

A Vigil of Prayer for Children

Held at Wellington Cathedral May 2007

Welcome & Greeting

(Frank Nelson, Wellington Cathedral)

Grace and peace to you in the name of God,
Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit.

We gather as people of faith, seeking to create a more secure and loving environment for our beloved children.

We gather as people who love the world God made, believe in Jesus Christ, and hope for a world where people would not intentionally hurt others.

We gather to pray for children and those entrusted with their care, to challenge ourselves, and to strengthen our families and our community.

We gather as citizens of Aotearoa New Zealand to pray for those we entrust with making laws, running our country and caring for all its people.

We do this with confidence in Jesus Christ, who invited the children to come to him.

Lament for the Children of Aotearoa

(Margaret Mayman, St Andrew's on the Terrace, Presbyterian)

A Candle is lit by a representative of Plunket New Zealand, and a bell tolls 11 times, once for each child who dies in family related violence every year.

Confession

(Fr Maurice Carmody, Sacred Heart Cathedral)

We come seeking forgiveness for all we failed to be and do -

As parents and care-givers: ***O God, forgive***

As law-makers and law-enforcers: ***O God, forgive***

As Christians who have remained silent in the face of injustice:

O God, forgive

As citizens and neighbours: ***O God, forgive***

As human beings made in God's image: ***O God, forgive***

Silence

God forgives us: be at peace. ***Amen***

Psalm 146: 5-10 *(Read by ???)*

Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever; who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin. The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord!

Matthew 19:13-15 *(Read by ????)*

Then little children were being brought to him in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them; but Jesus said, "Let

the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." And he laid his hands on them and went on his way.

A Candle is lit by a representative of Barnados

Litany of Hope

(Fionnaigh McKenzie, Presbyterian Youth Worker)

In all we do, all we say, all that we are, there is God's Spirit of hope.

In times of challenge and fear, we hold onto the light of God's grace.

When we move through times of transition as people and as communities, God's gentle guidance grants us strength and vision.

As people who care about our children and our communities, we acknowledge the reality of hurt and pain that can be inflicted.

As the Body of Christ, we stand ready to affirm our role in teaching and protecting all of our children.

As we take steps to make our community safe, we remember the gospel call to love God and serve God - to help those who are least among us.

And so, we call upon God's wisdom to grant us strong voices and clear actions that will help to make our community a place of safety, teaching and inspiration.

Thanks be to God for gathering us together and inviting us into right relationship with Jesus Christ and with one another.

A Candle is lit by a representative of Save the Children

A Letter to Parents

Specially written and read for today's service by Joy Cowley

Dear Mum and Dad, I love you.
You are my role models, my teachers.
Who you are and what you do shape my world.
Through the great love you show me,
I learn to love others, and I discover
the abundance of God's love for us all.
When you tell me I am beautiful,
I see the whole world as beautiful.
When you see me as a precious gift,
I understand the true value of family life.

Thank you for your patience with me.
I am small but I have big emotions
and sometimes I lose control.
When that happens, you send me
to my room for time on my own,
and then afterwards, we talk about it.
When I talk, you always listen to me.
So when you talk, I listen to you.
I learn that when anger flares up
it's good to take time out to cool down,
and then discuss the problem.

Dear Mum and Dad, you teach me well.
I will not grow up fearing you.
I will not have secrets that I can't share.
I will always hold you in love and respect.
And when you are old, and you need me
as much as I need you now,
all the love that you have given me,
will come back to you,
my dear Mum and Dad.

A candle is lit by a representative of UNICEF

Prayers

(Neil Keesing, St Ninian's Uniting Church, Methodist)

On this day when tensions are real and difference divides, Christ sets us free from fear, and transforms us for peace, let us pray with thanksgiving -
For the gift of children, their laughter, innocence, utter vulnerability, joy and unconditional love: ***We give thanks O Lord.***

For the love and self-sacrifice of parents and care-givers, their commitment to feed, clothe, educate, nurture and love those committed to their care: ***We give thanks O Lord.***

For the dedication of those who care for the well-being of children, especially when things go wrong: ***We give thanks O Lord.***

For those who encourage and help children in our play centres and schools with homework, sport and recreation, and all who offer healthy role models: ***We give thanks O Lord.***

For those who debate, shape and fashion our laws; for those who interpret and enforce the laws affecting children: ***We give thanks O Lord.***

For our country, its diversity of peoples and richness of cultures; its beauty of mountain and beach, city and village: ***We give thanks O Lord.***

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen

Blessing

(Thomas Brown, Bishop of Wellington)

May the sun warm your soul and the moon be gentle above you.
May the Creator hold your hand and the Christ walk in your footsteps. May the Spirit dance in your playing and grace be found on the way. ***Amen.***

Leaders of Churches process in silence to the Parliamentary Library steps, where a statement will be handed to Sue Bradford MP, before dispersing in silence and with dignity. Some may like to remain in the Cathedral to pray.