

St. John's and St. Columba's Strathpray

Let us pray for one another and for the world ...

Sunday September 7th Creation 1.

'Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you.' James 4:7,8.

'Lions in Africa have a particular strategy in hunting gazelle. The oldest male lion positions himself upwind of the herd of gazelle. He's slow, weak, and toothless, but still has an intimidating roar. The younger more agile members of the pack then sneak downwind and hide in the tall grass. Once all of them are in position, the old man lets out a might roar. The gazelles look up, catch his scent, and then flee in the opposite direction, right into the jaws of the hidden lions.'



*How often the devil seeks to make us flee by sowing fear. But, as James wrote, the devil will flee as we resist him and face our fears. The devil **"prowls around like an angry lion, looking for someone to devour."** (1 Peter 5:7) – but is no match for Jesus who is "the Lion of Judah". So next time you hear the roar and feel your fears, don't flee. Rather go for the roar, move through your fears and you will invariably discover that they don't have as many "teeth" as you thought they would.' (Simon Guillebaud)*

Lord, I choose to face my fears today. Amen.

We pray for the congregation of St. Columba, Nairn: Alison Simpson, Marion Keston, Blayne Peacock. Lay Reader: Pat Ellison.

Monday September 8th

'We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.' 2 Corinthians 4:9.

In the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games, British athlete Derek Redmond was running in the 400m. This was the culmination of months and even years of gruelling training, with his dad as trainer and coach. In the semi-final heat, he was out in front when his hamstring suddenly went, and he pulled up in agony. The race continued and finished whilst he was writhing in pain. He dragged himself to his feet, and hobbled forward, lifting his injured leg step by step.



The crowd rose to its feet and cheered him onwards. The pain was so excruciating – but then a grey-haired plump man jumped over the railings, evaded security officials, and ran towards him. Many people wept as they watched him put his arms around Derek's waist and whisper encouragements in his ear. Together they made it to the finishing line. The other man was his father.

Similarly with us, the Holy Spirit comes alongside each of us wounded athletes. He helps carry us the rest of the way. And he is the only one who can do it, because he is the only one who knows what we've been through and what lies ahead.

The apostle Paul, like Derek Redmond, was “struck down but not destroyed”. May we be the same through the toughest of times.’ (Simon Guillebaud – Choose Life)

Lord, I resolve to get back up whenever I take a hit and to live in the power of your Spirit today. Amen.

On International Literacy Day, we pray for those who have no access to education.

Tuesday September 9th

‘Now that you realize how kind the Lord has been to you, put away all evil, deception, envy, and fraud.’ 1 Peter 2:2.

‘Successful businessman Jerry Singleton grew attached to a little boy who was his regular shoe shiner at the train station. The boy was always meticulous in his work, which impressed Jerry. One day, Jerry asked him why he was so conscientious about his work. The boy replied, “Sir, I’m a follower of Jesus, and I try to shine every pair of shoes as if he himself were wearing them.”

Years later, Jerry reflected on how he’d seen something so deeply genuine in that shoeshine boy that it proved to be the catalyst to his decision to begin reading the Bible, and then deciding to become a follower of Christ himself. He credited his salvation to the little boy who shined every pair of shoes “as if Jesus Christ were wearing them”.

Charles Spurgeon once asked a cleaner who was a recent convert what difference choosing to follow Jesus had made in her life. Rather timidly she replied, “Well Sir, I now sweep under the doormats.”

Choosing to follow Jesus totally changes how we live our lives. Or at least it should do. Today’s verse shows the purpose and power of living an attractively different good life.’ (Simon Guillebaud)

Lord, I choose to live a good life for your glory today. Amen.

We pray for those who exercise influence in online culture.



Wednesday September 10th

‘Little children, let us stop just saying we love people; let us really love them, and show it by our actions.’ 1 John 3:18.

‘One overloaded pastor turned away a homeless lady seeking help, telling her he was too busy, but he assured her he would pray for her. She wrote the following poem and gave it to her local Shelter officer:

“I was hungry, and you formed a humanities group to discuss my hunger.

I was imprisoned, and you crept off quietly to your chapel and prayed for my release.



I was naked, and in your mind you debated the morality of my appearance.

I was sick, and you knelt and thanked God for your health.

I was homeless, and you preached a sermon on the spiritual shelter of the love of God.

