

### **Intercessions prepared by Judith Shaw**

Lord, we know how you valued and took time to pray. Following your example, we come before you with our prayers of intercession.

We pray for our World weighed down and preoccupied with the current pandemic. May a spirit of international cooperation and goodwill prevail. As leaders in all fields of endeavour come to a fuller understanding of the disease, may advances in its treatment and the development of a vaccine become widely available and unstintingly shared between all nations regardless of race colour creed or economic status.

Under current circumstances it is easy to forget that parts of the world continue to face catastrophic natural and man-made disasters. Monsoon rains are flooding Mumbai and extreme temperatures and heatwave conditions in the northern hemisphere are seriously affecting places like California and Honshu, Japan. Political unrest accompanied by violence is escalating in Belarus where strong women are mounting a fearless opposition to the intimidating suppression and arrest of their male colleagues. The Beirut Explosion and its aftermath is having a disastrous effect on the people of Lebanon, a country already torn apart by political chaos and corruption. Wherever and whatever the need we pray that your guiding presence may be there.

Over the last week we commemorated the end of the War in the Pacific 75 years ago. We pray that leaders may reflect on the grief and destruction suffered when nations fail to resolve their differences in an atmosphere of constructive dialogue. May they be totally committed to peace and not see Sabre rattling as a solution.

### **We pray for our Nation.**

We are thankful that in the early days of the pandemic leaders put aside personal ideologies in service of the common good. Politicians met with big business and union leaders and listened to experts. The load of leadership and the months of steering their way through unfamiliar waters is exacting a heavy toll and fractures are appearing in the spirit of bipartisanship. We pray that their strength may be renewed knowing that they have community support. We pray that criticism of their endeavours may be offered constructively, fairly and in an unbiased manner and blaming others take no part.

Newspapers report that victims of domestic violence and alcoholism have increased under lockdown and quarantine conditions. We pray for all who are defenceless – the young, the disabled and elderly members of our society, whose professional care is often unthinkingly delegated to undertrained underpaid and undervalued casual workers with disastrous outcomes for both cared for and carers. We pray that the decision makers may exercise leadership realising that the value of a human life cannot be measured in dollars and cents, that we diminish our own humanity when we put profit before people.

We pray for all those workers who quietly carry out the essential services which we take for granted and upon which we depend for our survival. Open our eyes to the risk they are taking and the personal sacrifices they are making.

We pray for all those who have lost their jobs and whose futures seem bleak and uncertain. Provide them with physical, mental and emotional support. Create in our society an awareness that we have a responsibility to care for the vulnerable, the needy and the weakest among us.

Help those who are stridently asserting their human rights, realise that they may be seriously endangering the human rights of others. They are compromising the life and health of the community when they ignore professional advice, refusing to accept restrictions on their movements or wearing a mask when advised to do so

We pray that from the present crisis we may learn valuable lessons and that many of the systems under which we have been functioning are inadequate and need reviewing. Help us to create a post pandemic future that is brighter, more equitable and caring for all.

### **We pray for our church and local community.**

We pray for St Ninians and Benedictus where caring bonds of friendship are so valued. Help us to remain alert to the needs of all our church community whether physically able to worship in our buildings or at home via the wonders of email and the internet. May everyone feel connected and may no one fall between the cracks.

With fear, loneliness or depression threatening our well being we find it difficult to shift from overwhelming negative thoughts associated with the pandemic. Create in us an appreciation of simple pleasures to be found in books, music, art, even a stimulating telephone conversation with a family member or friend. Attune our senses to the beauty that surrounds us. While walking in fresh air and sunshine, open our eyes to see the early spring blossoms that are starting to peep out, and bulbs beginning to burst into bloom. Open our ears to the sounds of magpies warbling in suburban gardens as they cheekily souvenir materials for their nest building. Help us to appreciate periods of quietness and silence. In them let us find your love, peace and serenity.

We pray that the life and love of Jesus may motivate all that we do and be evident in our living and loving. We acknowledge that God lives in us and God cares through us. We are privileged to give God human expression. Amen.