

Take Away This Hate: A Liturgy for the Transgender Day of Remembrance

20 November 2023

SuQ1127a

Preface

Either show or say.

The 20th November each year is marked as the Transgender Day of Remembrance. In this service we remember those transgender people who have been murdered or have taken their own lives during the previous year, simply for trying to live lives in ways which are true to their own identities. Although transgender people today are well accepted by certain sections of the United Kingdom population, in other parts and in some religious traditions they are not, and they still remain one of the most vilified groups. In other countries this can be an even greater, and a life-or-death matter. About 80 percent of people who fear they are transsexual find they are not. Of those who do, the results of a large number of independent peer reviewed studies in many countries claiming acceptance of transgender people show a common pattern. Attempted suicide rates of 32 to 40 percent are independently quoted. To in five trans people (41 per cent) and three in ten non-binary people (31 per cent) have experienced a hate crime or incident because of their gender identity in the last 12 months. More than a quarter of trans people (28 per cent) in a relationship in the last year have faced domestic abuse from a partner. One in four trans people (25 per cent) have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. One in eight trans employees (12 per cent) have been physically attacked by colleagues or customers in the last year. These figures are challenged by other groups.

The current arguments about the nature and origins of transgender condition have lent to intense disputes and the incidences of hate crime against transgender people are now showing a rapidly increasing trend. In this service of remembrance, we remember those who have been casualties both of ignorance and the violence that this creates.

Hymn: Be Not Afraid.

Download and run via playlist.

On 11 February 2023, Brianna Ghey a 16-year-old British transgender girl from Birchwood in Warrington, Cheshire, England, was killed in Culcheth Linear Park in Culcheth, Warrington. Two accused teenagers, both aged 15, are in police custody, having been charged with murder four days after the incident¹.

As we join together for this Transgender day of Remembrance, we honour the very many transgender people who have been murdered or have taken their own lives because of the hatred of others in the last year. Let Brianna stand for all those who have been killed or committed suicide when the freedom to express their identities is denied.

¹ On 11 February 2023, Brianna Ghey a 16-year-old British transgender girl from Birchwood in Warrington, Cheshire, England, was killed in Culcheth Linear Park in Culcheth, Warrington. Two accused teenagers, both aged 15, are in police custody, having been charged with murder four days after the incident. (Wikipedia). BBC News Report <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-67543984>

Gathering

Just one death is a death too many.
Just one death is a life that is gone.
Just one life that brought love to many,
Care and compassion where all must belong.
Hate incurred for being transgender.
Stabbed in a park by those who knew her.
Teenage murder of a teenage girl.

Yet she's just one, one of the many.
How many more, will suffer or die.
With difference only in identity and role
Character trashed when being transgender.
Sees search for identity as sexual desire,
Rejected by those who think they know better,
How many others unknown will die?



Photo Cheshire Police

Come Lord Jesus in this time to remember.
All those that we know but also unknown,
Identities smashed by those who deny us,
For names we embrace bring life to our souls
Brianna in death, in death we have found you,
For you stand for all, as now we remember.
That all should be loved and find love in their souls.

Hymn Be still my Soul.

Download and run via playlist.

Reflection

Download and run audio and video via playlist.

Few of us are likely to be unaffected by the human slaughter, suffering and misery we see every day caused by the violence of war on the peoples of Gaza, Israel, Russia, and Ukraine not to mention the unseen distresses caused by violence, conflict, and war in many other parts of the world. Each year on the 20th November on this Transgender Day of Remembrance, we remember the deaths and the persecution of transgender people by the hands of others during the previous year. This may seem like a minor issue, given the horrendous scale of the violence we now see every day. Yet they all share the same things in common. That is the need to be recognised, accepted, and celebrated for who we are, whether that be Jew, Christian, Muslim or Sikh, or men or women, or those whose gender identities cross the binary divide. For our identities, for what we call ourselves, and for all people, these are the things that are most precious to us, and to who we are.

If we follow the guidelines of the World Authorities and Professional Medical Institutions, the sources of these identities, for all of us, lie at the core of the personalities that are created. They about our search for identity, being ourselves, about rejecting what is wrong, and about finding our places in societies. These are inwardly focussed with no harm to others. But, for other groups and for certain religious traditions, this search is not understood to be for identity. It is instead considered to be driven by motives of sex. It means that our identities are considered to be merely social constructs created by underlying drives of behaviour and desire, which are imposed by these suppressed attractions of sex. It is this misdiagnosis and misunderstanding which creates fears that we seek to impose those goals on others through their misrepresentations, with their predictions of predation, grooming, and threats. To justify these arguments the impact of the massive neural and cognitive advances during the first three years of life must be dismissed or denied. And this is the time

when children learn to separate the self from the other before social expectations can be formed. These developments also happen before conscious awareness is created, the methods of management contradict, and it is natural for most people to assume that unless some sexually motivated perversion or disruption occurs gender identity should always be congruent with biological sex.

