

A Sunday Prayer

Lord,

We have come from different weeks. Some of us arrive rested, some of us arrive frayed, and some of us are not entirely sure why we came at all. You receive all three the same way. Meet us here as we actually are, not as we would prefer to appear.

Thank You for what this past week held, including the parts we would not have chosen. For work that went well and work that did not. For conversations that healed something and conversations we are still turning over. You were present in all of it, whether or not we noticed at the time.

We pray for those who are alone, and for those who are grieving. For the one who has spoken to no one since Friday. For the widow or widower still setting out one cup out of habit. For those whose loss is recent enough that Sunday mornings are hard, and for those whose loss is old enough that nobody asks anymore. Grief does not keep to a schedule, Lord, and neither should our kindness. Teach us to notice, and to stay past the first fortnight.

And because we cannot carry one another well while we are divided, we pray for the unity of Your Church. Not the polite kind that is really just avoidance, but the real kind that survives disagreement. Forgive us for the ease with which we take sides, and for the small resentments we have allowed to become permanent. Keep us more interested in one another than in being proved right. And where the

wider Church is fractured and watched by a world that draws its own conclusions, have mercy on us and make us better than our arguments.

We pray too for Mark our Rector. Give him a week with some quiet in it, protect him from the demands that are urgent but not important, and remind him that he is Yours before he is ours.

We bring You those who are carrying more at the moment than they can easily hold. The unwell in body, and those whose illness is in the mind and harder to explain to people who mean well. Those awaiting results, or living with the ones they have already had. Those whose money will not reach the end of the month and whose pride will not let them say so. You are not deceived by brave faces. Come close to each of them, and where You intend one of us to be part of the answer, make that unmistakably clear.

Now send us out steadily, Lord. Not with the false peace of pretending things are fine, but with the deeper peace of knowing that You are good, that You are present, and that nothing this week can carry us beyond Your reach.

In the name of Jesus, we pray.

Amen.