

Prayer for Peace, Hope and Justice:
A Prayer for the Two Mass Murders in Khayelitsha

Information

In March, two mass murders took place over two weekends in Khayelitsha. First, in Monwabisi Park informal settlement in Endlovini where 5 people between the ages 25-35 were shot dead. Then in the Enkanini informal settlement where 6 people between the ages 22-27 were shot dead. The two communities are only 4 km apart from each other. The majority of the homes in the area are constructed out of corrugated iron, easily penetrated by a bullet, effectively leaving people nowhere to hide. Two attacks. Eleven dead. Please imagine if this took place in Sea Point, Claremont or Durbanville. What would be the response?

One would think that the areas that have the highest instances of violent crime would be tended to by the highest proportion of SAPS – but it's just the opposite. This is known and documented in The Commission of Inquiry into Policing in Khayelitsha that took place almost 10 years ago. The recommendations of which are still yet to be implemented...

Let us pray.

Compassionate God – hear our prayers.

The 126th psalmist says that you are the restorer of fortunes and that you return laughter and joy to those who weep and grieve.

So today we direct our prayers to you.

We ask not for restoration of fortunes because those for whom we pray have never had fortunes to begin with.

Our prayers are more conservative.

We will even forego the promise of laughter if only what causes the weeping would stop.

We ask not for fortune.

Our prayers are more humble.

All we ask is that people can go to bed at night and not have to worry about bullets penetrating the corrugated iron sheets of their homes.

All we ask is that mothers can hang out the washing on the line without being shot.

All we ask is that children playing outside their homes are not paralyzed from a bullet-shattered-spine.

All we ask is that men learn to settle their differences without guns and without drunken fists and without angry slaps to the face.

You see Lord we are not asking for a lot.

We are certainly not asking for fortunes, not even laughter and joy.

We ask simply for every act of violence that robs people of their precious and sacred lives to stop.

We pray this for all whom violence is their daily bread and tears their only drink.

We pray this for the violently traumatised people of Monwabisi and Enkanini informal settlements in Khayelitsha, who live only 25 km from here, but whose experience of life are many nightmarish worlds away.

Lord have mercy.

Compassionate God we ask you not for much.

We ask you not for all the answers of society's ills.

All we ask is that you come and shatter our complacency today.

All we ask is that you remove our indifference.

All we ask is that you dilute our fears.

All we ask is that you give us courage.

To act.

Even now.

Amen.

Psalm 126

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then it was said among the nations,
'The Lord has done great things for them.'
The Lord has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced.

Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
like the watercourses in the Negeb.
May those who sow in tears
reap with shouts of joy.
Those who go out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
carrying their sheaves.