

Prayer for Peace, Hope and Justice

Lord Jesus we wait for you this Advent season. We wait for you to come and show us a new way. We wait, and in our waiting, we are hurried by the frenetic pace of this season. Help us to be still, so we can hear. Slow us down so we can see.

Lord we bring to you this morning those who wait by the side of the street for a job, perhaps just for the day so they can feed their families. Lord, they wait in hope, and for the most part they just wait. We pray for a world in which people will have the means to do life. We pray for a world in which students who have finished their studies will not have to wait in vain for jobs that set them up for life.

Lord we pray for those who have come from other countries to eke out a living in our country. Lord Jesus you know how it is to be a foreign national for you were born in a foreign country. We pray for those who have come from neighbouring countries as they wait in long queues to apply for permits and papers. We pray for a country and officials that treat them with kindness.

Lord we pray for many who hear the music that pronounces joy to the world as a discordant and jarring tune. Some of them hear this from their rooms in isolation as they wait for the virus to clear from their bodies before they can experience the joy of interaction with others. Some are unable to hear the songs as they are in hospital, waiting for news of when their situation will change for the better.

Lord Jesus you know the pain of loss personally and you know how it is to shed tears of grief. So we pray for those who mourn their loved ones. For some the pain is fresh and it all feels like a dream. As some of us stock up on food and clothes and drinks, they have to make difficult decisions about coffins and how long it will take for the post mortem results. They wait not so much for life, but to perform burial ceremonies. They are unable to hear songs of joy.

For some the ceremonies have been performed, and now they have an emptiness and a numbness. The season that is supposed to be joyous is too painful for words. They are unable to imagine gatherings without the one who has left them – in some families death has visited a couple of times and snatched more than one person! These days that would be filled with laughter and joy are saturated with pain and tears. They too wait Lord Jesus, for a day of relief from the heaviness of their grief.

In a world where many are struggling, Lord we think of ourselves, gripped tightly in the clasp of consumerism, fuelled especially in your name at this time. The extravagance of this season is an insult to those who are decidedly poor. The over-consumption by many of us spits in the face of those who are underfed. Lord send the power of your spirit among us and heal us of our sickness. Silence in us the voices of greed and competition and enhance the voice that speaks of generosity and cooperation.

Lord, even though some of us struggle to hear the good news of your coming, we know that you do come. Help us to quiet down and wait. In a world where instant gratification is the goal help us to learn to wait for what is really meaningful and life-giving. In a world where our eyes are fixed on phone screens and our ears plugged by earphones, help us to hear the good news of your coming, and help us to be the good news of food to those who hunger, companionship to those who are lonely and comfort to those who weep.

Please help us to be still – so we do not miss your invitation to us to birth a world that is kinder, gentler, compassionate – a world where the power of love triumphs over the love for power.

Amen.