

BOOK OF | A Better PRAYERS | Tomorrow

Praying for people who are suffering because of Covid-19 in
Ireland and Zimbabwe



Local church in Thandekile's
community. Photo credit: Cynthia
Matonhodze, Trócaire

Trócaire

PARISH PRAYER SERVICE/ REFLECTION

Trócaire now invites you to participate and reflect in a prayer service for all affected by Covid-19, particularly in Ireland and Zimbabwe.

This can be done alone or preferably with a group in your home, parish or community, in a way that is safe and in line with Covid-19 guidelines in your region.

Just as the Lord's Prayer gives Thandekile, courage, hope and strength in tough situations, we pray that this prayer service will give courage, hope and strength to many people in Ireland and Zimbabwe.

If you would like to talk to a Trócaire staff member about this prayer service, please contact: colm.hogan@trocaire.org

We start in prayer:

Opening Hymn

(optional and of your choice)

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Almighty and eternal God,
our refuge in every danger,
to whom we turn in our distress;
in faith, we pray for all those affected by Covid-19
in Ireland and Zimbabwe and all over the world

we pray for courage, hope and strength,
look with compassion on the afflicted,
grant eternal rest to the dead,
comfort to mourners, healing to the sick,
peace to the dying,
strength to healthcare workers,
wisdom to our leaders
and the courage to reach out to all in love,
so that together we may give glory to your holy
name.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Reading

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans 8:31b-39

Brothers and sisters: With God on our side who can be against us? Since God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up to benefit us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, that he will not refuse anything he can give. Could anyone accuse those that God has chosen?

When God acquits, could anyone condemn? Could Christ Jesus? No! He not only died for us – he rose from the dead, and there at God's right hand he stands and pleads for us. Nothing, therefore, can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried, or being persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or even attacked.

As scripture promised: For your sake we are being massacred daily and reckoned as sheep for the slaughter. These are the trials through which we triumph, by the power of him who loved us. For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel, no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not any power, or height or depth, nor any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The word of the Lord.

All: *Thanks be to God.*

Responsorial Psalm

(optional and of your choice)

Psalm 80:2ac and 3b, 5-7 (4b)

R. *God of hosts bring us back, let your face shine on us, and we shall be saved.*

- 1) O shepherd of Israel, hear us,
shine forth from your cherubim throne
O Lord, rouse up your might,
O Lord, come to our help. **R.**
- 2) Lord God of hosts,

how long will you frown on your people's plea?
You have fed them with tears for their bread,
and abundance of tears for their drink. **R.**

Gospel Acclamation

(spoken or sung)

Praise and honour to you, O Lord Jesus Christ!

Gospel Reading (John 17:24-26)

A reading from the Gospel according to John
Glory to you, O Lord.

Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, so that they may always see the glory you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. Father, Righteous One, the world has not known you, but I have known you and these have known that you have sent me. I have made your name known to them and will continue to make it known, so that the love with which you loved me may be in them and so that I may be in them.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you Lord, Jesus Christ.

Prayers of the Faithful

- 1) We pray for the people of Zimbabwe and Ireland. May our prayers be lifted up to you, Lord, for change to come to the most vulnerable in our world and for them to be inspired with courage, hope and strength. **Lord hear us.**
- 2) For all women and men who are suffering because of domestic violence here in Ireland and in Zimbabwe, whose dignity is never forgotten by God; and for all those who are helping them. We remember staff from Trócaire and their partner organisations, such as Caritas Bulawayo, who are walking the daily journey with these women and men.
Lord hear us.
- 3) We pray for Thandekile, Nomatter and Forward, whose stories we hear about this Lent. May their strength in the face of great adversity inspire us all in Ireland to pray and act generously on their behalf. **Lord hear us.**
- 4) We pray for an end to the drought in Zimbabwe, which is caused by climate change, that we will all grow in love, responsibility and respect for our common home. **Lord hear us.**
- 5) We pray for the work of Trócaire. We thank God for the generosity of the Irish people that enables the work of Trócaire to continue in countries such as Zimbabwe. **Lord hear us.**

6) As our world continues to deal with Covid-19, we pray for an equitable distribution of vaccines, especially in low-income countries, so that people everywhere will be protected.

Lord hear us.

