

A CALL TO PRAY
PALM SUNDAY // 5TH APRIL 2020 // 3PM TO 4PM

Thank you for joining A Call To Pray.

The simple call behind this initiative is to get as many people as possible across the island of Ireland to pray together at the same time, during this time of great need.

So we are setting aside 3pm to 4pm on Palm Sunday (5th April) to do this together.

We do not want to be too prescriptive or to overly complicate things. The most important thing is that you commit to pray at this time. Please do not feel guilty if you cannot manage the full hour.

We would like to encourage everyone who is able to kneel down in an act of humility during the last 10 minutes. We want the heart and climax of this prayer time to be when we all kneel, in our homes, at 3.50pm. Just as Jesus humbled himself on the first Palm Sunday, riding on an infant Donkey, we want our act of worship to be one where we bow down and lift His name up.

If you are not familiar with praying, you are very welcome to join us! In fact, we would love you to join us. We sense that many people are turning to Jesus at this time of fear and confusion. We encourage you to call out to him today. We fully believe in a God who hears your prayers.

Churches and Christian Organisations

If you are a Church or Christian organisation or leader and we have not managed to contact you personally, please forgive us for that. With time constraints we are rushing to try and contact as many people as we can. However, if you have managed to get this, please now feel invited - you are now a part of this! This is for you and you can fully use this as your own initiative. Please share and stir up as much participation as you can. There are deliberately no names or badges on this initiative. This is for everyone.

Suggested Resources

If you wish to use them we have provided some guidance, simple tools and suggestions for families, along with some written prayers. We hope they help! Please feel free to use them and to pass them onto your friends, families and wider networks. Or alternatively use other resources that your church or Christian networks encourage and provide.

SUGGESTED PRAYERS

Heavenly Father in this great time of great need, we turn to you.

Jesus, we call upon your name.

Holy Spirit we cry out for you to come.

God who is merciful;

Capture our hearts,

Awaken your Church,

Heal our land.

PRAYER FOR MERCY

Lord Jesus Christ, we cry out to you for mercy. Have mercy on us Lord! We cry out to you to protect this land from the spread of the coronavirus. Shield us from this outbreak. Guard our loved ones. Stretch your hedge of protection around our neighbours. Jesus, we turn to you in faith and hope, you are the God who is able.

Scripture Reflection: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy! I look to you for protection. I will hide beneath the shadow of your wings until the danger passes by. (Psalm 57:1)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Father, you are a Holy and righteous God. Today we turn from our sin, our self-worship our self-centeredness, and our sense of entitlement. Lord let us consider how our sin grieves you. Father we repent and turn back to doing the things that please you; loving you and loving our neighbours. Forgive us where we have put ourselves first, relied on our own strength, wandered from our ways, and forgotten who you really are.

PAUSE. WAIT. BE STILL

Reflect on the things that you have put before God. Confess them. Bring them before God.

Scripture Reflection: Be exalted, O God, above the highest heavens. May your glory shine over all the earth. (Psalm 57:11)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

In this section we have put together some topics and added some written prayers and scripture responses. Please also feel free to pray about other topics and people. We have also suggested other issues at the end of this section.

If you are with family or friends, you could share out who reads the prayers and who says the responses. Or you can pray them all together. Again whatever way works best for you. Please do take time to pause, wait and be still with each topic. It is often in the silence that God speaks the loudest. If people or other issues come to your mind during the times of silence and reflection, please feel free just to pray into those and be led by God in how and who to pray for.

The Comforter

Lord, we pray for those who are grieving at this time. We pray that you draw near, that your comfort becomes tangible, that your very presence becomes more and more evident during this loss and pain. You are the God who sees us and we pray that those who are hurting and vulnerable will know that you see them today, that you draw near and that you are their Comforter.

Lord we name before you those known to us who have lost loved ones over this period, not just to coronavirus. We pray for those we know who are sick and vulnerable today.

PAUSE. WAIT. BE STILL

Pray for the people you know by name.

Response: The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:4-7)

Medical staff, carers and essential services

We lift before you all our medical staff and professionals, carers, community workers and those providing essential services. We thank you for their commitment and dedication to sacrificially serving others. We pray that your outstretched arms will embrace their helping hands on the frontline of this pandemic. Comfort and uphold them as they deal with the traumatic situations they face. Lord give them strength and tenacity in their tiredness. Protect them from infection and guard their families. Father encourage them with your gentleness and give them compassion and grace in how they serve and lead.

PAUSE. WAIT. BE STILL

Pray by name for your local hospitals, care homes, medical centres. Remember also essential services including shop workers, police and fire services, transport services, postal and council workers, etc. Pray by name for anyone you know who works in these areas.

