

A Service for The Transgender Day of Remembrance 20 November 2022¹

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SuP1120h

INTRODUCTION

At this sad time when we gather to remember all transgender people who have been murdered at the hands of others or taken their own lives during the last year because of the persecution and violence inflicted on them, let us remember what the bible says. Matthew 25 (vs 35-40) describes the example that Jesus set, for *“I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked, and you clothed me, I was sick, and you visited me, I was in prison, and you came to me.”* Then the righteous will answer him, saying, *‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’* And the King will answer them, *‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.* Ignorance and fear has led to the persecution and vilification of transgender people. Today we remember these deaths.

READING

Luke 18: 16-20

Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour”.

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

HYMN²

Will you come and follow me
if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don’t know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown
in you and you in me?

Will you leave old self behind

¹ This service is available on: Gilchrist, S. (2022): “A Service for the Transgender Day of Remembrance 20 November 2022”: <http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/SuP1120h-TdorService-2022.pdf>

² Please ensure you have the appropriate permissions before using

if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer
in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see
if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free
and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean
and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean
in you and you in me?

Will you love the 'you' you hide
if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
to reshape the world around
through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true
when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same.
In your company I'll go
where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me.

('Will you come and follow me' is from the writing partnership of two leading members of the Iona Community in Scotland, John Bell, and Graham Maule).

LIST OF NAMES

As we come together to remember some of the victims of these persecutions let us all remember that every death is a tragedy and a departure from God's Love. Let us also remember that we and all people, without prejudice or fear or ignorance, are welcomed in God's Love, and that we may build a home for everyone in the love of Christ.

*A list of names may be read out, or a period of silence
Or use this link to show slides <https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports>
Access the relevant data via the links on the website.*

SILENCE

REFLECTION

Each year, on the 20th. November, which is the international Transgender Day of Remembrance we remember those transgender people who have been murdered or committed suicide because of who they are. Current lists show that there are more than 400 of these in the current year, but this is only the tip of the iceberg. There are no complete lists. In 2021/2022 in England and Wales alone 4355 hate crimes against transgender people were reported to the police. This is an increase of 56% from the previous year. Surveys show that over 88% of transgender people in the United Kingdom do not report serious incidents to the police and 44% were unhappy with the action taken by the police. In the present circumstances in the United Kingdom these figures are only likely to increase.

Today, transgender people are mostly well accepted in the United Kingdom, but it only takes a minority to create the persecution and discrimination that occurs. That is not the case in many other parts of the world where transgender people, along with other gender and sexually variant people can face severe imprisonment for expressing their identities and in some cases even death. Any government action which aims to reduce the present protections for transgender people by allowing discrimination to be based on identity, instead of abuse, must be a matter for concern. All the professional institutions recognise transgender conditions are about the search for identity where no threats to others, or disruptions to society are involved. All the major Churches and religious organisations emphasise their pastoral care for transgender people, and totally condemn the violence that occurs. Yet because of ignorance and fears generated by others, violence against transgender people continues to increase.

Any group which disturbs the normal expectations of society can create fear and uncertainty. Today the need for acceptance and understanding is even greater. What transgender people are seeking is often misunderstood. Instead of adopting approaches which increase ignorance and fears we must listen to their voice. That same listening occurs in the Gospel Message. It was Jesus who took his message to the outcasts in society. It was Jesus who condemned the institutions and authorities who discriminated against anyone who disrupted the “good order” of society on the grounds of who they are, and not what they do.

In the Bible we read; *“The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So, it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.”* (1 Corinthians 12:12-13) *“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”* (Galatians 3:28).

Many will be aware of the intense disputes about the nature and origin of transgender conditions. The professional medical institutions and world authorities adopt a scientific consensus which regards these *“naturally expected variations of the human condition, intrinsic to the personality created, arising very early in development, and cannot be changed either by the individual concerned or by the predations of others in subsequent life.* It is a search for identity, it rejects what is wrong, it is internally focussed, it does not attack others, and is about being yourself. Gender-critical feminist arguments and the historic teaching of the Church, which is based on its own traditions, regard these instead as sexually driven personality disruptions and departures from the normal or divinely prescribed paths of development, where fears of predation or abuse appear. The motives and methods of management are directly opposed to each other. Great harm can occur if the wrong one is applied. If we, or any government, including the present United Kingdom government, listen only to the views of the righteous, who Jesus attacks, and if we too ignore, ridicule, or dismiss all others, then in our ignorance, are we also complicit in the tragedies, persecutions, and cruelties that occur.

Today, we remember all those transgender people who have been murdered by others or have taken their own lives in the last year because of the persecution and abuse heaped upon them,

solely because of who they are. Let us take these tragedies as a warning of the harm that ignorance and prejudice can create. Let it remind us that when any dispute occurs all sides of the argument must be considered, not just the preferred one which supports prejudice and abuse. Let this inspire us to work for society in which all people, not just transgender, people but heterosexual, lesbian, gay and bisexual who seek to fulfil the gospel message in ways that are true to their own identities, are not just fully welcomed without prejudice in society, but also find full and complete inclusion in the Christian Church.

HYMN³

Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where prophets speak,
and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek
to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where love is found
in water, wine, and wheat:
a banquet hall on holy ground
where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus,
is revealed in time and space;
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed

³ Please ensure you have the appropriate permissions before using

as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950
Text © 1994 GIA Pub

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)⁴

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

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>

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 now being increased by Government actions. 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 lives. 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 and who asked to see the evidence before being convinced. And when we see how Jesus responded to these 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

Together, in your own language and preferred version

CORRYMEELA PRAYER FOR COURAGE

**Courage comes from the Heart
And we are always welcomed by God
The Heart (Croi)⁵ of our being**

**We bear witness to our faith
Knowing that we are called to live lives**

⁵Croi is the Gaelic name for the Heart, and the name of Corrymeela’s worship centre

**Of courage, love, and reconciliation
In the ordinary and extraordinary moments
of each day**

**We bear witness too, to our failures
And of our complicity in the fractures of this world**

**May we be courageous today
May we learn today
May we love today: Amen**

BLESSING

**May
God's arms enfold and protect us.
God's word inform and inspire us.
God's love infuse and transform us.
God's Spirit flow and empower us.
God's peace support and care for us.
now and always: Amen**