

A SERVICE FOR THE TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE 20 NOVEMBER 2020

This liturgy and other information are available online at
<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/liturgies/tdor/index.htm>

CALLING

Come Lord Jesus Come
You who welcome all, from all the world
Come Lord Jesus Come
To greet us now
We come as we are from every race and love and gender
To build your house our home

COLLECT

God of All Mercy Compassion and Grace, we come today on this Transgender Day of Remembrance to remember all transgender people who have been persecuted, discriminated against, suffered hate crime, have been murdered or have taken their own lives because of the rejection they face. Help us today to understand the things we may not understand. Help us to avoid unfeeling actions. Help us to bring love and not hate. Help us to rejoice in the diversity that humanity creates. Through our worship and our remembering of all transgender people who have died during this last year from the hands of others... and our appeals for those who face the distresses of exclusion and rejection which are enforced by others... help us to sustain the strength and the vision to break down these barriers of despising, rejecting, and misunderstanding and by your grace strengthen us to build a more tolerant and accepting world.

HYMN

Let Us Build a House Where Love Can Dwell

Marty Haugen: © GIA Publications Inc, Chicago USA: May be used with the appropriate licence

READING FROM ISAIAH 53 1

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely, he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

READING FROM JOHN 14: 2-14

"In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going". Thomas, said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the

Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

Philip said to him, *“Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.”* Jesus said to him, *“Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.”*

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

This is the Word of the Lord

REFLECTION

Philip said to Jesus, *“Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.”* To be shown does not necessarily mean to see. In this house there are many rooms, but too often doors are shut to keep people out. To see, means to break through the barriers caused by ignorance, suspicion, rejection, and hate.

In the United Kingdom, transphobic hate crime reports have quadrupled over the past five years. Crime statistics show that there was an increase in criminal activity of 25% in 2019. The number of transgender hate crimes recorded by police forces in England, Scotland and Wales has risen by 81%¹. In October 2020, an article in the Daily Telegraph reported that hate crimes topped more than 100,000 for the first time. It also noted that police now investigate seven transphobic crimes a day and that offences have hit a record high. Transgender people in the United Kingdom currently have it harder than most.

This is also at a time where there are disputes about the origins of these conditions. One group, mainly from the feminist movements argue that it is a paraphilia, which is a disruption to the normal path of development driven by sublimated sexual motivations. However, the other group, headed by the professional medical institutions, instead argue that it is a personality variation within the normal range of human development. Depending on which diagnosis you choose, the methods of management are almost opposite to one another.

One side dismisses gender identity as a purely social construct, the other places it at the heart of the personality that is created. On one side the transgender person is presented as the perpetrator: on the other that person becomes the sufferer instead. What is seen as compassion by one side is automatically condemned as coercion by the other. It is these differences which provide the background for what has become a toxic dispute.

In the Gospel of John, Thomas, said to Jesus: *“Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”*. When Philip said to Jesus, *“Lord, show us the Father”*, he was asking for evidence, but Jesus did not provide it, instead he described journeys people make. Thus when Jesus responded by saying: *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life”* he was telling them not to rely on the sort of evidence that Philip wanted, but follow the example of how he lived his life, and how other people live their lives. He followed this up by saying: *“Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves”*. Far too often we do not even try to see or listen to what people say and

¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-48756370>

do, Instead we spend much of our time trying to manipulate science and distort our reporting of how people behave to conform to the agendas and viewpoints that our particular viewpoint or diagnosis dictates. Of course all viewpoints, must be objectively analysed and considered in every argument which claims to use science to justify its position, but when one side accuses the other with accusations of manipulation and that: *“Their teaching is backed by no credible science but has been adopted by government, the NHS, schools, and therapists”*, then listening to transgender people is on the way out².

Hearing people talk about being too scared to leave their homes in fear of being attacked does not sound like modern day Britain, but this is the sad reality for a lot of transgender men and women. Many describe the current plight of transgender people as being equivalent to that of the gay rights movement in the 1980s and 1990s. All lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people disrupt the accepted order of any society where gender complementary is socially and legally enforced. This is regardless of the morality of their acts. For this reason alone, a sexual motive had always been presumed, but listening to the experiences gender and sexually variant people shows that the driving forces behind them are those of love and identity instead. People do disrupt gender and sexuality for many reasons. Motives may be misjudged. But for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Thus without exception, all people, which includes, transgender, transsexual, lesbian, gay, heterosexual and bisexual people who attempt to express their identities within roles that are true to themselves, and who seek live their lives in ways that fulfil the love of Christ, must be fully accepted in their own right. In the well-known passage in Galatians 3:28, Paul said *“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”*. If we are truly to build the house of many rooms that Jesus refers to, we must listen and hear from each other with love and respect.

