

Prayers for Peace during Civil Unrest and Racial Tension

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Phil. 4:6-7

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Matt. 5:9

Introduction

In the face of calamities, as happened with COVID-19, it is natural for people to find themselves struggling with fear, uncertainty, and despair. It is during these trying times that the power of faith becomes not just a source of solace, but a necessary anchor to help individuals navigate the stormy seas of life. Our Faith, in its various forms, holds the promise of hope, strength, and resilience, enabling us to emerge from crises with a renewed sense of purpose and courage.

We urge all communities across England to seek peace and unity in response to the terrible tragedy of the murder of the three young girls in Southport last week and the subsequent violence that has erupted throughout our nation.

Collect for Peace during Civil Unrest and Racial Tension

Merciful God, author and giver of peace,
As we continue to pray for the families and friends of those who died
and those who were injured in Southport,
we remember that You have created each of us in your image,
and that everyone is worthy of dignity and respect.
Heavenly Father, listen to the cry that rises from many towns in our country,
from those subjected to violence and racial hatred.
We pray for peace which, as your son Jesus Christ told us,
is a peace which the world cannot give.
We pray that closed eyes may be opened
to see beyond the boundaries of race, religion, and hatred.
May hearts be renewed to embrace all your children as brothers and sisters.
In your righteousness, stir the hearts of your people that,
rejoicing in our diversity, we may be assured of your love,
be free of all fear and strive for peace.
Through your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen

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General Prayer

Following the unrest and violence across towns and cities in the United Kingdom in recent days, we pray for all communities affected; for all those left injured, traumatised or afraid. For the police, and all those at national or local levels seeking to restore public order and bring the perpetrators to justice. For places of worship in the affected areas and all people of faith and goodwill seeking to promote peace and respect in the face of violence and hatred. Lord, in your mercy:

hear our prayer.

Specific Prayers

For the Victims:

We pray for the families and souls (+) of Bebe King, Elsie Dot Stancombe and Alice Dasilva Aguiar, and for all the children and adults injured in the attack. We pray for the community of Meols Cop as they come to terms with what has happened, and all those communities subsequently afflicted by rioting. Lord, in your mercy:

hear our prayer.

For a Hurting Neighbour:

We pray that our eyes and our hearts may be open to the pain of this world; to see the pain of our neighbour and, by God's grace, to become the healing presence to them. Lord, in your mercy:

hear our prayer.

For the Angry

We pray for those who may succumb to and become a victim of anger and its power; heal their wounded hearts, take away their burning words, and protect them and us from the desire for revenge. Lord, in your mercy:

hear our prayer.

For Those Who Despise Us:

We pray for those who persecute us, and the strength to love those who seek us harm. We pray that God would strengthen us to love and forgive those who see us as their enemies, as he loves them, and to remember that it is resentment, anger, and hatred that are our true enemies. Lord, in your mercy:

hear our prayer.

To Become a Justice-Loving People:

We pray that we may be a people who stand against injustice that occurs anywhere as a threat to justice everywhere, so that we might become worthy representatives of God's righteous kingdom and activists for Christ's love. Lord, in your mercy:

hear our prayer.

For the Security Forces:

We pray for all police officers and related security services, that they are protected and supported in their duties, and that they are strengthened to preserve the peace, defend the vulnerable, uphold the rights of the oppressed, and serve the good of the community, so that they might be emissaries of Christ's justice in the world. Lord, in your mercy:

hear our prayer.

For Those Weary of Doing Justice:

We pray that our eyes and ears may be open to see the needs of others and hear their cries; that those tired or scared of doing the right thing, particularly when the angry seem so strong, are upheld by Christ's gentle mercy. Strengthen our hearts so that we do not lose hope and are able to respond with love and compassion. Lord, in your mercy:

hear our prayer.

For the Nation

We pray, finally, for our nation and our leaders: for the spirit of wisdom, peace and justice to dwell amongst them, and us. Strengthen individual efforts to promote harmony, peace, and justice for all people, and comfort and protect all who are afraid, especially those who fear becoming the target of violence because of their race, ethnicity, heritage or faith. Lord, in your mercy:

hear our prayer.

**Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen**

Adaptation of the Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Heavenly Father, we cry out to you for our country
and ask that you make us instruments of Your peace.
Where there is racial hatred, help us to sow Your love.
Where there is injury, help us to heal and bring pardon.
Where there is discord, help us to bring harmony.
Where there is error, and misinformation let us bring truth.
Where there is doubt that we are all your children, let us bring faith;
Where there is despair, let us bring hope;
Where there is darkness, shine your light;
and where there is sadness, help us to bring joy.
O Divine Master, grant that we may not so much
seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

Concluding Note

Church of England rejoices in the diversity of our worshippers and in our nation, which is a gift of God for the enrichment of his Church and his world. We encourage people across our communities to share in this joy, to resist division and respond to one another with care and kindness. Our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us that perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18) and we ask all in our churches to commit themselves afresh to live out this reality for their communities, now more than ever.

**Racial Justice Unit
Church of England
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