

The City Church, New York

The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession – Sunday January 8, 2006

Ecuador's Waodani were the most violent tribesmen known to anthropologists. Their way of life was: Spear or be speared. Fifty years ago today, they murdered five young American missionaries who'd tried to bring them the Gospel – Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, Roger Youderian, Ed McCully, and Pete Fleming. Their widows finally did bring the Gospel to the Waodani. Their husbands' killers came to Christ and the tribe ended generations of violence, befriending the neighboring tribes they used to attack. This true story is told in the film, "End of the Spear," premiering this month.

Let us pray.

Our Father: Your Good News of grace and peace in Christ means the world to us. Or does it? When we hear of others who risk everything in this world to bring the Gospel to people who don't know it, may we be appalled at our indifference. If we refrain from sharing the Gospel merely because it's politically incorrect to do so, how do we have the nerve to turn to You and say Your Gospel means the world to us? Anything else in this world so often means so much more to us.

But Father, You've pardoned us into praying our prayer of confession this morning and we've been assured that it's as the forgiven unfaithful that we turn to You. Help us to learn that our thanksgiving for Your forgiving us is to be lived out. Give us wisdom and courage to be true to our Savior's call to share the Good News with a stumbling world all around us. May the discipleship of our five brothers and their families – on this fiftieth anniversary of their full measure of devotion – inspire us anew to devotion to You.

And in this 250th anniversary year of his birth, we thank You for Wolfgang Amadeus – not only for his gift of genius but for his perseverance under pressure. May we be as faithful in our callings.

In these first weeks of this new Year of our Lord, may we do much better than the merely good intentions of resolutions. May we learn to be the true Christians You've called us to be through our daily dying to self and our daily rising to life in Christ, that our purpose might be, as Paul put it: "to live is Christ; to die is gain." May we have no higher priority than to glorify You.

We pray in our dear Savior's name and add these words He taught us to pray, saying:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.