

The City Church, New York

The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession – Sunday May 21, 2006

On this day in 1738, after wrestling in prayer, Charles Wesley received the witness of the Holy Spirit that Christ was, indeed, his Savior and Lord. Let us pray.

Savior Christ:

On this day of remembering Your Holy Spirit's assurance to our brother, Charles, that Christ was, in truth, his Savior and his Lord, we are receiving new members into the fellowship of this assembly of Your Church. We're grateful to keep in mind that these precious souls are not new "members" as they might join a society restricted to this world alone. They – and we – are graced to be everlasting members of Your Body, the Church against whom, even the gates of hell cannot prevail. So we come rejoicing in our adoption as children of God in You, O Christ, our Savior and our Lord.

May we, all together, make and renew our commitments to be Your faithful followers – Yours alone – without reservation, for You have been faithfully committed to us, without reservation, from the foundation of the world.

We're grateful for Your continuing blessing upon this congregation of Your worldwide communion of saints. We remember friends and loved ones who, in faith, worshipped with us while they were still in this world and who now worship You face to face in that World without end. While we, who yet know only in part, worship but "through a glass darkly," keep us faithful. Give us guidance through this world until we, too, shall join in the beauty of worship in clear sight of our Savior and Lord.

Impress upon us what a privilege is ours to worship You in a land of religious freedom. We pray for our many sisters and brothers around the world who worship under threat of torture and death. And, as they themselves have asked us to do, we pray not for the persecution to end. We join in praying with them, for strength that they might endure and be true, for they tell us that persecution makes them better disciples. Lord, it's hard for us to grasp what they mean, but may we ponder it in view of our duties as Your disciples.

Praying that Your will might be done in everything, we add the prayer You 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.