

Transformation – NOW!
LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR

Welcome

Wherever there is love, there is God.

What kind of love is God's love?

It is a love that forgives...and then forgives...
and then forgives again.

It is a love that rolls up its sleeves
and gets involved with caring and mending and building.

It is a love that is quite happy to be considered a fool,
to be considered weak.

It is a love that goes on giving but keeps no accounts.

This is the nature of God's love.

by Susan Sayers

Hymn: Brother, sister, let me serve you

sung by St Martin's Voices

Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace
to let you be my servant, too.

We are pilgrims on a journey,
and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christlight for you
in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh, I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow
till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven,
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace
to let you be my servant, too.

Richard Gillard (born 1953)
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Music/Adm. by *Song Solutions CopyCare,*
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Bible Reading: Mark 12: 28-34 (*Living Bible*)

One of the teachers of religion who was standing there listening to the discussion realized that Jesus had answered well. So he asked, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

Jesus replied, "The one that says, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only God. And you must love him with all your heart and soul and mind and strength.'

"The second is: 'You must love others as much as yourself.' No other commandments are greater than these."

The teacher of religion replied, “Sir, you have spoken a true word in saying that there is only one God and no other. And I know it is far more important to love him with all my heart and understanding and strength, and to love others as myself, than to offer all kinds of sacrifices on the altar of the Temple.”

Realizing this man’s understanding, Jesus said to him, “You are not far from the Kingdom of God.” And after that, no one dared ask him any more questions.

Reflection – The absent Samaritan

It's hard to relate, Lord.

People in need. Millions of people.

Whether they're refugees, or leprosy sufferers,
or people without food.

Living in countries I don't know.

Names I can't pronounce in languages I don't understand.

They're a long way away, just pictures.

Cardboard cutouts, with no more reality
than the picture on the back of a Kellogg's packet.

Even those nearer home are distant from my experience.

Statistics.

There's safety in numbers.

I can forget the humanity behind them.

Men, women, children, who feel, and laugh, and cry.

Not much laughter though, more crying.

Tears watering the parched ground, irrigating seeds of pain.

The only crop that grows in the desert.

I could hide behind the questions.

Why does it happen? Why so much suffering?

I could blame others.

Politicians. Exploiters. Arms salesmen.

Multinational corporations. Currency manipulators.

That's fashionable - and true.

Why, Lord?

I hide behind the questions, and do nothing,

waiting for an answer because I'm scared.

Overwhelmed. Frightened to get involved.

Like turning away from a drunk in the gutter.

And who is my neighbour? I can't argue. Lord, I know.

And the Absent Samaritan?

Yes, Lord, I know that too.

I know the answer has to begin with me.

Maybe I can't do a lot (more than I know, did you say?)

but I can do something.

Together with others, together with you

I can spread your love around.

Show me how.

So that through me, today,

Someone may catch a glimpse of your love.

May find new life and hope.

May find the open door into your kingdom.

And, Lord, as I pray for people in need,

as I hear the crying far away,

let me not be deaf to the cry next door.

Eddie Askew

Anthem: A new commandment

sung by St Martin's Voices

A new commandment I give unto you:

that you love one another as I have loved you.

By this shall all men know that you are my disciples,

if you have love for one another.

Let not your heart be troubled:
believe in God, believe also in me.

Richard Shephard
John 13. 34-35

Mary Sumner's prayer

All this day, O Lord

**let me touch as many lives as possible for thee;
and every life I touch,
do thou by thy spirit quicken,
whether through the word I speak,
the prayer I breathe,
or the life I live.**

Amen.

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Intercessions

Forgive me for the times I have tried to make
carrying my cross more comfortable.

I have been too concerned with finding things to make it easier;
gadgets and toys to make my cross lighter, smaller, and cushioned.

Forgive me for making excuses

and not going with you because I was worried about
my health, safety, reputation, loneliness, financial security,
and ability to handle extreme weather and getting dirty.

Forgive me for focusing on my comfort rather than my character.

Forgive me for the times I have not followed you
because it wasn't convenient.

I didn't want to go out of my way to see the needs around me
because then I would feel guilty for not doing something about them.

Forgive me for not loving my neighbours—

I don't even know their names.

Forgive me for trying to pacify my conscience
by giving just enough to feel good about myself
but not enough to inconvenience my lifestyle.
Today, Lord,
I once again take up my cross and follow you.
Shake me of my complacency;
I want to live daily with an urgency
to radically be the change you call me to be.
Strip me of my comforts;
may my love for you be a driving force to live with joyful surrender.
Scratch out my schedule;
I don't want my circumstances or timeline
to influence my dedication and obedience
to take up my cross and follow you.
Here I am; Send Me.

from a prayer by Hila

Hymn: I, the Lord of sea and sky

sung by St Martin's Voices

I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord.

Is it I, Lord?

I have heard you calling in the night.

I will go, Lord, if you lead me.

I will hold your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them. They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send?

Chorus

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?

Chorus

Daniel L. Schutte (born 1947)
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Closing prayer

written by Richard Bott

In a world that cries out, "Fear me!"
We will listen to Jesus' words,
"Don't be afraid!"

In a world that wants us to hate the other...
We will live Jesus' call to,
"Love God.
Love your neighbour, as you love yourself."

In a world that radicalizes...

We, too, will be radical.

Radical with our hospitality.

Radical with our hope.

Radical with our love.

Amen

Material: as stated

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**Thursday Prayers next month will be on
10th August 2023 – Mary Sumner**