Response: Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. (Isaiah 43:1-2)

Unemployment

Heavenly Father we pray for all those who have lost their jobs, been placed on furlough or reduced hours and for all those in fear of losing their employment. We pray for those whose businesses and livelihoods are at risk at this unprecedented time. Give them your encouragement today, directly from your Spirit and also through friends and family. May your Church rise up to be people who support one another. We pray for you to strengthen them today. Build them up in heart and mind with hope and trust and remind them of Your goodness and faithfulness. Even in this time of fearfulness and uncertainty we pray that by your Spirit you can awaken new dreams for their future. Lift the anxiety of the unexpected from their minds and give them rest for their souls we pray.

PAUSE. WAIT. BE STILL.

Pray by name for people you know who have lost jobs or are concerned about current employment

Response: Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light." (Matthew 11: 28-30)

Leaders

We thank you for our leaders. The men and women who have to make decisions that directly affect our lives. We pray for wisdom, discernment, integrity and a sense of calm in the decisions they have to make. We pray for those in government, local political leaders, head teachers, business leaders and other institutions. We pray for a sense of unity and collaboration in how they work across stressed systems and structures. We ask for clarity and your wisdom in how these leaders can help stop the spread of coronavirus and protect our society. We ask for provision and release of resources that will help maintain, protect and sustain our health system. Jesus we ask for courage where courage is needed and patience where patience is required. We pray that these men and women lead well and are supported and encouraged by the public and your Church.

PAUSE. WAIT. BE STILL.

Pray for our politicians by name. Pray for the World Health Organisation. Leaders in virus research. For Police and Public Body leaders.

Response: Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9)

Loneliness

You draw close to us when we draw close to you. You place the lonely in families (Psalm 68:6). Lord, we pray for those who are feeling the effects of isolation more than others. For those whose social activities and access to friendships and fellowship have been taken away from them at this time. Jesus draw close to them today we pray. We pray that those who are lonely can reach out to you and call upon your name. We pray that your loving touch and your presence will meet them in their isolation.

PAUSE. WAIT. BE STILL

Pray for your neighbours who may be lonely at this time. Name them in prayer and make a note to reach out to them in an appropriate way later today.

Response: How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me! (Psalm 139: 17-18)

OTHER SUGGESTED TOPICS/PEOPLE TO PRAY FOR

Refugee Camps and Poorer Nations

Fear and Trauma

Mental Health

World Economies

Education – Teachers – Home Schooling

KNEEL - CALL UPON HIS NAME:

10 MINUTES

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. (2 Chronicles 17:4)

For the last 10 minutes we would like everyone in your house to kneel (if physically possible). Find a comfortable spot. Kneel and wait on God and don't rush praying lots of words, let the silence settle.

PAUSE. WAIT. BE STILL

After a few minutes then start to cry out to God. Cry out for mercy. Cry out for forgiveness. Cry out for your need of Him. Pray as His Spirit leads you.

THE LORDS PRAYER/OUR FATHER

At 4pm close with praying the Lord's Prayer/Our Father Prayer aloud.

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,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

OPTIONAL CLOSING PRAYER:

Most merciful Father, we offer all these, our heart-felt prayers to you, in the confidence that you are a good and gracious God. You have invited us to make requests of you according to your will, in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. This we have done today in faith that you will hear our cry.

Sovereign Lord, we declare that Jesus Christ is Lord and that you Father, are in ultimate control of this world. 'The earth is yours, everything in it, the world, and all who live in it'. Lord of all, would you at this time demonstrate your rule and reign on the Earth and 'let your kingdom come, your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.' We are grateful for governments, medics and all who serve us at this time of crisis. We declare today that 'Our eyes are towards you'; in Jesus we trust.

Father we thank you for your blessing upon us as the people of this island, and all your faithfulness to us in our past. Now in this hour of desperate need we say, 'Lord, have mercy upon us!' Through the great and loving sacrifice of your Son Jesus and the outworking power and presence of the Holy Spirit, forgive us our sin and heal our land.

May we as a people again turn to you because you alone are worthy of our lives!

Amen

NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION

#PRAYING FOR YOU

At the end of our prayers today, we will all be kneeling and praying together across the land as a sign of unity and togetherness. As we do this in our homes together, we also want to turn our focus outwards as an act of prayer and a reminder to pray for our neighbours and the world around us.

As a sign of that, we invite you to make a simple sign to hang on your window or door. All you need is a felt tip and a piece of paper or cardboard and a bit of tape, or you can paint it or create something on your computer and print it off. Get creative or keep it simple! Just write down "Praying for You" and hang it in your front window or door where neighbours and callers (postmen, delivery drivers etc.) can see it. Our hope is that they'll be blessed by it and that it will be a reminder for us to pray for them.

It's a small gesture, but let's not underestimate the power of prayer.