

***“Gentle God, Grant that at home where we are most truly ourselves,
where we are known at our best and worst, we may learn to forgive and be forgiven.”***
New Zealand Prayer Book, Collect for the 22nd Sunday after Pentecost



Dear Friends,

One of the things I miss each Sunday is that moment when the choir and altar party gathers together right before we enter the nave for the opening hymn. It always seems to begin with a little chaos, but then everyone lines up in their proper places, cassocks and cottas are straightened up, processional candles are double-checked, and then we pause for a time of prayer. It helps to get us focused on worship, and to steady ourselves for our part in it. It is much quieter these days before the service. Easier, yes. But I miss the energy contained in that little space, ready to explode into the nave.

All that has changed with this pandemic. I can't recall exactly how it came to be, but somehow, I have not been offering a formal prayer before the service begins. Perhaps it is because I am not exactly sure what I did with the prayer book I usually use; *New Zealand's Book of Common Prayer*. I think it may be buried underneath the pile of Prayerbooks we gathered from the pews when the pandemic began. Perhaps I need to go over *today* – while I'm thinking about it – and see if I can find it!

Thankfully, I have a copy at the rectory. It is now my “go to” book when Deacon Vicki asks me to close our Zoom Book Club in prayer. A couple of weeks ago, I chose the prayer written above; it is one that is appointed for this coming Sunday and has long-been one of my favorites.

Eight months into the pandemic, the power of it is hitting me like never before. Because it is about life in each one of our homes.

The pandemic has shed a rare light on our homelife – for we are spending far more time in the company of our immediate families than ever before. For better, for worse! Think of your home as your own little laboratory, or your own little petri dish. It is there, with those we know best that we learn who we really are. If anyone knows me, it's those two people who inhabit the rectory with me! It is in those intimate and familiar surroundings that we are most truly ourselves. And so it is there that we are given the opportunity to really work those words we pray every week, *“forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.”*

As we enter yet another month of limited movement, as we maneuver ever-more-closely among spouses and partners, children – and even our pets – my prayers are for our families. My prayers are for you. They are also for me. I pray that we can find this a time blessed by God, as we learn to care for one another, to respect one another, and of course, to forgive one another. I imagine that if we could all get together and write a book about life at home during Covid, we would find we have so very much in common in this experience. Much to laugh about, many unexpected lessons learned, and much for which to be thankful.

Enjoy your life. Look for our Lord in this beautiful autumnal world. Mostly, be grateful for the people you are blessed to have around you. For each one is a little piece of the Christ we share and love.

Peace,
Mother Lisa+