

## CARDIFF CIRCUIT PRAYER FOR MONDAY MAY 11<sup>TH</sup>, 2020

Today's thoughts are provided by Rev. Cathy Gale

For yesterday's prayer focus we were reminded that Wesley identified "Works of Piety" (such as Prayer, Searching the Scripture and Holy Communion) and "Works of Mercy" as means of grace – channels through which God engages us in loving relationship. Today I invite us to focus on what Wesley called "Works of Mercy". Perhaps we can translate this rather dated phrase to "Works of Love" or "Acts of Kindness".

A true story – in my last appointment in Jamaica, the largest church, where the Circuit Office was located, was in a smart, uptown Kingston community surrounded by shops and restaurants. It was often frequented by men and women who were struggling – some drug addicts, some with severe mental illness, many homeless. They came because they could make something through begging and could get cheap food from fast food outlets. Eric was a regular at my church office. He was a drug addict who had a winsome personality and no matter how many times you helped him out, he always asked again the next time he saw you! One evening, I was coming out of the church office, heading to the hall to lead a Bible Study. I was tired and, probably, a bit short tempered. Eric was there and begging for some help. I answered him honestly. "Eric, I can't help you today. I don't get paid till the end of the week and I'm broke." Eric, looking crestfallen, went away. I did Bible Study and came out 90 minutes later to see Eric waiting. My heart fell – I was too tired for another encounter. But Eric approached me with his hand outstretched and a smile. "Here, Rev." he said, "I begged \$100 and you can have \$50!" (It was the equivalent of about 50p.)

I've never forgotten that episode and what it taught me about helping people – it's all about relationship. It's not a one-way street of me doing something for someone else. As we help others we are ourselves helped. It's not always as stark as in the story I've just shared, but John Wesley's point is that God uses others as a channel of grace, helping us as we help them.

Use your time in prayer today to bring to mind encounters you've had with others as you've tried to be kind. Have you been changed by those encounters?

I offer you the image below – a gift to me some years ago – as a symbol of giving, of kindness. Also, some words from a well-known hymn. Think about those words – the second half of the verse as well as the first:



Brother, sister, let me serve you;  
let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant too.

Has this time in lockdown caused you to rethink how you might use your time and resources when restrictions are lifted? Is there anything you can do to help others even now?