This can particularly affect transgender people whose search for identity departs from the binary stereotypes expected by biology. It is of increasing concern at the present time when a coalition of gender-critical feminist movements, conservative politicians, governments, and religious groups are determined to deny the depth of transgender identities and the almost universal worldwide consensus of the professional medical institutions, by replacing their views with their own definitions of gender identity as merely a social construct which is driven by these sublimated sexual motives of behaviour and desire, which in turn creates these fears of predation, recruitment, grooming and threats.

Despite a much greater overall acceptance of transgender people in the United Kingdom these people remain one of the most vilified sections of the population. Transgender hate crimes for the year to 2023 numbered 4732, with a rise of religious hate crimes of 11 percent in the year to March 2023, and a corresponding rise of 9 percent in the previous year. This is despite to despite an overall reduction of 5 percent for all hate crimes committed against gender and sexually variant people in the last year. This rise is attributed by the United Kingdom Home Office to the toxic arguments created by the present disputes. What we need now is an openness and willingness of all people to genuinely take heed of the science, clinical, and experiential evidence now available. And not just to listen to what other people say, or to take heed of conspiracy theories, with all their misrepresentations and threats. It was Jesus who came *“to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed”* (Luke 4:18). It was Jesus who listened to those people whose voices were unheard, and their stories denied. Next time you meet someone who is transgender, listen to what they say, take heed of their stories, and with them celebrate what you may find.

Yet these are rarely one-sided arguments. There are failures on both sides. Unless we all are prepared to listen, to heed and to respect in care and love the stories of those people we would cast out from our company, we will create the ever-increasing degrees of misinformation, fears, and threats of aggression, which too often lead to wars to extreme violence and even to genocide by both or either side. From small beginnings, uninformed ideologies, fears, and condemnations, these acts of extreme violence, tribal attacks, and wars can arise. There may be great differences in the extremities of these conflicts, but not in kind. Transgender people may be relatively well accepted in the United Kingdom, but these are still life and death matters in many religious cultures and countries. As we now remember at least some of those transgender people we know to have who have been murdered or have taken their own lives through the actions of others, let us also listen to or imagine the terrors of Brianna and their own stories, because it is by finding these truths in each other that hope is defined.

Act of Remembrance

But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, Jacob, and formed you, Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name: you are mine. When you pass through waters, I will be with you; through rivers, you shall not be swept away (Isaiah 43: 1-4).

Let us now name and remember those transgender people who are known to us, who can no longer see the dew of new mornings, the delights of new sunlight the joys of relationships, or hear the memories of those who mourn them, when the actions of others means now they are gone.

Hymn: My Song is love Unknown.

Download and run via playlist.

Read or show list of names of transgender people murdered or taken their own lives during the previous year. Play the hymn during the reading of names or as a memorial afterwards. Use www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/TDOR2023-Deaths4.pdf or download and run other alternatives, as shown via playlist while the hymn plays.

Of the 329 trans and gender diverse people reported here as murdered in 2022-2023.

94% of victims were trans women or trans feminine people.

Trans people affected by racism make up 80% of the reported murders, a 15% increase from last year.

45% of trans people of those reported murdered in Europe whose migration background is known were migrants or refugees.

The age group with the most murder victims was 19 to 25 years old. Of all cases with age data available, three-quarters (77%) were between 19 and 40 years old.

Almost three-quarters (73%) of all registered murders were committed in Latin America and the Caribbean; nearly one-third (31%) of the total occurred in Brazil.

Murders in Armenia, Belgium and Slovakia were reported for the first time.

Almost half of the reported murders (46%) were shootings.

Just over one quarter (28%) of the recorded murders took place on the street, and a further quarter (26%) in the victim's own residence. *(Source Trans murder monitoring)*

Trans people search for identity, however in many countries, many have had to turn to sex work to support themselves in the face of discrimination and attacks. For the woman caught in adultery Jesus thought for a moment and then replied, *"He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone."* Before we decide to condemn, let us ask who should cast the first stone?

Let us say the Confession together.