Sadly, and too often, instead of seeking to listen, we use what we hear about each other to condemn each other instead. Listening becomes more difficult if the condemnations become too great and it may be made impossible if criminalisation occurs. Jesus was despised and rejected because he broke the mould. Today, we remember the many deaths that have been caused by our failures to listen. It is transgender people who suffer greatly in these gender wars. As we hear the list of names being read out of those who have been murdered because they have sought to live in ways which are true to their own identities, let us resolve to go forward and make this house of Jesus a home where love can dwell, a house where all are welcomed, and a house which shines with the Love of Christ.

ACT OF REMEMBRANCE

We remember now by name some of the transgender people who have died by the hands of others or by suicide in the last twelve months

LIST OF NAMES

An international TDOR³ List of names for 2020 is or will be available at:

<https://transrespect.org/en/research/tmm/>

or

www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/TDOR2020-MurderList.pdf

We also remember all others who have been hurt and persecuted, or who are not on this list

² For my own research in these areas see: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/articles/bibliography.htm>

³ For more information see: <https://transrespect.org/en/> <https://www.glaad.org/tdor>

MUSIC

Hymn "The Lord's My Shepherd" or other reflective music

INTERCESSIONS

The response is **"Help us God to do Your will"**

INCLUSION

Jesus said to his disciples: *"In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also"*: *"Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son"*.

As you called everyone on earth and in heaven, regardless of race, class, gender identity, and sexual orientation, help us to create for ourselves and others the ability to see that Philip was looking for, so that we, and all people, find the same fulfilment, love, and inclusion on earth today, in all our diversities, without qualification or restriction, in Your Father's House, our home.

Response: **"Help us God to do Your will"**

UNDERSTANDING

When Thomas, said to Jesus, *"Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"* Jesus said to him, *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life"*. Help us Lord to take away the Mist of Darkness so that we now know, even as you know us, how we fail to help others, how our lack of understanding creates prejudice fear and discrimination, and even death, to people whose identities are not the same as our own.

In your love and grace help us Lord help us to break down these walls of blindness in our own minds and in the minds of others, so that we may us bring understanding, compassion and acceptance, that from your home of diversity we may all rejoice together in the Love of Christ.

Response: **"Help us God to do Your will"**

CHURCH

As we pray for ourselves so let us pray for the Churches. Grant us Lord that we may create true, caring and compassionate Churches which welcome all equally who seek to fulfil Your love in the world, irrespective of race, class, tribe, gender and sexual identities, and all other differences that identity provides. Help us to dispel the fears and prejudices which bar anyone from entry to the Institutions that we, for Your worship and service, create.

Response: **"Help us God to do Your will"**

WORLD *(abridge this section if necessary)*

In a world where social divisions by power and gender remain and fear and prejudice continue to exist, let us remember the one in eight transgender employees who have been physically attacked by a colleague or customer each year. The half of transgender people in

the United Kingdom who have hidden their identity at work for fear of discrimination. The third of transgender people who have been discriminated against because of gender identity issues when visiting a café, restaurant, bar, or nightclub. The half of transgender people who do not feel comfortable using public toilets because of fear of discrimination or harassment. The quarter of transgender people who have been homeless. The one in four transgender people who are discriminated against when looking for a house or flat to rent or buy. The more than a quarter of transgender people who are in a relationship and have faced domestic abuse from a partner. The rejection by friends, religious groups, and families. The two in five transgender people who would like to undergo medical intervention as part of their transition, but who have not done so yet, because they fear the consequences it might have on their loved ones and families. The two in five transgender people who report that healthcare staff lack understanding of transgender health needs. The more than a third of transgender students in higher education who have experienced negative comments or behaviour from staff. The many transgender people whose sense of identity has been directly attacked through deliberate misgendering by others. The forty percent of transgender people who have attempted suicide at some time in their lives⁴. In a world divided by discrimination, inequalities, and strife, help us to build a world where such discrimination disappears, and all are welcome in the Love of Christ.

