

THE COVENTRY LITANY OF RECONCILIATION

Provost Richard Howard put the words “FATHER FORGIVE” on the wall behind the charred cross in the ruins of the destroyed cathedral in 1948, not “Father forgive Them”, *because we all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.* (Rom 3,23)

These words moved generations of people and are prayed in the Litany of Reconciliation every Friday at noon outside in the ruins and on many other places around the world.

The Litany of Reconciliation, based on the seven cardinal sins, was written in 1958 by Canon Joseph Poole, the first Precentor of the new Cathedral. It is a universal and timeless confession of humanity’s failings, but it evokes us to approach these sins and weaknesses in the forgiveness of God’s love.

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

The hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class,

Father, forgive.

The covetous desires of people and nations to possess what is not their own,

Father, forgive.

The greed which exploits the work of human hands and lays waste the earth,

Father, forgive.

Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others,

Father, forgive.

Our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the refugee,

Father, forgive.

The lust which dishonours the bodies of men, women and children,

Father, forgive.

The pride which leads us to trust in ourselves and not in God,

Father, forgive.

Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.