

An aerial photograph of a surfer riding a wave. The water is a deep, dark teal color, and the wave's crest is breaking into white foam. The surfer is a small white silhouette in the center of the frame. The overall mood is serene and powerful.

PRAYER
FOR A
WORLD TO
CHANGE

AN IMAGINED BEATITUDES FOR COP26

ST MARYS CF10

PRAYER FOR A WORLD TO CHANGE

An Imagined Beatitudes for COP26

When the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 26) begins in Glasgow on October 31, 2021, many churches will be celebrating the Feast of All Saints, a celebration during which we hear the words of the Beatitudes from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. (*Matthew 5:1-12*)

The Beatitudes are some of the most beautiful and well-known words in the Bible. Based on these words, we offer a simple prayer and meditation, an imagined extension and application to the current environmental crisis, as we commit to both prayer and action for a world to change.

Fr Dean Atkins

ST MARYS CF10

*When Jesus saw the crowds,
he went up the mountain
and after he sat down, his disciples came to him.
Then he began to speak.* (Matthew 5:1-12)

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
those who feel demoralised by disaster,
the down and the destitute who live with little hope.
The fearful and frightened,
their lives fractured by the thought of a future now undone.
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn,
with loved ones lost to a warming globe.
The fire-struck and flooded,
the drought and disaster stricken
left to sift through hot dust,
waiting for a harvest,
for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,
those who feel they have no power to bring change,
but who call from the streets and the side-lines,
halting traffic, hailing banners.
Placard waving protesters
sticking themselves to tarmac,
brushing off the belting sound of car horns,
and the bellowed anger of drivers,
for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for the unpredictable prophets
and the unexpected crowds who follow the voice of a child.
The scientists and conservationists,
the environmentalists and advocates,
the researchers and inventors
whose lifetimes' labour brings a world of change.
Those whose soapy hands at oil slicks
pull apart the feathers and the plumes,
clearing the dark mess of human living,
trawling through the rubbish tip of our seas,
picking out plastic,
or planting trees across the landscape of our lives,
or trudging across the dry ground of Africa,
pushing back poachers, empty-handed.

Blessed are the merciful,
for those who rebuild communities destroyed,
who walk with the sanctuary seekers,
their backs turned to their sometime home,
their lives lit only by gunfire
and wrapped in the smoke of war.
The displaced and the disconnected,
the refugees who drag what they own behind them,
holding onto a future that is not yet their own
for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart,
for the young and the old standing head to shoulder
and stare into the future
with open eyes, with speechless mouths,
who wonder what the future holds,
for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
those who stand between the disagreeers and deniers
and the call-for-changers and the eco-warriors.
For politicians playing their part on the stage of the world,
for those whose words undermine injustice,
and all who speak to the gallows of gunfire,
beneath a sky of exploding shells,
they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted
for righteousness' sake,
for scientists whose voice had gone unheard
in the midst of denial and derision.
The truth-tellers, the challengers and changers
who stand tall against the giants of our world
with their gold-lined pockets,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you
and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account,
those labelled as loony or misled,
the impractical and unimportant,
whose unpopular words move us,
drive us,
tell us,
that things must change.

Rejoice and be glad,
for your reward is great in heaven,
for in the same way they persecuted the prophets
who were before you.

Prayer

Lord God of the mountains and hills,
the oceans and forests,
the peaks and the plains,
the sky and the deep caverns of the earth,
your hand can be seen in all you have made.

We grieve for all that humanity
has done to harm the world you have created.

We pray for COP26,
for all the leaders and governments of the world,
and all who are called to action
to make bold change,
to save the world.

May we too, in our call to them,
commit ourselves to change the way we live,
to cherish the world you called us to care for.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

You can find this and other resources at our website

www.stmaryscf10.com

Cover photograph: Jeremy Bishop www.unsplash.com