

Cardiff Methodist Circuit Prayer Month – 15th May

Today's thoughts are provided by Rev. Paul Martin

"To clasp hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising" - Karl Barth

Dom Helder Camara was a remarkable man. A Bishop in a poor area in North East Brazil he made quite an impact standing alongside the poor and marginalised. Famously, he said that when he fed the poor, people called him a saint but when he questioned why there was such poverty he was swiftly dismissed as a communist. This was very dangerous in the period in which Brazil was ruled by a brutal military dictatorship. Indeed on one occasion he was visited by a gunman who announced he had come to assassinate Dom Helder. Ultimately the gunman left without carrying out the deed because he realised that Dom Helder was a man of God.

Dom Helder was one of the most prominent exponents of what came to be liberation theology. This is reflected in his prayers. At times they are deeply uncomfortable such as this one:

"Come, Lord,
do not smile and say you are already with us.
Millions do not know you,
and to us who do,
what is the difference?
What is the point of your presence
if our lives do not alter?
Change our lives,
shatter our complacency.
Make your word our life's purpose.
Take away the quietness of a clear conscience.
Press us uncomfortably.
For only thus
that other peace is made,
your peace."

This prayer for young people is also full of challenge:

"Lord this world needs
this wonderful wealth that is youth.
Help young people!
They possess the inexhaustible wealth
of the future.
Do not allow an easy life
to corrupt them,
Nor difficulties to quench their spirit
Amen."

Dom Helder Camara remains a powerful example to us that Barth was correct. May at the right times our prayers be the beginning of an uprising!

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

- 1/. Pray that a more just society be built on the ashes of this pandemic.
- 2/. Pray that in our church life we might dream big dreams
- 3/. Pray for all who are this day walking through the valleys of death, despair or pain whilst giving thanks for all who by words and deeds give reason to believe in life, hope and healing.