

Prayers

We pray for a world where all are heard
And rivers flow where each may drink.
A world where the harvest becomes
a banquet for all.
God of all creation,
You have blessed us with a world of beauty.
You have gifted us a place of plenty,
Where no one stands outside your
loving care.

Open our hearts and teach us
your compassion.
Open our minds and grant us the courage
to stay true to your will.
Give us the strength to cast off the shackles
that bind us to wealth and possessions.
Guide us as we work for your kingdom,
Lead us and move us to become a people
clothed with joy.

Amen

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Dear Lord,
Thank you that you are Lord of all.
Thank you that all good gifts come from you.

Help us to be obedient to your word
and seek to reflect your glory and
goodness in all we do.

We pray that you will help us to use
everything you have given us –
our talents, our time, our money, our
possessions, our personalities –
to bless others and bring about your
kingdom on earth.

Help us to give our lives generously in
service to you.
Help us to reach out to those in need.
Help us to be people who make a
difference in your world.

Amen

Traidcraft

Great Creator God,
who gave life to the world and everyone in it,
create in me a heart of careful consumerism.
As I stand in a shop, as I prepare my meals,
help me to remember that what I buy and eat
comes from farmers, growers, workers and
labourers in fields and factories across
the world.

Help me to remember that someone's life
and wellbeing depends on the products I hold
in my hands, place into my shopping basket,
and eat from my plate, that I may be thankful
and act with justice.

Amen

Mothers Union

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REFLECTIONS AND PRAYERS

A reflection on Psalm 24:1-3

"The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it".

In these times of climate change, poverty,
greed, malnutrition and recession, we
remember that 'the earth is the Lord's'. In
these times we remember our brothers and
sisters around the world who have suffered
most through our actions and we remember
that 'all who live in [this world] belong to the
Lord'. Let us reflect on what it means to love
and serve one another in God's world.

(Pause for reflection and silent prayer)

Heavenly Father, we have neglected the
needs of your world for too long now, we
have lost sight of this world as your own and
through greed we have exploited others and
left their lives destitute.

This Fairtrade Fortnight help us to remember
the 'power of the consumer' that our choices
can be the cornerstone of another person's
livelihood. Help us to remember that
swapping our shopping habits helps to put
those who have for so long been last, first,
so that they may know that they are not
forgotten and that we are all part of the same
world, your world, where no one person is
better than the next and all deserve the
same opportunity.

Your kingdom come and your will be done on
earth as it is in Heaven

Amen

Caroline Hughesdon

Just a moment

It starts with a change
So outwardly insignificant
That no one would notice
Except the person
Behind you in the aisle.

Just a moment
When instead of seeing
Rows of labels
On a supermarket shelf
You imagine the people
Behind them,
Tilling the earth,
Sowing the seed,
Gathering the crops.

And you pause,
Wondering,
What their names are,
Where they live
What difference it will make

If your hand picks up
This box instead of that,

Wondering: how do I
Love these neighbours?
Can I help change
This child's long journey for water,
Her mother's lack of healthcare,
The prospect her father faces
Of another year unable
To feed his family well?

Just a moment.
And the person behind you,
Her impatient baby
Squirring in the trolley,
May never realise
That in that brief hesitation
A life hung in the balance.

Christian Concern for One World

Lectionary readings

21 February 2010

Deuteronomy 26:1-11. 'The Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil and our oppression.' The Israelites are instructed to remember their past, tell the story of their journey and acknowledge their continued dependence on God.

Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16.

Trust in the Lord to deliver and protect.

Romans 10:8b-13. Confessing Jesus as Lord with our mouths and hearts.

Luke 4:1-13. Jesus rejects personal satisfaction, power and spectacle (and the misappropriation of scripture) for the worship and service of God – and then goes on to proclaim that his concern is for the poor and oppressed.

28 February 2010

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18. Abraham longs for descendants who will live in the land, and believes against the odds.

