

OUT OF THE DEPTHS

- Psalm 130:1

**A TIME OF
PRAYER AND REFLECTION
WITH
BISHOP JOHN HARROWER
FOR
THOSE WHO HAVE SUFFERED
FROM ABUSE**

**LENT
2004**

THE BISHOP WILL GREET ALL PRESENT

Welcome to this service of prayer and reflection

Some are here because you personally have experienced the destructive effects of sexual abuse either in the church,... in your home,... or in your community.

Some are here because you wish to support survivors of abuse and pray for them.

Some are here to repent before God this great evil that was done in our church – and it was a great evil – I wish to take this opportunity to apologise unreservedly to any who were abused in any way by Anglican Church workers. I am very, very sorry. It should never have happened.

So for all these reasons, let us come to God together – and I include myself in this time of prayer and reflection.

We meet in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

We have come here this evening:

from city and country,
from large and small communities,
from pain and disillusionment, from anger and
confusion, from sadness, looking for hope.

We come together:

to raise our hearts and voices and our very selves
to God,
in the hope that through lament, yet in faith, each
may be touched in their brokenness, and know the
transforming and surpassing power of God's
healing love.

Then follows this prayer:

God of the dispossessed,
defender of the helpless,
and liberator of the oppressed:
enliven us to hear the murmur of pain,
to grow in compassion for others,
and to sense a deep longing for you,
the source of life and love,

deep within us and far beyond us.
We ask this in the name of him who came
with healing in his wings,
even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The Bishop leads in the prayer:

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord:
Lord, hear my voice.

There is no place where you cannot reach.
Lord, hear my voice.

There is no journey which you have not travelled.
Lord, hear my voice.

There are no people beyond your care.
Lord, hear my voice.

A Reading from
Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians (4:6-11)

God, who said, 'Let light shine out of the
darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give
us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in
the face of Christ.

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show
that this all-surpassing power is from God and not
from us.

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.

We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.

After a time of silence
there will follow a reading from the Gospel according to
John (10: 10b-18)

Jesus said:

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away – and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for sheep.

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice, So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.

For the Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PARTICIPATIVE PRAYER

The Psalms give us a model of bringing to God all our trials and our struggles. This prayer takes up that theme, and is a cry to God written by a survivor of abuse. You may like to join in the responses in bold letters.

O Holy God hear us as we cry out to you.
Our pain is more than we can bear alone.

Unable to forget the violation done to us;
Still bearing the marks of our wounds;
We cry to you, O Lord.

Struggling to overcome our fears;
Mourning our loss of innocence;
We cry to you, O Lord.

Not knowing where to turn in misery and isolation;
Wondering how your grace permitted this;
Bowed down by the weakness of human frailty;
We cry to you, O Lord.

Longing for families who can bear our truths with us;
Looking for justice where none seems possible;
We cry to you, O Lord.

Searching for the kind of faith that once sustained us;
In shame and confusion, wanting to stand safe and secure again;
We cry to you, O Lord

Hoping for justice and peace;
Seeking the courage to face our own demons;
Wanting to put all this behind us;
We cry to you, O Lord

Outraged by the actions of those who should have known better;
Bearing with one another burdens not of our own making;
Looking for your guidance and direction;
We cry to you, O Lord

Amidst the shattered images of godliness and ministry;
Out of the darkness of our despair;
Not even knowing how to help each other or where to go from here;
We cry to you, O Lord.
We cry to a Saviour who also suffered.
We seek your mercy, your healing, your hope.

A TIME OF REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

You may prefer to remain seated and reflect, or you may choose to participate in one or more of the following:

- to place a stone at the foot of the cross as a sign of surrendering your burden to the power of Christ.
- to be prayed for and anointed with oil.
- to be prayed for with the laying on of hands.
- to light a candle inviting the light of Christ to shine in the darkness.
- to kneel or sit in your pew and in silent prayer to repent before God over what has happened in our church, and to pray for those who have been abused.

At an appropriate time, the Bishop will lead this devotion:

A SONG OF THE WILDERNESS

from Isaiah 35

The wilderness and the dry land shall rejoice,
the desert shall blossom and burst into song.

**They shall see the Glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.**

Strengthen the weary hands,
And make firm the feeble knees.

**Say to the anxious, 'Be strong, fear not,
your God is coming with judgment,
coming with judgment to save you.'**

Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

**Then shall the lame leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy.**

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
The ransomed of the Lord shall return with
singing,
with everlasting joy upon their heads.

**Joy and gladness shall be theirs,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.**

THE BLESSING

May Christ our crucified Saviour
draw you to himself, that you find in him
unconditional love,
a firm support for hope,
light and comfort for your journey;
and the blessing of God,
Creator and Redeemer,
giver of life and love,
be with you all, now and forever. **Amen.**

FOLLOWING THE SERVICE

After the service counsellors and others will be available to provide an opportunity for any who wish to speak out their story or seek support. A second group is available to pray for those who desire it.

*"The Spirit helps us
in our weakness.
We do not know what
we ought to pray for,
but the Spirit himself
intercedes for us
with groans that words
cannot express."*

(Romans 8:26)

I sincerely thank each one of you
for sharing in this time of
prayer and reflection
with me.

Bishop John Harrower

This service is adapted from a Liturgy of Lament prepared by Future Church, Cleveland Ohio 44111 USA www.futurechurch.org who gives permission for its use. A survivor of abuse suggested the use of this service in the Diocese of Tasmania.