

Tuesday

**Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;**

Read:

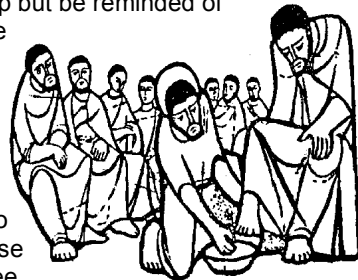
¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in the one Spirit we were all

baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

- 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

Think:

As I reflect on this line of the prayer I can't help but be reminded of several scenes from Jesus' life. How often the 'Pharisees and teachers of the law' were scandalised by the company Jesus kept: 'Sinners and tax collectors'. And as the church grew – it maintained Jesus' tradition of reaching out to all sorts of people.



And so we witness a church where Paul has to remind the church that it is made up of a diverse bunch of people; Jews, Greeks, slaves and free.

Christian community is characterised by diversity; and also by servanthood – no matter how important we think we are; we must be willing to serve. Jesus takes on the role of a servant as he washes his disciple's feet (John 13:1-20) the work of a slave.

Pray

Dearest Lord, may I see you today and every day in the person of your sick, and, while nursing them, minister unto you. Though you hide yourself behind the unattractive disguise of the irritable, the exacting, the unreasonable, may I still recognise you, and say, 'Jesus, my patient, how sweet it is to serve you.'

- Mother Theresa of Calcutta

Are you willing to be a part of the community that God loves; in all its diversity?

Are you willing to do the work of a servant, without grumbling or congratulating or feeling sorry for yourself?

Wednesday

**put me to doing,
put me to suffering;**

Read:

³⁹ He came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him. ⁴⁰ When he reached the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not come into the time of trial." ⁴¹ Then he

withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, ⁴² "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done."

- Luke 22:39-42

Think

The words of the Lord's Prayer, "lead us not into temptation" may be translated as "deliver us from the time of trial." The time of trial is a time when one's faith is tested - when the call to be a Christian is so difficult that we might just give up.

God plants ideas in our head of things to do – but so often we reject them as too risky; too big; too small – when we give up on those ideas that God gives us; we come into the time of trial and we give up.

On the Mount of Olives Jesus invited the disciples to pray that they would not come into the time of trial. The garden of Gethsemane, the decision to take up his cross is a time of trial for Jesus. A trial which he passes.

The disciples however, are not even able to stay awake.



Pray

Govern everything by your wisdom, O Lord, so that my soul may always be serving you.
in the way you will
and not as I choose.
Let me die to myself so that I may serve you;
let me live to you who are life itself.

Amen

- Teresa of Avila

Are you willing to be 'inconvenienced' for Jesus?

Introduction

Friday

The words of the Methodist Covenant Prayer are hard to say if you mean them. They're big words, with large implications.

This week, as you prepare to say the covenant prayer I would like you to consider the words carefully. For each day of the following week – Monday through to Saturday I've included a line or two from the prayer; a scripture reading to spark your thinking – and a prayer sourced from a book called *Prayers from the Heart*, by Richard Foster.

As we covenant with God remember that this is a special covenant. It is our *voluntary* response to God's love for us – God's love which is already an established fact; revealed to us in Jesus death on the cross. It is not in our power to change the fact that God loves us more than we can understand or imagine. We can do nothing good enough, or bad enough, to make God love us more or less.

In our covenant prayer we simply offer ourselves to God.

As you begin this week of preparation remember the words below from our baptism liturgy in which we declare Jesus love which comes before our response:

Covenant Prayer

I am no longer my own, but yours.
Put me to what you will,
rank me with whom you will;
put me to doing,
put me to suffering;
let me be employed for you
or laid aside for you,
exalted for you
or brought low for you;
let me be full, let me be empty;
let me have all things;
let me have nothing;
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all
things to your pleasure and disposal.

And now, glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. You are
mine and I am yours. So be it.

And the covenant now made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven.

Amen

Baptism Liturgy

_____ for you Jesus Christ came into the world;
for you he lived and showed God's love;
for you he suffered death on the Cross;
for you he triumphed over death,
rising to newness of life;

for you he prays at God's right hand:
all this for you,
before you could know anything of it.
In your Baptism,
the word of Scripture is fulfilled:
'We love, because God first loved us.'

- British Worship Book 1998

**let me be full, let me be empty;
let me have all things, let me have nothing;**

Read:

¹⁷ As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ¹⁸ Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.' " ²⁰ He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth." ²¹ Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." ²² When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions...

(23-27)

²⁸ ...Peter began to say to him, "Look, we have left everything and followed you." ²⁹ Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, ³⁰ who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. ³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first."

- Mark 10:17-31

Think

If we let go of our 'stuff' Jesus promises us houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, fields & persecutions (Mark 10:30). Most of us stop at houses – but in this teaching Jesus, through teaching us to share – teaches us to become members of a wider human family; joined in joy and in suffering.

Do you own your 'stuff'?

Or does it own you?

Pray:

O Lord,
open my eyes that I may see the needs of others;
open my ears that I may hear their cries;
open my heart so that they need not be without succour;

Let me not be afraid to defend the weak because of the anger of the strong, nor afraid to defend the poor because of the anger of the rich.

Show me where love and hope and faith are needed, and use me to bring them to those places.

And so open my eyes and my ears that I may this coming day be able to do some work of peace for thee.

Amen.

- Alan Paton