

A pandemic is the time the world discovers who its neighbour really is - when we begin to embrace the concerns of others who are suffering with Coronavirus, as well as deal with our own fears and anxieties. When we reach out to those whose need is greater than ours, the elderly and vulnerable, and do all that we can to become 'community', then we are being true followers of Christ.

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second (Commandment) is this: Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:30,31)

For all whose day starts with anxiety,  
as they leave the security of home  
worrying about the risk of infection;  
particularly those whose health  
or age classifies them as vulnerable.  
Loving God, be close, keep them safe,  
along with all whose tasks today  
includes the care of frail and elderly.  
And for all of us, grant wisdom  
to make sensible choices, not just  
for ourselves, but for everybody.

Breath of life and love,  
disturb the dark clouds of fear and anxiety  
that trouble our lives, and in this gentle  
breeze, as clouds disperse, may we sense  
hope and healing, as your light  
breaks in and through our hearts and minds,  
and shines out in the world.

We are beginning to learn  
that this is a fragile world  
you've placed into our care.  
But there are times, Lord,  
when we are reminded  
of our human fragility,  
needing your loving care  
through times of anxiety  
and illness. Touch us, Lord,  
with healing hands and words,  
that we might walk together  
through this temporary darkness  
and into your glorious light.

Gracious God, let us never forget,  
as daily life becomes more difficult  
and restrictions cause annoyance,  
that there are many for whom  
this has been normality for years;  
affected by long-term drought  
or destructive storms; struggling

in poverty, or through violence  
forced to adopt the life of refugee.  
May we remember to be thankful  
for what we have, and work together  
selflessly for all who need our help.

Give wisdom, Lord, to all in authority,  
not only leaders of nations but local  
communities, that actions and words  
are prompted by the needs of others,  
not personal gain. That all might ask  
the question, 'Who is my neighbour?'  
and, as if seeing through your eyes,  
want nothing but the best for them.

We pray for this world's leaders,  
with difficult decisions to make  
affecting the lives of so many.  
May they be guided not by  
any personal agenda, but work  
for the common good of all,  
that this world might be led  
to a better place, where trust  
and honesty are the values  
both sought and demonstrated  
in those we choose to lead us.

Loving God, what we desire is this;  
that people see not us, but through  
our smile, greeting, helping hand  
or helpful word, your love reach out  
and touch, maybe at a time of need.  
Keep us focussed through this day  
on being your servants in this place,  
or wherever you might take us,  
and may your name be glorified.

Bless the good neighbours, Lord,  
who call to check that all is well,  
with those unable to get out,  
and whose gentle act of service

brings a ray of light into a day  
that would otherwise be cheerless.  
Bless them, and all who likewise  
give of their time for others  
in following your good example,  
that this might become a better  
and more caring world in which to live.

Help us to put aside preconceptions  
about other people,  
because that alters our behaviour,  
and simply accept that they, like us,  
are precious in your eyes.

Bless the givers, eyes open for those in need  
of prayer, encouragement, support,  
a little time, the gift of love.  
In the act of giving and receiving  
may both be blessed.

Bless all who work in stressful situations;  
healthcare, teaching, law enforcement,  
social services and other occupations  
where patience, love and perseverance  
can wear thin, and daily stress levels rise.  
Keep them safe and keep them well,  
equipped to follow their vocation  
through the most difficult of times.  
And at the end of their day, grant rest.

Bless those who give, who go the extra mile  
in their care for others, and whose love  
expands to fill the present need, not dwelling  
on the cost. Bless their generosity, and those  
receiving it. By their good example may  
others' needs be met.

God bless each step that you take today,  
whether that road is rough or smooth.  
And in God's strength step out in faith,  
step out in love, step out in peace,  
and bless this world with God's presence  
in and through your life.

We pray for our communities -  
that snapshot of humanity  
with all ages, backgrounds,  
education, employment status,  
politics and religious viewpoint  
who are our neighbours  
in the streets where we live.

We pray for all of them;  
not only those we know by name  
and chat to through the day,  
but also less familiar faces  
about whom we know so little  
and pass by with just a smile.  
All in need of your love at this time.  
Bless their homes and families,  
and let your love and peace  
so shine within this community  
that smiles turn to conversations,  
and strangers become friends.  
We pray this through Jesus Christ,  
the Prince of Peace. Amen

We give thanks for all those people  
whose daily lives are about giving;  
be it medical or physical assistance,  
teaching, training and encouraging,  
loving, caring, supporting, praying;  
all the many ways that one life can  
be blessed and enriched by another.  
For all these people we give thanks.

In the darker moments, when clouds gather  
and the heaviness we feel seems  
overwhelming, remind us of your love,  
carrying the weight of so much in that cross,  
embracing the world with arms outstretched  
that we might know freedom from the chains  
which now constrain us.  
Bring us to your light, release our burdens  
and from despair bring hope.

Dear Lord, let us not forget  
our neighbours at this time.  
Not just those who live close but in the wider  
community who are elderly, vulnerable, and  
very much isolated from the world outside  
their door. May they know they are loved  
through our actions and care,  
and in their loneliness know  
your presence, healing, and peace.

All I am, and all I have, I offer, Lord, to you.  
I offer you these hands, that you might use  
them in and through my daily work.  
I offer you these feet, that you might lead  
them to someone who needs my help.  
I offer you these shoulders if you should them  
to help lighten another's load.  
I offer you this voice that you might use it to  
speak up for those in need.  
All I am, and all I have, I offer, Lord, to you.