Response: ***“Help us God to do Your will”***

DEATH

Lord God, we remember before you all those who have died recently, especially those known to us. On this day we also remember all those transgender people who have been murdered or committed suicide, because they have been trying to be true to their own identities. We also remember those who grieve for them. We pray for the perpetrators. Give them the peace of knowing that we all are loved in equal measure. Help us to find that in life, as in death, we all are alive in Your Kingdom of Love.

Response: ***“Help us God to do Your will”***

OURSELVES

Often, we are uncertain, like Thomas, who did not know the way to follow. Or Philip who asked to see the evidence before being convinced. And when we see how Jesus responded to their uncertainties, when he said: *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life”*. Help us to recognise the harm we may have done to others through ignorance or lack of understanding even when our best intentions are in place. As we mourn for those who have died let us remember that the true fruits of that mourning must be found in a better and more understanding world. In place of our own fears, our doubts and uncertainties, grant us your peace, give us the joy, hope and courage to bring that good news, with your message of mercy, justice, love, and freedom to the world.

Lord in Your Mercy:

Response: ***“Hear our Prayers”***

THE LORD’S PRAYER

In your own language and preferred version

⁴Abridge this section if necessary. This information is from Stonewall reports and other sources <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/news/new-research-exposes-profound-discrimination-trans-people-face>

COMMISSIONING

Today, we have remembered those transgender people who have died by the hands of others, for daring to be who they are. You have called us to service, to teach and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. That their deaths may not be in vain, in your grace and your forgiveness, we ask for the courage to bring your love and acceptance to the world

Response: ***“Help us God to do Your will”***

HYMN

LORD, WE HEAR THIS CRY FOR FREEDOM

Lord, we hear this cry for freedom
Love and trust for one and all
Lord we hear this shout for justice
As we answer to your call
Bring us strength and bring us courage
Bring us love and help us care
So our lives can truly witness
Love of Jesus which we share

Lord you felt the bonds of prison
Put to death through human sin
Cursed and stripped and then derided
So God’s love may truly win
Give us strength to face our weakness
Give us power to do your will
Conquer fear and conquer danger
Risking all we would fulfil

In these battles fighters fear us
Threatening their hold on power
Seeing all of us as traitors
Not supporting who they are
In these groups and gangs and cultures
Help us to provide escape
For all victims trapped by violence
To the love which you instate

Truth and mercy kiss each other
In the justice you endorse
Let us face the power of nations
When they use abusive force
Harming those by state run violence
Or discrimination’s hate
Let your love become our witness
Of the freedom you create

Lord your will is seen in flowering
Never bounded by a creed
Tribes and people’s own exclusions
Bringing guilt to each true need
With the outcasts, scorned and sinners

You yourself were called unclean
Help us Lord to share that presence
Finding out what this will mean

In this world no male and female
Jew or Greek or slave or free
Is excluded from your friendship
Of true selves that you can see
Neither race nor sex nor gender
Shall debar us from your call
When our acts are based on loving
You do welcome one and all

Bring us Lord the Church you founded
Not a Church of strength and power
But a Church which in the weakest
Builds God's kingdom where we are
Help us Lord to share your vision
Of a world that's just and good
In a Church of love and welcome
Sharing all that life's imbued

Lord we seek not little triumphs
In the lives we see and own
But the worldwide call of mission
Which the Gospel's power has shown
Give to us the power and wisdom
To pursue this glorious task
In your strength and power and glory
This from you we dare to ask.

*Tune: Beethoven "Ode to Joy", last movement of 9th Symphony.
Or Sussex: "Father, hear the prayer we offer"*

Hymn © Susan Gilchrist

November 2018

BENEDICTION

From depression bring resolution, from hurt bring forgiveness, from despair bring hope, from fear bring courage, from self-interest bring compassion, from sadness bring joy, from darkness bring light, from commitment bring the peace which comes of knowing that we do God's will. And the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and for evermore.

Go in Peace to serve the World

Response: **Amen**

Reproduction rights for non-commercial purposes are granted.

© Susan Gilchrist

November 2020