Psalm 27. Trust in the goodness and deliverance of God.

Philippians 3:17-4:1. 'Many live as enemies of the cross of Christ', their limited focus idolatrously inward and selfish. But Paul calls us to a bigger vision: 'our homeland is in heaven', from which we are to expect salvation and transformation.

Luke 13:31-35. Jesus refuses compromise – he will complete his work of deliverance and healing and will not be intimidated by those who oppose him. His heart-felt lament is for a world that espouses violence and rejects tender care.

7 March 2010

Isaiah 55:1-9. An invitation to the thirsty and a vision of abundant provision. True satisfaction and a new way of living are found in God, who calls us to repentance and challenges us to think differently.

Psalm 63:1-8. Longing for God.

1 Cor. 10:1-13. Paul urges his readers to examine their lives and actions, warning them not to become idolaters: 'we should never set our hearts on evil things'.

Luke 13:1-9. Suffering is not the consequence of sin. Without repentance all will perish, but God is patient waiting and working for it.

We too need to remember our story and past. Part of our past is the appalling history of many tropical commodities such as sugar – a story that involves exploitation and slavery.

But we also need to tell the stories of people who have stood up for justice – to remember how people of faith have helped release people from oppression down the centuries and across the continents, helping abolish the trans-Atlantic slave trade and apartheid. And we need to tell today's good news story that is Fairtrade and rejoice in the way Fairtrade is transforming history.

Jesus lived a radically different way of identification with the poor and marginalised. One small way in which we can follow Jesus in our daily lives is to swap to using goods that have been fairly traded. These bring good news to the poor and do not compromise us in oppression. This is also a practical way of confessing Jesus as Lord with both our mouths and hearts.

So as part of your Lenten seeking after righteousness, why not do something positive by swapping to the Fairtrade alternative?

Trusting in a bigger vision and living true to who we are, are key themes running through these passages.

Like Abraham, many people today, especially in poor countries, simply long for their children to have a future. In a world where poverty kills 30,000 children every day, there is still much work to do engaging with healing, deliverance and sending a message to those in power. One way we can do so is through Fairtrade.

When we buy Fairtrade products we are doing two things: first, we are helping people and communities work their way out of poverty, we are helping bring about transformation. But, second, we are also sending a powerful political message to governments and companies that large numbers of us want to see a fairer international trading system and that we are prepared to act to bring it about.

In our daily lives, how can we better heed Paul's injunction to live true to our heritage in Christ, focused on our heavenly common-wealth and expecting Jesus to bring transformation?

Atrocities and disasters have always been prevalent – as has the belief that people get what they deserve. Jesus emphatically rejects the theology that suffering is a punishment for sin. He is clear that instead of passing judgment on others when we see their misfortunes, we are to look to our own repentance, lives and actions.

What do we understand by repentance? What do we believe about the suffering in our world?

Small farmers in the Global South have been among the first to feel the effects of changing weather patterns – droughts, floods and shifting seasons all affecting their crops and livelihoods. But they are not the ones primarily responsible for their problems. Man-made climate change is largely a consequence of over-consumption and dependence on fossil fuels in the Global North. Yet often we look at their poverty and fail to make the connection with our own – idolatrous? – pursuit of an unsustainable lifestyle.

Jesus warns that if we do not change our ways, all will suffer. But there is hope: God is a God who longs for us to repent, change and be saved. In The Blue Mountains of China Mennonite author Rudy Wiebe says, 'In a Jesus society, you repent, not by feeling bad, but by thinking different'.

At the heart of our faith is the good news of a God who longs to give us abundance, as seen in the Isaiah passage and in Jesus who came 'that they might have life, life in all its fullness' (John 10:10).

The Fairtrade movement echoes this belief in abundant living and represents a different way of thinking about international trade. It is an alternative model which puts poverty alleviation, sustainable development, environmental protection and social justice at the heart of international trade. It is predicated on the belief that we can and must act justly to make a better world.