

Prayer of the Church - Sunday 31 January, 2021 - Epiphany 4B

Thank you, Lord, for sending your prophets, and especially for sending your Son Jesus with your own authority and power to save us from sin and evil. There are so many people around us who claim to have the answers to life's problems. Help us above all to listen to Jesus, and to follow him in faith and obedience. *Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer***

As a new school year begins we pray for teachers everywhere, that they may teach with true authority. And we pray for all children, that they may honour and respect their teachers and learn from them. Bless our church's activities as many begin again for the year ahead.

*Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer***

Help all who have the responsibility of teaching God's word. May they teach with authority, wisdom, and compassion. Help Christian parents take up their task of teaching and forming their children in the faith. *Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer***

We pray for all in our nation who exercise authority in the civil realm: especially our political leaders, our judges, and the police. Help them to use the authority you have given them justly and for the good of all. *Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer***

Continue to watch over our world in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Be with world leaders as they make decisions about restrictions, lock-downs, travel, trade, and vaccine development and distribution. Use these tumultuous events to turn people to you in repentance and faith. *Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer***

Heavenly Father, have mercy on people held captive by evil, and free them from their oppression. Still the voices of all false prophets and false teachers, and let the power of Jesus' love and truth break through all defences. *Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer***

We commit to you all who are unwell or in need and those who care for them, especially (*insert names*), and others known to us personally and whom we now name in our hearts... (*brief silence*)

*Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer***

Lord, only you can deliver us from evil, and keep us walking in your light and salvation. Let us always fear you, so that we may live wisely, and so that we may continually join the whole church on earth and the hosts of heaven as they praise you forever. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**