday October 11th

'Whoever wants to embrace life and see the day fill up with good, here's what you do: say nothing evil or hurtful; snub evil and cultivate good; run after peace for all you're worth. God looks on all this with approval.' 1 Peter 3.

'God never commissioned us to remove all bad things from the world, to undo the Fall; God calls us to redeem the bad, transforming it into something good.' (Philip Yancey – Reaching for the Invisible God)



We pray for preparations for the UN climate conference to take place in Glasgow in November.

Bestower of Life, Abundant Love, Trusted Companion, Eternal Wisdom, I pray your blessing to be upon me today. Be my Teacher and create in me a generous heart. Amen.

Tuesday October 12th

'He makes springs pour water into the ravines; it flows between the mountains. They give water to all the beasts of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. The birds of the sky nest by the waters; they sing among the branches. He waters the mountains from his upper chambers; the land is satisfied by the fruit of his work. He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for people to cultivate - bringing forth food from the earth: wine that gladdens human hearts, oil to make their faces shine, and bread that sustains their hearts. How many are your works, LORD! In wisdom you made them all.' Ps. 104.



'All that is sweet, delightful and amiable in this world, in the serenity of the air, the fineness of seasons, the joy of light, the melody of sounds, the beauty of colours, the fragrancy of smells .. is nothing else but heaven breaking through the veil of this world.' (William Law)

We pray for those who live and work in local prisons.

I arise today through the strength of heaven: light of sun, radiance of moon, splendour of fire, speed of lightning, swiftness of wind, depth of sea, stability of earth, firmness of rock. Amen.

Wednesday October 13th



‘Jesus said to his disciples, “Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I assure you that whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.”’
Mark 10.

‘Christian faith is not neurotic dependency but childlike trust. We do not have a God who forever indulges our whims but a God whom we trust with our destinies. Our Lord gave us the picture of the child as a model for Christian faith not because of the child’s helplessness but because of the child’s willingness to be led, to be taught, to be blessed.’ (Peterson)

We pray for the 702,200 children who attend 2476 schools in Scotland.

O God, the imaginative weaver, take the thread of my life in your gentle hands and weave my love creatively, hopefully and purposefully, generously and graciously, into the fabric of this world’s need. Amen.

Thursday October 14th

‘Teach me your way, LORD, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.’ Psalm 86.

‘To live in the presence of God is to live with purity of heart, with simple-mindedness and with total acceptance of His will. That, indeed, demands a choice, a decision, and great courage. It is a sign of true holiness.’ (Henri Nouwen)

We pray for our local politicians and councillors.

Gracious Father, give me diligence to seek You, and wisdom to find You today. May my ears hear Your voice; my eyes see Your goodness; and my tongue proclaim Your name as I commit my life to pleasing You. Amen.



Friday October 15th

‘But he endured the suffering that should have been ours, the pain that we should have borne. All the while we thought that his suffering was punishment sent by God. But because of our sins he was wounded, beaten because of the evil we did. We are healed by the punishment he suffered, made whole by the blows he received.’ Isaiah 53.



‘In this passage from Isaiah which foretells the amazing mystery of the redemption (that in some way that we can only guess at), Christ by his suffering has taken upon himself the sins of the world: the violence of the soldier who rapes, the cruelty of the torturer, the callousness of the youth who mugs the old lady for her pension. I do not claim to understand it, but I know that this act somehow holds our world together.’ (Sheila Cassidy)

We pray for retired clergy assisting in the Diocese.

We praise and honour you, Lord Jesus, the eternal Word who took our flesh and became man for our salvation. All praise to you for your birth and humiliation, for sharing our human life and limitations, for entering into our sufferings and trials, for identifying yourself with our sins and dying for us on the cross. Jesus, Saviour, Redeemer, true God and true Man, we glorify you for ever. Amen.

Saturday October 16th

'Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.' Heb. 13.

'We always treat our guests as angels – just in case!' (Father Jeremiah, an Egyptian monk)

On World Food Day, we pray for those who today will go hungry.

Lord, forgive my calculated efforts to serve you, only when it is convenient for me to do so, only in those places where it is safe to do so, and only with those who make it easy to do so. Amen.



Unknown heroes of the faith .. The Desert Fathers.



In the early centuries of its existence the Christian Church remained close to the physical wilderness, spreading as it did along the trade routes of the Middle East and the Mediterranean coastlands. But with the conversion of the Emperor Constantine, Christianity became the institutional religion of the whole Roman Empire. At this time a significant number of Christians chose the desert.

They withdrew into the desert for lives of solitary prayer and silence. It was not an organised movement, but individuals responded to what they felt to be a call for deeper prayer and waiting on God.

Although it was not their intention or purpose, they became a highly influential source of counselling and guidance, and we know them as the Desert Fathers (there were Desert Mothers too!).

It is all too easy to assume that, by doing this, they were running away from the 'real world'. In fact they saw part of their calling as involving spiritual warfare and battle against evil in the world. Their writings and sayings show that their solitude and withdrawal was deeply rooted in God's guidance and will, and the impact they made on the 'real world' after their 'escape' was considerable. They were much sought out by people of their day, and collections of sayings and stories about them have circulated in the Church ever since. They were rugged, practical people of few words, shrewd discernment and down-to-earth wisdom.

One story catches something of the character of these men of God: a young man sought out a solitary holy man, eager to talk to him about prayer. The old man said nothing but built up a small fire and made tea. He then began to pour the tea into the young man's cup. Though it was full he went on pouring. Tea spilled all over the ground. The young man finally protested: 'It's already too full!' 'So it is with you,' said the old man. 'Until you are empty, how can you receive what you seek?'



Desert faith and prayer challenges our expectation that God exists simply to fill our world and meet our needs on request. It teaches us to live by faith and not by sight. And shows that sometimes it's only in silence that we can come before God.

(David Runcorn – Space for God)