

Monthly Prayer World DIAKONIA May 2016

In preparing the prayers for the month of May I thought that it might be appropriate to follow on, to some extent, from the prayer prepared by Diane Kaufmann for April. That prayer reminded me that we are part of a world-wide fellowship of Diaconal Communities for we too, in Australia, are challenged by the reality of refugees in our communities. Sometimes they are welcomed in our country, but sadly, many times they are not. A question comes to us is how can we be a truly welcoming and hospitable community in the face of the fear, mistrust, and anger that those seeking shelter seem to throw up for our Government. If only it were different! Perhaps it can be different if we just take the time to look at ourselves and ponder how we, as individuals, can be more aware of our own response to those who come to our shores seeking a safer home; if we could just look at ourselves in relation to the One who calls us beyond ourselves and into an encounter with God and all those who are made in God's image. It can be different. Let's pray that it is.

For the prayer this month I want to offer a prayer called '*Gracious friend*' by Alma Fritchley that is found in a resource produced by the Iona Community in Scotland.

Gracious friend
and God of compassion,
we reach out to you for understanding
whilst hardly understanding ourselves.

We turn to you for eternal truths
yet can barely look ourselves in the eye
when our words are less than honest.

We ask that our open hearts be blessed by you
yet dither and deny
when your existence is questioned and challenged.

We take part in catastrophic wars
yet turn to you looking for peace,
and fail to understand when the war rages on.

We ask that poverty ends here, ends now,
yet look over our shoulder in horror
when a hand is held out in desperation.

God of our understanding,
help us see the real face:
ours and yours.

Help us see the real needs,
ours and theirs,
and help us catch a glimpse
of a world that can be.
Amen.

Prayer by Alma Fritchley (*copyright*), in Ruth Burgess (ed) Moments of our Nights and Days, Glasgow, Wild Goose Publications, 2014. p262.