

The Free Church, Hampstead Garden Suburb

Lent Prayer Diary 2019

*Our Father who art in Heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done
on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever
Amen.*

For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been **tempted** as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4, 15)

'Yield not to **Temptation** for yielding is sin'

Week 1, Sunday 10th March to Saturday 16th March

'...Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit was led by the Spirit for forty days in the wilderness, tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing in those days; and when they were ended, He was hungry. The devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'man shall not live by bread alone.' "...' (Luke 4, 1 - 4)

Please pray...

1. That we would not give in to the temptation to want more just for the sake of having more; but that we would be content with what we have, and be thankful...
2. That those who lead within the Christian Church would not be tempted to believe that material prosperity is a sign of God's blessing, but that they would seek Spiritual empowerment...
3. That those who influence the global political agenda would not be tempted to trade in long term security for short term gain...

*"Yes--deep within and deeper yet
The rankling shaft of conscience hide,
Quick let the swelling eye forget
The tears that in the heart abide.
Calm be the voice, the aspect bold,
No shuddering pass o'er lip or brow,
For why should Innocence be told
The pangs that guilty spirits bow?"*

John Keble 'Ash Wednesday' vs 1.

Week 2, Sunday 17th March - Saturday 23rd March

'...And the Devil took Jesus up and showed Him all the Kingdoms of the world in a moment in time, and said to Him, "To You I will give all this authority and their glory for it has been delivered to me, and I will give it to whom I will. If You then will worship me, it shall all be yours." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve."...' (Luke 4, 5 - 8)

Please pray...

1. That we would not give in to the temptation to seek to unduly influence, control, and manipulate the lives of others...
2. That those who occupy positions of power within the Christian Church should not fall prey to the temptation to abuse such power, in whatever way...
3. That those who assume high office in Government would resist the temptation to use such power secretly, disproportionately, even corruptly...

*The loving eye that watches thine
Close as the air that wraps thee round -
Why in thy sorrow should it pine,
Since never of thy sin it found?
And wherefore should the heathen see
What chains of darkness thee enslave,
And mocking say, 'Lo, this is he
Who owned a God that could not save'?"*

John Keble, 'Ash Wednesday' vs 2.

Week 3, Sunday 24th March - Saturday 30th March

'...And he took Jesus to Jerusalem, and set Him on the pinnacle of the Temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; for it is written, 'He will give His angels charge of You, to guard you,' and 'On their hands they will bear You up, lest You strike Your foot against a stone.' "And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'you shall not tempt the Lord your God.' "...' (Luke 4, 9 - 12)

Please pray...

1. That we would not give in to the temptation to assume any advantage just because of who we are, who we know, where we live, † whom we belong, what we believe, whatever...
2. That those who serve in the Christian Church would not be tempted to laud it over others but rather that they might reaffirm their calling as God's servants...
3. That those who guide our thinking might not be so tempted as to think what they know is more important than what others believe...

*Thus oft the mourner's wayward heart
Tempts him to hide his grief and die,
Too feeble for Confession's smart,
Too proud to bear a pitying eye;
How sweet, in that dark hour, to fall
On bosoms waiting to receive
Our sighs, and gently whisper all!
They love us--will not God forgive?*

John Keble, 'Ash Wednesday' vs 3.

Week 4, Sunday 31st March - Saturday 6th April

"...Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin¹ it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. "Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the man by whom the temptation comes..." (Matt. 18, 5-7).

Please pray...

1. That we would be careful always when we are in the company of young children; in our use of language, of gesture, of appearance recognising them for who they are themselves and not what we want them to be for us...
2. That the Christian Church would continue to repent of its abject failure to respect children and young people; that it might be purged of its abusers; that once again a child might feel safe in its midst...
3. That the world would cease its exploitation of children: child labour, child soldiers, child prostitution in order that every child, every child might be given the opportunity to flourish, uninhibited and unafraid...

*Else let us keep our fast within,
Till Heaven and we are quite alone,
Then let the grief, the shame, the sin,
Before the mercy-seat be thrown.
Between the porch and altar weep,
Unworthy of the holiest place,
Yet hoping near the shrine to keep
One lowly cell in sight of grace.*

John Keble, 'Ash Wednesday' vs 4.

Week 5, Sunday 7th April - Saturday 14th April,

'...No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it... (1 Corinthians 10, 13)'

Please pray...

1. That we would resist the temptation to take the easy way out, the soft option, the line of least resistance...
2. That those who represent the Christian Church would resist the temptation to compromise, to vacillate, to obfuscate the truth of the Gospel...
3. That those charged with governing would resist the temptation to settle for the quick fix, an easy win, the simple solution regardless of the cost incurred, the harm inflicted, the damage caused...

*Nor fear lest sympathy should fail -
Hast thou not seen, in night hours drear,
When racking thoughts the heart assail,
The glimmering stars by turns appear,
And from the eternal house above
With silent news of mercy steal?
So Angels pause on tasks of love,
To look where sorrowing sinners kneel.*

John Keble, 'Ash Wednesday', vs 5.

Week 6, Sunday 15th April - Saturday 20th April (Holy Week)

'...He fell on his face and prayed, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." And He came and found them sleeping; and He said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again, He went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, thy will be done." Again, He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So, He went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words...' (Matthew 26, 39 - 44)

Pleas pray...

1. That if ever we find ourselves having to choose between the Will of God and the Way of the World that we would not be tempted to give in to 'siren voices'...
2. That the Christian Church would rediscover the power of prayer, the discipline required by prayer, the effort demanded by prayer if it is to resist the temptation to retreat into itself, acting as if there were no God...
3. That those of whom it is required, would always act courageously, not tempted to count the cost, always prepared to pay the price...

*High thoughts were with Him in that hour,
Untold, unspeakable on earth -
And who can stay the soaring power
Of spirits weaned from worldly mirth,
While far beyond the sound of praise
With upward eye they float serene,
And learn to bear their Saviour's blaze
When Judgment shall undraw the screen?*

John Keble, 'Ash Wednesday', vs 7.

Sunday 21st April [Easter Day]

'...He is not here, He is Risen...'

Easter Day in Dublin

The poor man sits begging,
in the archway between a Dublin
car park and the via dolorosa
to the shopping mall
where what's now is in
before it goes green bin.

Its transience faster than yesterday.

I had not a lot to give but stopped to talk.

He was twenty-eight, a failed pharmacy student
who thought, drugs were cool. He packed life in
to stay cool and instead of dispensing he is
dispensed, as gingerly the race goes on.

The poor man at the pool of Bethesda awaits the
swirl in conversation, in acknowledgment
that he was born and baptised, confirmed and condemned.

'thanks for talking to me, sometimes I'm invisible.'

That he is here is Resurrection for him,
his Easter moment when what's dead is given life.

He was caught in the rush
but awaits the swirl of the water
by the angels hand that heals.

Easter day and Resurrection
not in another land and time,
but in the laneway,
between the car park
and the shopping mall.

Bernard Kennedy

*Christ has died: **CHRIST IS RISEN:** Christ will come again*