I was lonely, and you left me alone to pray for me.

You seem so holy, so close to God but I am still very

hungry, and lonely, and cold.”

Our world grows weary of armchair prophets who only advise, and talk, and do nothing. But a body of people willing to serve, to give themselves, to forgive, to love – that group of people is enough to change the world.

How about you. Are you ready to “walk your talk”? Jesus did, and he calls us to join him. What might that look like today?’ (Simon Guillebaud)

Lord, I choose to walk the talk and not just talk a good game. Amen.

We pray for those suffering as a result of major conflicts in the world.

Thursday September 11th

‘GOD is always on the alert, constantly on the lookout for people who are totally committed to him. You were foolish to go for human help when you could have had God’s help.’ 2 Chronicles 16:9.

‘A chicken and a pig were chatting by the farm fence when a commercial truck pulled up. Emblazoned on the side was a photo of some crispy bacon rashers and a few lightly fried eggs. The chicken salivated and said, “That looks so tasty!” The pig replied, “No way! For you it’s just a small contribution but for me it requires my very life!” Will I present myself as a living sacrifice to God? That includes my hopes and dreams, my frustrations and disappointments, my bank account, hobbies, relationships, career, health, time, and more. He calls for, and is worthy of, full commitment.’ (Simon Guillebaud)



Lord, help me to surrender control willingly of every area of my life to you today. Amen. We pray for journalists, editors, photographers and others in the news media.

Friday September 12th

‘By taking it on Himself, Jesus in a sense dignified pain. Of all the kinds of lives He could have lived, He chose a suffering one. Because of Jesus, I can never say about a person, “He must be suffering because of some sin he committed”; Jesus, who did not sin, also felt pain. And I cannot say, “Suffering and death must mean God has forsaken us; He’s left us alone to self-destruct”; because, even though Jesus dies, His death became the great victory of history, pulling man and God together. God made a supreme good out of that awful day.

*Jesus’ followers are not insulated from the tragedies of this world, just as He was not. Rather, Peter could say to suffering Christians, “**This suffering is all part of the work God has given you. Christ, who suffered for you, is your example. Follow in his steps.**” (1Peter2:21) (Philip Yancey – Where Is God When It Hurts?)*



O Lord, you can only lead when I will follow. Help me to trust you in all things and at all times – you, who know the end from the beginning. Amen.

We pray for those who have suffered the death of a child.

Saturday September 13th

‘And you pinned him to a cross and killed him. But God untied the death ropes and raised him up. Death was no match for him.’ Acts 2:24.

‘There are times when all seems lost, when nothing can save us from our troubles.

“But God ...” may be one of the best phrases in the Bible.

“But God remembered Noah ...” (Gen. 8)

“But God intended it for good ...” (Gen. 50)

“But God can be trusted ...” (Ps.52)

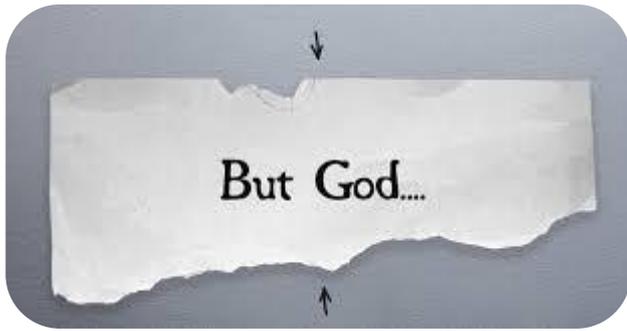
“But God has blessed you ...” (Matt. 13:16)

“But God knows your hearts ...” (Luke 16)

“But God can do anything ...” (Mark 10)

Jesus was in the grave but God raised Him up from death.

Is there anything beyond God’s care?’ (5 Minutes



Of Grace)

God be in my head, and in my understanding. God be in my eyes, and in my looking. God be in my mouth, and in my speaking. God be in my heart, and in my thinking. God be at my end, and at my departing. Amen.

We pray for all who work in the Diocesan Office.



“For I know the plans I have for you,”
declares the Lord,
“plans to prosper you and not to harm you,
plans to give you hope and a future.
Then you will call on me
and come and pray to me, and
I will listen to you.
You will seek me with
all your heart.
Jeremiah 29