

Prayers for the victims at Manchester Arena 22nd May 2017



His Holiness Pope Francis was deeply saddened to learn of the injury and tragic loss of life caused by the barbaric attack in Manchester, and he expresses his heartfelt solidarity with all those affected by this senseless act of violence. He commends the generous efforts of the emergency and security personnel, and offers the assurance of his prayers for the injured, and for all who have died. Mindful in a particular way of those children and young people who have lost their lives, and of their grieving families, Pope Francis invokes God's blessings of peace, healing and strength upon the nation.

Justin Welby, the archbishop of Canterbury, "Heroic Manchester, dark evil cannot overcome it. We pray for those in sorrow on the hard journey of loss & pain, & for those who protect us,"

Sign of the Cross

A word of Praise Song of praise Psalm 137

I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart, for you have heard the words of my mouth. In the presence of the angels I will make music to you, worship before your holy temple. I will praise your name because of your mercy and faithfulness: high above all other names is the greatness of your word. Each day that I call on you, Lord, listen to me, strengthen my spirit. All the kings of the earth will proclaim your glory, Lord, when they hear your word. They will sing of the paths of the Lord, so great is his glory. For the Lord is on high but he cares for the humble; and he knows the proud from afar. If I walk in the midst of troubles, you will give me life. If my enemies rise up against me, your right hand will keep me safe. The Lord does all that I need.

Lord, your kindness lasts for ever: do not forsake the work of your hands. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Penitential rite

I confess to almighty God and to you my brothers and sisters that I have greatly sinned in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary, ever Virgin, all the angels and saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord, our God.

Sign of Peace



Opening prayer

God of infinite mercy, we pray for the victims of the Manchester arena attack.

Remember them according to the favour you bear for your people.

Comfort those who mourn and give strength to the injured.

Deliver those whose hearts are hardened by hatred.

Grant to us all your understanding, and your persevering love, for your mercy's sake.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

First reading Matthew 5:43-45

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew

'You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy." But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.

The Gospel of the Lord

Reflection for silent consideration extract By His Grace Bishop Angaelos, General Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox following the terrorist attack in Paris 13 November 2015

We must never lose sight of the effectiveness of prayer, nor of the powerful impact that our collective acts of solidarity offer in confronting such evil and the fear it inevitably instils; for it is that goodness in the world that causes evil to be cast out. We must therefore remember that although the constantly-streaming news we see, hear and read points to a very bleak world filled with darkness, a powerful light continues to shine through the acts of brave and hopeful individuals and communities, propagating this hope further.

As Christians, we are given a very specific instruction in chapter 5 of the Gospel of Saint Matthew: "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you..." because in so doing, we become true children of our Father in heaven. With this spirit, we pray for hearts bent on harm and destruction to be changed, a transition we ourselves are familiar with in the life of the great Saint Paul who started his life as Saul, persecutor of the early Church. We can never truly know when and how such acts of rampant violence will cease, but we pray for those who commit them to realise the full, wasteful and devastating impact of their actions on the lives of so many who bleed and mourn just as they do. We also pray that the pain, anger and resentment caused by these events do not corrupt good hearts or tear communities apart.

As families mourn the loss of loved ones, we pray that God gives comfort and peace to all who feel they have lost much. As so many around the world continue to suffer the effects of intolerance and an ever-narrowing perspective of some regarding who does and does not deserve to live, and as many seek refuge from persecution and war-torn regions, our prayers are also offered for them as they encounter such adversity and difficulty in striving for freedom and refuge.

May we never lose sight of the powerful and hope-filled message of Saint Paul himself to the Corinthians, that we are "...hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed..."

Second reading Matthew 5:1-10

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew

When Jesus saw the crowds of people there, he went up on a hill and sat down. His followers came and sat next to him. Then Jesus began teaching the people. He said, "Great blessings belong to those who know they are spiritually in need

God's kingdom belongs to them.

Great blessings belong to those who are sad now.

God will comfort them.

Great blessings belong to those who are humble.

They will be given the land God promised.

Great blessings belong to those who want to do right more than anything else.

God will fully satisfy them.

Great blessings belong to those who show mercy to others.

Mercy will be given to them.

Great blessings belong to those whose thoughts are pure.

They will be with God.

Great blessings belong to those who work to bring peace.

