

The City Church, New York

The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession – Sunday May 7, 2006

In an interview on this day in the last year of his earthly pilgrimage, 1963, C. S. Lewis said:

“There are many different ways of bringing people into God’s Kingdom, even some ways that I specifically dislike. I have learned to be cautious.”

Let us pray.

God of Triune Love – Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

We’re in awe of even the little we know of all Your creation – from the very first bit of the Big Bang, so fine-tuned for our thriving, through the ever-expanding cosmos, rushing on, rejoicing in Your providence. And as we don’t know-it-all when it comes to bringing this world into being, may we have the good sense to realize that we don’t know-it-all when it comes to bringing Your World-without-end into being.

We see diversity in all creation – even among us. We’re no more clones of one another than are snowflakes and stars. Thank You for calling all of us with our different personalities, backgrounds, needs and gifts, to join together as a family, brothers and sisters in Christ, sharing love that corresponds to Your Divine Diversity of Triune Love.

You know us as we don’t know ourselves, for You are Wisdom. And yet, You love us, for You are Love. So, when we fall into a know-it-all attitude about You, ourselves and others, please stop us. When we fall into a self-deceiving, so-called love for You, ourselves and others, please stop us. Help us to know, Lord, that it’s not we ourselves with whom Your Kingdom must come to terms; but we must come to terms with Your Kingdom. And Your Kingdom is not of this world. So please stop us when we mistake the assumptions and priorities of this world that’s passing away, for the assumptions and priorities of Your World that shall never pass away. And just because we don’t understand others, just because we don’t like them, just because they don’t understand or like us, help us not to think that we or they are not understood and cherished by the One who knows each heart – and, more importantly, knows His own Great Heart of Mercy.

Bless our minister as he preaches. Bless us all as we attend to the preaching. Apply to our hearts what You would have us receive, that we might better live as true followers of our Lord, Jesus, and we’ll give You the glory in his name, who 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.