7) For all migrants, refugees and asylum seekers who have died; for all experiencing homelessness who have died; and for all who were ignored, forgotten and cast out by their communities – and even their loved ones – who have died. **Lord hear us.**

8) For all members of our families who have died, who gifted us with their gentle care, wisdom and support. We remember people in our own parish and parishes in Zimbabwe who have lost loved ones to Covid-19, in particular we remember Donovan, the husband of Thandekile who very sadly died from Covid-19.

Lord hear us.

Moment of Silence

Let us now pause for a moment of silence in remembrance of all who have died of Covid-19 in Ireland, Zimbabwe and throughout the world.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

And let perpetual light shine upon them.

May they rest in peace.

Amen.

May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

'The Lord's Prayer gives me courage, hope and strength in tough situations.' (Thandekile)

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.

Amen.

Reflection

(Adapted from the 2020 Easter Message of the Catholic Bishops of Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe)



Thandekile and Nomatter fetching water. It is clear how dry the land is. Photo credit: Cynthia Matonhodze, Trócaire

God's healing hand

To our brothers and sisters who have contracted and are suffering due to Covid-19, we pray that God's healing hand may rest upon you.

To medical doctors, nurses and the supporting staff who are on the frontline of the fight against Covid-19, may the Good Lord sustain you and inspire you to render your life-saving services with due care, love and compassion.

To all those who have lost their loved ones due to the Covid-19 outbreak, we convey our deepest sympathies.

We pray that their souls, through God's mercy, may rest in eternal peace.

We pray that God may grant all bereaved families his consolation and strengthen their faith and hope in Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord.

Amen.

Closing Prayer

May the Father of mercies and God of all consolation,
pursue you with untiring love,
comfort you in your loss and sorrow,
gently wipe every tear from your eyes,
and lift you from the depths of grief.

May you be given courage, hope and strength
May the love and peace of the Lord, Jesus Christ,
sustain you in hope until at last
you are reunited with those you love.

May almighty God bless and console you,
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Closing Hymn

(optional and of your choice)

Additional Prayers

(for use during communion reflections, at the start of pastoral council meetings or for personal prayer)

1) Praise Be to You, Creator of All Things

Come to us, dear Lord and plant the seeds of compassion in our hearts
and grant our leaders wisdom to make the changes we need to see,
so that your earth and your people can thrive as you planned.

Reach out your loving arms to all your brothers and sisters,

and renew our love for you, our planet, and all living creatures.

Grant us peace in our hearts as we remain hopeful for change.

Guide us with presence as we continue to commit ourselves to work for climate justice.

(Janet Twomey, Trócaire)

2) Prayer of Caritas Bulawayo

God our Father of mercy and goodness we thank you for the gift of the whole creation and especially our country Zimbabwe with all its beauty and resources. We as your stewards of creation come before you seeking your mercy and blessings. You have entrusted us with many talents and gifts. We offer all our talents and gifts to you to serve the people of this country. Grant us a heart to care for your creation. Bless our efforts with your peace and protection. Protect our land and people. Protect us from all dangers to body and soul. Grant us a heart full of peace and care so that we respect each other and live as your beloved children. Bless all our benefactors and friends for their generosity and help. May your kingdom be realised in our daily lives.

Amen.

(Prayer translated from Ndebele, the local language spoken in Matabeleland South and Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe)

Umkhuleko we Caritas Bulawayo

Nkulunkulu Baba wethu olesihawu lothando, siyakubonga ngesipho sakho, lakho konke owakudala kulo umhlaba. Sicela isihawu sakho lezibusiso, ikakhulu thina abalondolozisi bakho konke okudalwe nguwe. Ngalezi ziphiwo owasinika zona, sizinikela kuwe ukuba senelise ukuba zinceku zakho, ikakhulu elizweni lethu leZimbabwe. Siphe umoya wokunakekela konke okudalwe nguwe, njalo ubusise imizamo yethu ngokuthula kwakho. Vikela abantwana bakho kuzozonke izingozi zomphefumulo kanye lezomzimba. Siphe inhliziyi egcwele ukuthula, isineke lokuhlonipha, njalo siphile njengabantwana bakho abathandekayo, ngaso sonke isikhathi. Busisa bonke abasiphathisayo ngesandla esilomusa njalo esiphayo. Umbuso wakho mawufezwe ezimpilweni zethu. Amen. (Archbishop Alex Thomas, Archbishop of Bulawayo)

3) Reflection from the Book of Isaiah (Isaiah 58:6, 10)

Is not this, the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

If you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.

