

Prayer Service for 'VE Day 75' - 8th May 2020



Today we commemorate the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe when the sounds of war fell silent on this continent.

We are conscious of our need for God's forgiveness for the sin and the desire to dominate others that leads to conflict between people, and war between nations.

As we remember the many soldiers, sailors, and airmen who gave their lives restraining evil and opposing tyranny, so we also come in thanksgiving for the years of peace that the nations of Europe have enjoyed since the Second World War.

We gather joyfully today, as those who gathered on that first Victory day, glad of each other's company, and grateful for the laughter and love that follows times of sadness and loss.

Verse From Psalm 46

God has been our refuge and our strength:

A present help in time of trouble.

He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.

'Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.'

The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Hymn: 'Praise, my soul, the King of heaven'

Watch the clip, or sing, or read and pray: <https://youtu.be/Olik0hbDKIs>

1 Praise, my soul, the King of heaven,
to his feet your tribute bring;
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
who like you his praise should sing?
Alleluia, alleluia!
praise the everlasting King.

2 Praise him for his grace and favour
to our fathers in distress;
praise him, still the same as ever,
slow to blame and swift to bless;
Alleluia, alleluia!
glorious in his faithfulness.

3 Father-like, he tends and spares us,
All our hopes and fears he knows;
in his hands he gently bears us,
rescues us from all our foes:
Alleluia, alleluia!
widely as his mercy flows.

4 Angels, help us to adore him;
you behold him face to face;
sun and moon, bow down before him,
praise him all in time and space.
Alleluia, alleluia!
praise with us the God of grace.

Old Testament Reading: Micah 4.1–4

God's promised time of peace

In days to come, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised up above the hills.

Peoples shall stream to it, and many nations shall come and say:

'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.'

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

He shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.

New Testament Reading: 2 Corinthians 5.16–21

The call to be reconciled

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way.

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:

everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.

So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Spend a few moments reflecting on the readings and God's enduring message of his presence with us and his desire for our well-being and peace...

Hymn: 'Abide with me'

Watch the clip, or sing, or read and pray: <https://youtu.be/kkXI-8no9ZE>

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

I need Thy presence every passing hour.
What but Thy grace
can foil the tempter's power?
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine,
Lord, abide with me.

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight,
and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting?
Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom
and point me to the skies.
Heaven's morning breaks,
and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

Responsory

Your salvation is near to those who fear you,
that glory may dwell in our land.

Mercy and truth have met together;
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne;
steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.

Your salvation is near to those who fear you,
that glory may dwell in our land.

Prayers

You can use these prayers or your own.

For those who served and died in World War II

O God of truth and justice,
we hold before you those men and women who have died in active service,
particularly in the Second World War, whose sacrifice brought Victory in Europe.
As we honour their courage and cherish their memory,
may we put our faith in your future;
for you are the source of life and hope, now and for ever. Amen.

For those who serve today

O Lord God of Hosts, stretch forth, we pray, your almighty arm
to strengthen and protect our service men and women.
Support them in times of conflict,
and in their rest and training keep them safe from all evil;
endue them with courage and loyalty;
and grant that in all things they may serve without reproach;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For the peace of the world

O God, who would fold both heaven and earth in a single peace;
that the design of your great love lighten upon the waste of our wraths and sorrows
and give peace to your church, peace among nations,
peace in our dwellings and peace in our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of Saint Ignatius

Teach us, good Lord, to serve thee as thou deservest,
to give and not to count the cost;
to fight and not to heed the wounds;
to toil and not to seek for rest;
to labour and not to ask for any reward;
except that of knowing that we do thy will. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Above all things, we pray that God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven, as we join our voices together with all who pray today and say:

Our Father...

An Act of Commitment

We pledge ourselves anew to the service of God and our fellow men and women;

**Lord God our Father,
we pledge ourselves to serve you
and all humankind,
in the cause of peace,
for the relief of want and suffering,
and for the praise of your name.
Guide us by your Spirit;
give us wisdom;
give us courage;
give us hope;
and keep us faithful now and always.
Amen.**

O Lord our God,
as we remember,
teach us the ways of peace.
As we treasure memories,
teach us to hope.
As we give thanks
for the sacrifices of the past,
help us to make your future in this world,
until your kingdom come.
Amen.

Hymn: 'Now Thank we all our God'

Watch the clip, or sing, or read and pray: <https://youtu.be/sR6Kajdtt3M>

Now thank we all our God
with heart and hands and voices,
who wondrous things has done,
in whom his world rejoices;
who from our mothers' arms
has blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love,
and still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts
and blessed peace to cheer us,
to keep us in his grace,
and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all ills
of this world in the next.

All praise and thanks to God
the Father now be given,
the Son and Spirit blest,
who reign in highest heaven
the one eternal God,
whom heaven and earth adore;
for thus it was, is now,
and shall be evermore

The Blessing

God grant to the living, grace;
to the departed, rest;
to the Church, the Queen, the Commonwealth,
and all people, peace and concord;
and to us and all his servants, life everlasting;
and the blessing of God almighty,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
come down upon you and remain with us always.
Amen.