



Picture Credit: Camden Historical Society
Camden Showground, June 1964.

Dear Friends,

July 2022

You have been very much in our thoughts and prayers during this time of catastrophic floods affecting parts of our nation. As you will have seen or heard through the news, many people in our communities have been hit by floods again! This is the fourth time our area (Camden) has seen large portions of our township submerged in severe flood waters.

We want to share that the Lord has protected us and our property. We are so grateful! However, we know that there are many people in our community that are hurting. No matter how great the disaster and tragedy, we are not without comfort and hope because of Jesus Christ's heart compassion and guidance through even the toughest circumstances. Sometimes in hours of deepest darkness and tragedy all that we can pray is: **"My Father, I do not understand You, but I trust You."** Then peace comes into our hearts.

Today we humbly ask that you pray alongside us for comfort and help for all those who are experiencing unthinkable loss, pain and suffering in this time.

May it help each one of us to seek Him in prayer as a reaction to the difficult news we are seeing and hearing during this catastrophe. Where the different opportunities arise, may we share with others the comfort and hope that is available for them.

Many natural disasters are coming upon our nation. What we are seeing at this time is God reaching out to us through judgements that warn us of the beginning of the apocalyptic age.

Holy Scripture says, 'Does evil befall a city, unless the LORD has done it?' (Amos 3:6 RSV). But we also read, 'He does not willingly afflict or grieve the sons of men' (Lamentations 3:33 RSV). This speaks of the Lord's grief even in judging.

The Bible clearly sees a direct connection between sin and all kinds of calamities. Consider, for example, Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple: "When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because Your people have sinned against You, and when they pray ... and turn from their sin because You have afflicted them, then hear from heaven ... When famine or plague comes to the land, or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers, or when an enemy besieges them in any of their cities, whatever disaster or disease may come, and when a prayer or plea is made by any of Your people Israel ... then hear from heaven, Your dwelling place. Forgive and act ." (1 Kings 8:35-39 NIV).

What, then, should our attitude be when calamity descends upon us as a people and we don't understand why? In the face of disaster we are reminded by Mother Basilea's messages, that we are to humble ourselves under the sins of our age, in which our own are included. Daniel 9 gives us good guidelines.

Daniel was not personally to blame for the destruction of Jerusalem. But he does not sit in judgement over others. One with his people, he shares the blame for sin, confessing, "We have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from Your commands and laws ... O LORD, we and our kings, our princes and our fathers are covered with shame because we have sinned against You" (Daniel 9:5,8 NIV). He humbly acknowledges the rightness of God's dealings.

We are the ones who have sinned! This is the confession Jesus is waiting to hear from us, as we can see from His reaction to specific calamities in His day. Jesus does not condemn the victims. Rather, He challenges the rest of the population, who were not personally affected, to repent, humbly confessing personal and national guilt.

It is wrong to assume automatically that a specific suffering is a punishment for specific sins. God primarily has the eternal well-being of the victims in mind.

The question is: are we souls whom God can raise up to lament with Him and bring Him comfort in such times of distress? He is looking for a group of mourner-comforters today. Before the anguish of God reaches its peak, we need to pray that these qualities will become ours.

It is not just about responding to God's judgement; with our whole being we are to be a response that brings comfort and solace to His heart. God is waiting for those who will share His anguish and grieve with Him, those who will bring Him comfort by confessing their sins and humbly submitting to His wrath.

These mourner-comforters, who minister to God's heart, are living proof of His love.

Why? Because they grieve for the lost and for those hit by disaster; they weep with a priestly heart, just as Jesus wept over Jerusalem when His city did not recognise the hour of its visitation (Luke 19:41-44). Even while suffering themselves from the effects of divine judgement, they have an unshakeable faith, which never loses confidence in the love of God.

If we do not lose confidence in the love of God, we will be invincible to Satan. Whether we are victorious or whether we fail depends not on our own resources but on our love for God, which is at one with His will and trusts in His love. If we could always understand God's actions, if we experienced nothing but miracles, we would never learn to be overcomers! What makes us strong is unity with the incomprehensible will of the Father, and bringing comfort to His heart during times of catastrophe.

How can we bring comfort to His heart? Through worship. Could there be a greater ministry for believers in the end times? Mother Basilea reminded us Sisters never to forget that we are called to the ministry of worship. Indeed all believers are called to offer glory, praise and worship to God the Father, to Jesus, the Lamb of God, who suffered and triumphed, and to the Holy Spirit. So may the sound of worship never cease among us. May the Lord receive glory, praise and worship, inspired by love. May the ministry of worship be ever sacred to us. Let us worship God—even in the depths of spiritual night or suffering—and bring Him glory in every situation.

We were reminded of a leaflet by Mother Basilea, compiled especially for times when life really hurts. Perhaps it will be a comfort for you and others in our nation as we move towards recovery from the catastrophic floods that hit us here in Australia.

In times of distress and pain, even tragedy, there is Someone whose heart breaks with yours, the heart of God your Creator. He is not a distant, far-away God, who doesn't care. He is loving and compassionate, and He cares about each one of us, yes, you too.

Words can never truly express how much God loves us. This is what gives us hope and security when everything seems to be falling apart. Jesus invites us to come to Him, and He will give us rest and support. He will refresh our souls.

We can say with the Psalmist, "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever" (Psalm 73:26 RSV). Then suffering loses its power over us.

Satan, who tries to make us rebellious and to turn us against God in such situations, is forced to give way. Our experience will be that even if we lose everything else we can never lose God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

Having Jesus in our hearts is the greatest treasure there is, and no disaster or tragedy can rob us of Him. If we have Him, we have all we need, for He has the power to rescue us from our plight or to help us in it.

Adapted from WHEN DISASTER STRIKES

For all your prayers, friendship and support
we send you our heartfelt thanks. God bless you abundantly!

The Evangelical Sisters of Mary



A Prayer for the Nation

*O Lord,
we bring our requests
to You not on the basis of
our righteousness, but on the
basis of Your great mercy.
(cf. Daniel 9:18)*

We confess with our nation that we have sinned.
We have dared to turn away from Your holy
and irrevocable commandments,
which You gave to us as an expression of Your will.
We have declared them irrelevant,
invalid and no longer binding,
even within the realm of the Christian Church.
In so doing, we have opened the floodgates of sin.

Father,
in great distress we plead with You for our country,
which deserves Your judgment.
For the sake of Jesus' precious blood,
have mercy upon our nation.
Save our country from perishing.
Accept our supplications,
as we turn aside from paths of sin.

Amen.

Those
who trust in
God's help
draw down
His help. MB

*Suffering and submission
to the mighty hand of God
is the way to show Jesus
true love and worship. MB*

In your distress
say to God:

*MY FATHER,
I DO NOT
UNDERSTAND
YOU, BUT
I TRUST IN
YOUR LOVE. MB*