

Good Friday – God sharing in the suffering of the world

A prayerful reflection to help us pray for those in need around us whilst remembering the events we commemorate today.

We pray today for those who are anxious or filled with fear, either for their own safety or for the wellbeing of those they love.

Worry and fear can take hold us, even when we know it is irrational, even though statistically we're far more likely to be safe than to be harmed. Sometimes we can be overwhelmed by it.

The Christ who was overwhelmed with sorrow and pleaded with his Father that the cup of suffering might be taken from him, knows your anxieties and your fears.

Sister, brother, we pray for you.

We pray today for those being separated from their loved ones due to hospitalisation with corona virus.

When those we love, and have perhaps spent most of our lives with, are suddenly taken from us the sense of loss and isolation are immense, the desire to be with them overwhelming.

The Christ who was taken from his friends and followers by the soldiers in Gethsemane, knows your pain and how bereft you are, He feels your loneliness.

Sister, brother, we pray for you.

We pray today for those who are filled with remorse for being careless about social contact with others which may, inadvertently, have passed the virus to them.

Hindsight harshly illuminates our past decisions, all the more so if we consciously thought "it'll be fine" when now we know it wasn't.

The Christ who was disowned by Peter, despite the warning He'd given him, is also the Christ who forgave Peter and called him anew to share in his work of reconciliation and healing.

Sister, brother, we pray for you.

We pray today for those who are suffering at the hands of others

Weeks of being confined together, and the frustrations that come with that, have led to an increase in domestic violence and will be impacting on the wellbeing of children too.

The Christ who suffered a fearful beating at the hands of the Roman soldiers, knows the physical and emotional pain that comes from being at the mercy of those who are cruel or want to vent their frustration on you.

Sister, brother, we pray for you.

We pray today for those who are in intensive care and fearful for their lives.

When other symptoms lead to breathlessness and hospitalisation, the sense of fear must become overwhelming, especially with the separation from loved ones that is also necessary.

The Christ who walked the lonely road to Calvary, bearing his own cross, knew the fear of death despite the promise of resurrection. He knows your fears and walks your lonely road with you.

Sister, brother, we pray for you.

We pray today for those medical staff who are putting themselves in places of risk, in order to care for those who are ill.

When people have a potentially lethal contagious disease our natural desire is to stay away from them. But the role of a nurse or doctor, and the compassion that called so many to that work, puts them at their bedside instead. May they be protected in their work.

The Christ who suffered on the cross, took encouragement from the women who braved the crowds & the soldiers to be with him in His time of need. He knows your compassion and rejoices in you.

Sister, brother, we pray for you.

We pray today for those at the point of despair.

When our anxieties for ourselves or others take hold, or we are unable to see our way out of the current situation, we can descend into a hopelessness and despair that seems to overwhelm our faith.

The Christ who cried out, *“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”*, has gone before us into the place of deepest despair. We will encounter Him there and find resurrection through Him.

Sister, brother, we pray for you.

We pray today for those who have lost their lives to this disease, and their loved ones.

When our perception is so often limited to this life, death seems the ultimate disaster, the crushing of everything we hold dear. The dead are gone and the bereaved are hollowed out by their sense of loss.

The Christ who lifeless body was taken down from the cross, was not only raised to life again Himself, but assured all who put their trust in Him, *“even if you die, yet shall you live.”* May the light of this promise shine in the darkness.

Sister, brother, we pray for you.

We give thanks today that Good Friday is not the end of the story.

The Christ whose cruel execution we remember today, could not be contained by death.

On Easter Day we shall celebrate his resurrection and give thanks for the hope of life eternal that Christ's life, death and resurrection brings to all.

Sister, brother, may God's light overwhelm whatever darkness you face and fill you with hope and joy!