

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Section 3 - Week 2

Generosity and gratitude

The very best in people has been seen throughout these disasters. Just briefly we have been jolted out of our busy self-centredness and been true neighbours. We have found the joy of giving generously of time and money. It has been a glimpse of how communities should be – a glimpse of heaven.

Pray : Give thanks for all those who are generous to you. Prayer of the week.**Read :** Luke 5:5-6

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

The final phase after disaster is restoration. This takes time and life will not be the same as it was. *"We cannot go around despair to hope. We have to go right through despair"* Henri Nouwen – 'The Journey from Despair to Hope'.

The strong wind of Pentecost is restorative not destructive. Hope is restored to the frightened disciples.

Pray : for the strong wind of the Holy Spirit to bring hope to us.
Prayer of the week.

Read : Acts 2: 2

Suggested social action: Set aside extra time in your usual prayers for one person you know who has been going through a particularly difficult time. Make contact with them if possible.

Sometimes we have no words, sometimes we do not know how to act wisely, but we can always ask God to come and be present. And we shall see how often the atmosphere changes, quarrels stop, peace comes. We see... how contemplation and action are inseparable, that Christian action is impossible without contemplation.

Anthony Bloom and George LeFebvre *Courage to Pray*



MU PRAYER LEAFLET – Easter 2011

Dear Friends,

Natural disasters have marked the beginning of 2011 – floods in many parts of Australia, fires in the west, huge cyclones in the north and the earthquake that has hit our neighbours in Christchurch, New Zealand. We have all been affected directly or indirectly as we have seen images and heard reports and stories. How do we pick through the wreckage and piece life together? How do we help others in this same sad and heavy task.

Identifying our own feelings and understanding what sustains us and where we find God in the tough times is the hard work of prayer. This prayer leaflet ponders on the times of fear, hope, sadness, comfort, hardship, and generosity we all know. Journeying from our own experiences and the thoughts and feelings associated with them, to those of the characters of the Gospel accounts is a way of exploring our own responses. On Easter morning the women found the enormous stone was rolled aside. Christ had broken free. Resurrection teaches us of the indestructibility of God's life. Incredulous hope had replaced despair, indestructibility had replaced destruction.

Peace and blessing this Eastertide, *Bronwyn*

PRAYER OF THE WEEK

God of all grace, fill us with your love so that we may weep with the grief-stricken, tend those in need, lift up the weary and comfort the despairing. As we celebrate your Resurrection may we show in our lives your risen life amongst us, in Jesus name. Amen

This leaflet is in 3 parts of 2 weeks and a final reflection.

EASTER DAY

Section 1 - Week 1

Fear

So many of those who were caught up in floods, cyclones, fires or earthquake described how fearful they were. They were frightened of the destructive power of nature, frightened of losing those they loved, frightened of losing their own lives, frightened of losing all they had worked so hard for in business, farm or home, frightened they may have to face it all again if rain or wind or earthquake aftershocks continued. Fear strikes us in many situations of life.

Pray the prayer of Celtic fishermen : *O God, the sea is so great
And my boat is so small.*

Pray : For those who have suffered loss of a loved one.

For those who have lost so much in business or farm or home.

Prayer of the week.

Read : Mark 16: 1-8 - the original ending of Mark's gospel

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Section 1 - Week 2

Hope

What is the opposite of fear? Love, hope and courage are all aspects of what "casts out fear". Fear paralyses – love sets free. In the same way that rescuers courageously toiled in the chaos, Jesus does not stand afar off when we are in the middle of the storm. He steps strongly towards us right into the heart of the turmoil. Hope is the knowledge that this is always true.

Pray : Calm me Lord as you still the storm. Prayer of the week

Read : John 6:19-20

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Section 2 - Week 1

Grief

It is not possible to see good when surrounded by death and destruction. Mary does not recognise Jesus in the garden. Feelings of desolation and utter loneliness overtake us. The sadness and grief are overwhelming. There is no will or strength or resilience to go on. God feels absent. In the absence is a call to grow into a deeper strength.

Pray : for those we know who feel desolate and despairing
Prayer of the week.

Read : John 20: 16-17

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Section 2 - Week 2

Comfort

There are many ways of offering comfort – prayer, practical ways, listening and offering time and space for the story to be told even without the need for lots of words. On the road to Emmaus the disciples poured out the story of all that had happened in Jerusalem.

Pray: for wisdom to know how best to offer comfort to those we know in our own lives who are in need. Prayer of the week.

Read : Luke 24: 31-32

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Section 3 - Week 1

Hardship and endurance

When disaster of any kind strikes us, there is immediate energy to repair and restore. We find we are weary and there is still a long haul ahead. It may be that big decisions have to be made which mean change. Once again we may feel very alone. The Christian faith is not an escape from responsibility or hardship. It is a well known spiritual lesson that these are the times of greatest growth.

Pray : for faith and trust, strength and perseverance in our praying life
Prayer of the week.

Read : Romans 5: 3-5