

## **St. Andrew's Church, Coniston, Prayer & Praise, 3 June 2020**

*The Martyrs of Uganda, 1885–7 and 1977 Commemoration*

*How appropriate that today would be the commemoration day for the martyr of 45 Ugandan converts to Christianity. I have just come from a zoom meeting with fellow Toastmaster members in London where the senseless treatment and killing of George Floyd was brought into the open in the topics and speeches. A powerful speech by Kemi opening in tears with the words, "I can't breathe, I can't breathe, I can't breathe, ..... please....." choked everyone to silence. I think back to the way I felt walking through the world, almost in a trance like state, following 911. **I continue to wonder what would have happened had our response been to open our arms with love to a world in pain instead.** I invite you to contemplate this now in today's prayers.*

### **The Summons**

Come, Holy Spirit, speak to us words of healing.

**Speak to us words of peace.**

Speak to us words of reconciliation.

**Speak to us words of love,**

that we may speak out to others

**in your name. Amen.**

### **Reading, 1 John 3:16-19**

<sup>16</sup> This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. <sup>17</sup> If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? <sup>18</sup> Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

<sup>19</sup> This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence.

### **Hymn 237, Holy, Holy, Holy**

*Remembering that every soul is precious in the sight of God. Made Holy through the blood of Jesus*

<https://bit.ly/3el5T5r>

### **Extract from Prayers of life by Michel Quoist (p90-91)**

Lord, why did you tell me to love all men, my brothers? I have tried, but I come back to you, frightened... Lord, I was so peaceful at home, I was so comfortably settled. It was well furnished, and I felt cozy. I was alone, I was at peace. Sheltered from the wind, the rain, the mud. I would have stayed unsullied in my ivory tower. But, Lord, you have discovered a breach in my defences, You have forced me to open my door, Like a squall of rain in the face, the cry of men has awakened me; Like a gale of wind a friendship has shaken me, As a ray of light slips in unnoticed, your grace has stirred me... and, rashly enough, I left my door ajar. Now, Lord, I am lost! Outside men were lying in wait for me. I did not know they were so near; in this house, in this street, in this office; my neighbour, my colleague, my friend. As

soon as I started to open the door I saw them, with outstretched hands, burning eyes, longing hearts, like beggars on church steps.

The first ones came in, Lord. There was after all some space in my heart. I welcomed them. I would have cared for them and fondled them, my very own little lambs, my little flock. You would have been pleased, Lord, I would have served and honoured you in a proper, respectable way. Till then, it was sensible... But the next ones, Lord, the other men, I had not seen them; they were hidden behind the first ones. There were more of them, they were wretched; they over-powered me without warning. We had to crowd in, I had to find room for them. Now they have come from all over, in successive waves, pushing one another, jostling one another.

They have come from all over town, from all parts of the country, of the world; numberless, inexhaustible. They don't come alone any longer but in groups, bound one to another. They come bending under heavy loads; loads of injustice, of resentment and hate, of suffering and sin... They drag the world behind them, with everything rusted, twisted, or badly adjusted.

Lord, they hurt me! They are in the way, they are everywhere, They are too hungry, they are consuming me! I can't do anything any more; as they come in, they push the door, and the door opens wider... Lord! My door is wide open! I can't stand it any more! It's too much! It's no kind of life! What about my job?

My family?

My peace?

My liberty?

And me?

Lord, I have lost everything, I don't belong to myself any longer; There's no more room for me at home.

Don't worry, God says, you have gained all. While men came in to you, I, your Father, I, your God, Slipped in among them.

**Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, Have mercy on me a sinner**  
**Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, Have mercy on me a sinner**  
**Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, Have mercy on me a sinner**

**Hymn 522, Oh the deep deep Love of Jesus**

<https://youtu.be/fEihc1MZFw>

**Prayer**

**Spirit of God, speak to me in language my heart can embrace,  
in language my mind can understand,  
in the language of silence that sinks deep into my soul.  
Spirit of God, speak to me words of transformation,**

**words of empowerment, words of grace.**

*Listen to God in silence*

God of wind and dove and fire,  
**Speak freedom, peace and change**

over lands divided by war and by creed.  
**Speak refreshment, assurance and warmth**

over lives afflicted by exhaustion and illness.  
**Speak integrity, humility and challenge**

over lives broken by grief and loss.  
**Speak power, anointing and healing over each one of us,**

that the anointing of The Spirit may be a new beginning,  
**and a catalyst for change. Amen.**

### **Collect**

O Lord our God,  
grant us grace to desire you with our whole heart;  
that so desiring, we may seek and find you;  
and so finding, may love you;  
and so loving, may hate those sins from which  
    you have delivered us;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**Hymn** *for a world in pain right now, Brothers and Sisters unite, Break every Chain*  
<https://youtu.be/ucY6NwQTI3M>

### **The Affirmation (from *Passion for the Possible*, Daniel J O'Leary)**

**I unleash God's spiritual force within me. I am unfettered and unbound. There are no real limitations in my life, no false condition has any power over me. I am free in the Spirit of Christ within me and by his spirit I will live my life to love as he has taught me to love. Amen.**