4) A Prayer of Gratitude You Are Enough

If you can still weep at injustice, you are enough.

If your eyes are dry but you are moved to act, you are enough.

If you can extend a hand to the hopeless, you are enough.

If all you have to give is a tender thought, you are enough.

If you will not abide by the exploitation of others, you are enough.

If your soul feels the suffering of our sisters and brothers in poverty, you are enough.

And if you can imagine a world made better one life at a time because you cared,

You – remarkable, kind, compassionate, you – are so much more than enough. (*Trócaire*)

5) The Lord's Prayer (Conversation with God): Courage, Hope and Strength

(In two parts: the prayer is in bold and God's response follows)

Our Father who art in heaven.

Yes?

Don't interrupt me. I'm praying.

But – you called *me*!

**Called you? No, I didn't call you. I'm praying.
Our Father who art in heaven.**

There – you did it again!

Did what?

Called *me*. You said, 'Our Father who art in heaven.' Well, here I am. What's on your mind?

But I didn't mean anything by it. I was, you know, just saying my prayers for the day. I always say the Lord's Prayer. It makes me feel good, kind of like fulfilling a duty.

Well, all right. Go on.

Okay, hallowed be thy name.

Hold it right there. What do you mean by that?

By what? By 'hallowed be thy name'? It means, it means ... good grief, I don't know what it means. How in the world should I know? It's just a part of the prayer. By the way, what does it mean?

It means 'honoured', 'holy', 'wonderful'.

Hey, that makes sense. I never thought about what 'hallowed' meant before.

Thanks. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Do you really mean that?

Sure, why not?

What are you doing about it?

Doing? Why, nothing, I guess. I just think it would be good if you got control of everything down here like you have up there. We're kind of in a mess down here, you know.

Yes, I know; but have I got control of you?

Well, I go to church.

That isn't what I asked you. What about your bad temper? You've really got a problem there, you know. And maybe you could look after the environment better and treat others with respect and dignity.

Now hold on just a minute! Stop picking on me! I'm just as good as some of the rest of those people at church!

Excuse *me*. I thought you were praying for my will to be done. If that is to happen, it will have to start with the ones who are praying for it. Like you – for example.

Oh, all right. I guess I do have some hang ups. Now that you mention it, I could probably name some others.

So could I.

I haven't thought about it very much until now, but I really would like to cut out some of those things. I would like to, you know, be really free.

Good. Now we're getting somewhere. We'll work together – you and me. I'm proud of you.

Look, Lord, if you don't mind, I need to finish up here. This is taking a lot longer than it usually does.

Praying is a dangerous thing. You just might get what you ask for. Remember, you called me – and here I am. It's too late to stop now. Keep praying. ... Well, go on.

I'm scared to.

Scared? Of what?

I know what you'll say.

Try me.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

What about Ann?

See? I knew it! I knew you would bring her up! Why, Lord, she's told lies about me, spread stories. She never paid back the money she owes me. I've sworn to get even with her!

But – your prayer. What about your prayer?

I didn't ... mean it.

Well, at least you're honest. But it's quite a load carrying around all that bitterness and resentment, isn't it?

Yes, but I'll feel better as soon as I get even with her. Boy, have I got some plans for her. She'll wish she had never been born.

No, you won't feel any better. You'll feel worse. Revenge isn't sweet. You know how unhappy you are. Well, I can change that.

You can? How?

Forgive Ann. Then, I'll forgive you; and the hate and the sin will be Ann's problem – not yours. You will have settled the problem as far as you are concerned.

Oh, you know, you're right. You always are. And more than I want revenge, I want to be right with you. (sigh) All right, all right. I forgive her.

There now! Wonderful! How do you feel?

Hmmm. Well, not bad. Not bad at all! In fact, I feel pretty great! You know, I don't think I'll go to bed uptight tonight. I haven't been getting much rest, you know.

Yeah, I know. But you're not through with your prayer, are you? Go on.

Oh, all right. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Yeah. I know. Okay.

Go ahead. Finish your prayer.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Do you know what would bring me glory? What would really make me happy?

No, but I'd like to know. I want to please you now. I've really made a mess of things. I want to truly follow you. I can see now how great that would be. So, tell me – how do I make you happy?

You just did.

(Adapted from: <https://d2y1pz2y630308.cloudfront.net/1309/documents/2020/3/Lords%20Prayer%20conversation%20with%20God.pdf>)