God will call them his sons and daughters.

Great blessings belong to those who suffer persecution for doing what is right.

God's kingdom belongs to them.

The Gospel of the Lord

Reflection for silent consideration *Extract from Bishop Nick Baines, Bishop of Leeds and duty Bishop at the House of Lords last week wrote this on 23rd March 2017 following the terrorist incident at Westminster.*

The normality of the day had been ripped apart in acts of wanton violence that beggar imagination. The ordinariness of life – tourists posing for photos with policemen at the gates of Parliament, people walking to and from work – collapsed in tragedy and misery. Words cannot comprehend the depths of shock as news filtered through of what had happened. Someone said to me: “the world feels less safe today.”

The world of words is not short of explanations or interrogations. Even before we know the facts, judgments are made. This is inevitable in a world of instant communication. But, words are also needed as we attempt to grasp what has happened.

I turn to the Psalms. This Hebrew poetry collection is not for the squeamish or those who like to keep their religion tidy. One minute these poets are laughing at the absurdities of human beings, the next they are raging at God because of the injustices and cruelties of this world. And they were certainly no strangers to violence or horror. They knew what it was to be hunted; but they also knew the power of mercy and love and hope.

And that reflects what many of us in Parliament witnessed yesterday. While we were being kept secure by a remarkable police force, they were outside dealing with the unknowns of terror and the loss of a colleague. The parliamentary staff were professional and, as always courteous. Visitors, including parties of school children, were looked after by MPs who managed to keep everything calm and human. The emergency services did their stuff with discretion, skill and humanity. Westminster Abbey took in over one thousand people and made the experience as good as they could.

Yesterday we saw the worst of human depravity – that empty, soulless vacuum from which joy has been sucked – but the Abbey was filled with conversation as we saw the best of human society and compassion. And maybe the Abbey was the best place for us to be – a place not only of refuge and mercy, but a locus of hope... a place whose very stones bear witness to the mess and muck as well as to the glory of human beings who struggle to make sense of it all. Here God is worshipped and here people laugh and weep and think and speak. Here is a space that refuses to stick God in a box where he can remain unsullied by the realities of a complex life.

Intercessions

We pray for all those affected by the terror attack in Manchester. Grant those who died eternal life. May the injured be restored to health and the traumatised find peace of mind and heart and may all, who need it, find the comfort, strength and support that they need. Lord we pray.....

R/ Bring us your peace

We pray for the people of Manchester. We ask Lord that they look to you for hope and peace in their city. Dispel fear and give them courage to resume their daily lives. Lord we pray.....**R/**

We pray that the members of the police and other emergency services who are so willing to risk their own lives in order to save and support others, will be rewarded for their courage and dedication. Lord we pray.....**R/**

We pray for all those who are persecuted and for those who are persecutors. Lord we pray.....**R/**

We pray for our country as it makes a decision about who to lead us that we are guided by the Holy Spirit to choose what is best for our country and our world. Lord we pray.....**R/**

We pray for families: for married couples, those who are single and for children. Fill them with our Spirit so that families may become harbours of peace and kindness; havens of patience and goodness; refuges of faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, communities of real joy. Lord we pray..... R/

We pray now for our personal intentions..... R/

Hail MaryOur Father

Closing Prayer

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to know you is eternal life and to serve you is perfect freedom: Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defence, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing A Blessing for Peace John O'Donohue Benedictus

As the fever of the day calms toward twilight
May all that is strained in us come to ease.
We pray for all who suffered violence today,
May an unexpected serenity surprise them.
For those who risk their lives each day for peace,
May their hearts glimpse providence at the heart of history.
That those who make riches from war might hear in their dreams the cries of the lost.
That we might see through our fear of each other
A new vision to heal...
That those who enjoy the privilege of peace
Might not forget their tormented brothers and sisters.
That the wolf might lie down with the lamb,
That our swords be beaten into ploughshares
And no hurt or harm be done anywhere along the holy mountain.
The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among us and remain with us always. Amen.

Make me a channel of your peace.

Where there is hatred let me bring your love.
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord
And where there's doubt, true faith in you.

Make me a channel of your peace
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope
Where there is darkness, only light
And where there's sadness, ever joy.

Oh, Master grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand
To be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned
In giving of ourselves that we receive
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.

