



The Bishop of Wakefield, the Rt Revd Stephen Platten, today encouraged Church of England parishes to join with others this weekend in praying for peace in Syria and to look at practical ways of supporting the humanitarian relief effort.

The Bishop of Wakefield, Chair of the Church of England's Liturgical Commission and Lead Bishop in the House of Lords on Defence and Security, said:

"I welcome this week's decision by the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales calling Catholics to offer prayers for those affected by the conflict in Syria. I very much hope that all Christians, whatever their denomination, will follow suit. I am delighted that the Church of England has today released prayers to assist people to do so.

"This conflict has persisted for too long and caused too much unnecessary human suffering. The international community must redouble its efforts in breaking the diplomatic impasse and in meeting the humanitarian costs of the conflict. It is high time that we saw peace, security and stability restored in Syria.

"In addition to praying for the people of Syria and the wider peace in the region, I hope that Church of England parishes will look to support the ongoing relief effort by contributing generously to Christian Aid's emergency appeal for Syria."

### ***A Prayer for Reconciliation in Syria***

God of history,

Witness of the struggles within families;

we pray for the divided family of Syria

as brother fights against brother,

and sister rejects sister.

We pray for those whose love of neighbour

has been destroyed in the bitterness of enmity.

May fear be submerged in compassion.

May distrust be diluted by hope,

as a vision of peace illuminates

darkened minds and hate-filled hearts.

We pray in the name of Christ,

our source of light and love. Amen.

***A Prayer for Peace in Syria***

Spirit of wisdom and grace,

the power of truth and judgement;

we pray for all who are working for peace

in the tangled conflict of Syria today.

For international leaders holding a thread of control,

for the politicians holding a thread of power,

for the religious leaders holding a thread of authority,

for the fighters holding a thread of influence,

and the citizens clinging to a thread of hope.

Bring unity through the untangled order of justice.

Bring reconciliation through truthful dialogue.

Bring new life through patient diplomacy,

determined mediation and courageous peace-making.

We pray in the name of Christ,

our source of inspiration and confidence. Amen.

***A Prayer for the Victims of the Syrian conflict***

We pray for those damaged by the fighting in Syria.

To the wounded and injured:

Come Lord Jesus.

To the terrified who are living in shock:

Come Lord Jesus

To the hungry and homeless, refugee and exile:

Come Lord Jesus

To those bringing humanitarian aid:

Give protection Lord Jesus

To those administering medical assistance:

Give protection Lord Jesus.

To those offering counsel and care:

Give protection Lord Jesus.

For all making the sacrifice of love:

Give the strength of your Spirit

and the joy of your comfort.

In the hope of Christ we pray. Amen.

## Notes

Archbishop Vincent Nichols, president of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, and Bishop Declan Lang, chair of the international affairs committee for the Conference, called on Monday, 8 July for all Catholics to offer prayers and to offer practical support wherever possible, for all those affected by the conflict in Syria. <http://www.catholic-ew.org.uk/Home/News/Prayers-for-Syria>

1. Details of Christian Aid's emergency appeal for Syria can be found at <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/emergencies/current/syria-crisis-appeal/index.aspx>
2. In a fringe meeting at this year's York General Synod, the Archbishop of Canterbury called for prayers and action for Syria. <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5104/we-need-prayers-and-action-to-help-syria-says-archbishop>