



ST NINIAN'S UNITING CHURCH
PRAYERS AND REFLECTION
MARCH 25TH 2026
BASED ON HEBREWS 10:4-10



Hebrews 10:4-10

The offering of Jesus' body sanctifies us

10:4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

10:5 Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me;

10:6 in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure.

10:7 Then I said, 'See, I have come to do your will, O God' (in the scroll of the book it is written of me)."

10:8 When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law),

10:9 then he added, "See, I have come to do your will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second.

10:10 And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Lord today is a sacred day as we rejoice in the miraculous union of divinity and humanity. Thank you for the willingness of Mary, who embraced her calling of mother to Jesus with faith and courage. May Mary's humble acceptance be an inspiration to me in my response to your call upon my life. Grant me the grace to spread your love and light, in my effort to become more Christlike filled with compassion and hope. May I always seek to be your hands and feet, reflecting your glory in all that I do. Amen

PRAYER OF THANKS, PRAISE AND CONFESSION

Thank you, Lord, for brave people like Mary who are prepared to go against the flow
Thank you, Lord, for doing for us that which we cannot – becoming the Holy Sacrifice
Thank you, Lord, for leading me towards the path of peaceful offering through the birth, death and resurrection of Christ.

Praise be to God for bringing Christ into the world

Praise be to God for the passing of the old way of making sacrifices and bringing in a new way of knowing forgiveness and mercy for our sins through the blood of Christ shared at Your Holy Table.

Praise be to God for the hope in eternal life that fills empty spaces and conversations

Forgive me Lord when I doubt what Jesus has done for me

Forgive me Lord when I take pleasure in the suffering of others, thinking they got what they deserve.

Forgive me Lord when I won't do what you ask of me.

WORDS OF GRACE

Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Matthew 11:28-30

REFLECTION

This is one of those readings that we don't delve into very often however it provides for us an opportunity to see the relationship between the sacrificial system of the Old Testament and the redemptive work of Christ in the New Covenant. Paul, writes about the sacrifice of animals, though integral to the worship and tradition of Israel, couldn't serve their purpose for the cleansing of sin. We can see this quite clearly in verse 4 where Paul uses the word 'impossible'. This kind of sacrifice is quite limited from a sacrificial perspective.

Christ's arrival changes all that. It marks a tender point in how we have understood sacrifice. Unlike the perpetual offerings that were required under the rules of the Old Testament, Christ's sacrifice was singular and redemptive which for some is far to tender and emotional for them to know how to respond in any meaningful way. Paul speaks of Christ coming 'to do your will, O God' where we can take note of his obedience to his heavenly father submitting himself to fulfill God's plan for him. This willingness indicates to us a deep understanding of true worship, which transcends ritualistic traditions as we enter into a relationship with Christ that's built on faith and obedience.

The final two verses declare that through Christ there was no longer any need for the animal sacrifices of the past. The first covenant needed to go, so the second could be established which enabled the followers of Christ to know forgiveness and redemption through the offering of the blood of Christ and his subsequent resurrection. The fulfillment of the law brings on a movement from ritual to relational

with an emphasis being placed on a heart-centred faith enabling true intimacy with God.

Through these verses we can now consider our own sacrifices and offerings. Are they mere traditions or do they stem from a genuine desire to listen to God and what God's asking of you? In Christ, we find both the ultimate sacrifice and the ultimate call to live out our faith actively, driven by grace and gratitude. As you remember the new covenant, you are reminded that your life should continually echo Christ's submission, love, and desire to fulfill God's purpose in a world longing for change for the better – which is God's gift of love mercy and grace.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION FROM THE AUSTRALIAN PRAYER BOOK

On this day the Father made our salvation known to Mary by the message of an angel.

Filled with confidence, let us pray.

You chose the Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son.

Have mercy on all who wait for your redemption.

We pray for churches all around the world for Christ's compassion, gospel message and love to be their mainstay. We especially remember the Christian church and people in Nigeria who are experiencing persecution and death.

Through your angel Gabriel you brought a message of peace and joy to Mary.

Give to the world the joy and peace of salvation.

We pray for Iran, the fracturing and emerging war across the Middle East, Gaza, Ukraine, Russia, Israel, Venezuela, Sudan, Nigeria, and for the peace of the world.

By the consent of your handmaid and the power of the Holy Spirit,
your Word came to dwell among us.

Open our hearts to receive Christ, as Mary the Virgin received him.

We pray for our family, friends, faith community and wider community.

You look with compassion on the lowly and fill the hungry with good things.

Encourage the downhearted and downtrodden, help all those in need and comfort those near to death.

We pray for healing and comfort for all those we know who aren't well and living with illness.

To you, O God, nothing is impossible, and you alone do marvellous things;
save us, and bring us and all the faithful departed into your glorious kingdom.

Grant, O Lord, that by the riches of your grace we may grow up into him who unites our life to yours, even he who is the first-born of all creation, your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGAAtWj79xM&list=RDTGAAtWj79xM&start_radio=1