Confession

Lord, we thank you for your loving care and ask for your forgiveness in the many ways we have failed you. Often, we are uncertain, like Thomas, who did not know the way to follow and who asked to see the evidence before being convinced. May we see how Jesus responded to these uncertainties, when he said: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life". Help us to recognise the harm we may have done to others by condemning them through ignorance or lack of understanding even when our best intentions are in place. As we mourn or grieve for those who have died or who are in difficulty or despair, let us remember that the true fruits of that mourning must be found in a better and more understanding world. In place of our own fears, our doubts, and uncertainties, grant us your peace, give us the joy, hope and courage to bring that good news, with your message of mercy, justice, love, and freedom to the world.

Prayers of Concern

Shine on us Lord through the anger, violence, and heat of the warfare in Israel, Gaza, Ukraine, and in many other parts of the world, as we remember the distress and suffering, casualties, and deaths. In our prayers, we pray now for all those known to us, also those we do not know, that peace and concord may prevail.

Silent or spoken prayers may be offered here.

Lord in Your Mercy
Hear our Prayer.

Shine on us Lord, that we may bring peace, understanding, mercy and compassion to ourselves and our enemies and all those who are driven by fears of the other into all outbreaks of violence and hate. Help us to



break down the barriers of ignorance and fear which divide us, as we pray now for those who feel trapped by such barriers for which they can see no escape.

Silent or spoken prayers may be offered here.

Lord in Your Mercy
Hear our Prayer.

Shine on us Lord, for the sake of our leaders, governments, and all those in authority, that they may bring wise qualities of judgement, evenness, objectivity, compassion, mercy, objectivity and fairness to all people, immigrants, and others in all decisions they make.

Silent or spoken prayers may be offered here.

Lord in Your Mercy
Hear our Prayer.

Shine on us Lord for all transgender people, all gender, and sexually variant people, and all those who depart from the social stereotypes of behaviour, outlook, and culture which society expects biology expects. Instead of approaches of gender complementarity which enforce such exclusions. we pray for your help to bring that true gender equality that embraces all people in the love of Christ.

Silent or spoken prayers may be offered here.

Lord in Your Mercy
Hear our Prayer.

Shine on us Lord, that we may care for those who have been hurt and damaged by our failures, and for those who by our own actions or through the actions of others have led to murder and death. We mourn for those who are no longer with us and those who have suffered greatly. As we now pray for those who have died or suffered, grant them your Peace in the Love of Christ

Silent or spoken prayers may be offered here.

Lord in Your Mercy
Hear our Prayer.

Shine on us Lord, as we pray for ourselves. We bring to you our fears and concerns and we pray that you will, grant us Lord with the wisdom, understanding, courage and patience to do your will.

Silent or spoken prayers may be offered here.

Lord in Your Mercy
Hear our Prayer.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ

We now say together the Corrymeela Prayer for Courage

Courage

**Courage comes from the Heart,
And we are always welcomed by God,
The Heart of our being,
We bear witness to our faith,
Knowing that we are called to live lives,
Of courage, love, and reconciliation
In the ordinary and extraordinary moments
of each day**

**We bear witness too, to our failures,
And of our complicity in the fractures of this world
May we be courageous today.
May we learn today,
May we love today.**

Amen

Corrymeela Prayer for Courage²

Let Us Build a House

Hymn: Let us build a house

Download and run via playlist.

Let us say together:

Blessing

**Dear Lord
On earth you made us
On earth you love us
In Your great mercy
Grant us Lord the courage and ability
To build our earthly lives in your own image
Where, there is neither Jew nor Arab,
There is neither male and female
But that all are as one in Christ Jesus**

**And where all people, lesbian, gay, bisexual,
Heterosexual, transgender, transexual
And all races, cultures, and ethnicities
Who seek in love and faithfulness,
In ways which are true to their own identities
And seek to fulfil your Gospel Message,
Are welcomed today,
And are celebrated today,
In this your earthly home,**

**And in your joyfully equal Gospel message
On earth as it is in heaven.
Grant us your Peace
The Peace which passes all understanding,
Bless us and keep us,
Guard us and guide us,
From this day forward
And evermore.**

Amen

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² The Corrymeela Community is an ecumenical community of people of all Christian traditions who, individually and together, are committed to the healing of social, religious, and political divisions in Northern Ireland and throughout the rest of the world.
www.corrymeela.org

Links

Gilchrist, Susan. (2023): " Reflection for the Transgender Day of Remembrance: 20 November 2023":
www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/TDOR2023-Reflection.pdf

Gilchrist, Susan. (2023): "Service for the Transgender Day of Remembrance: 20 November 2023":
www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/TDOR2023-Liturgy.pdf

Gilchrist, Susan. (2023): "Playlist for the Transgender Day of Remembrance Service: 20 November 2023":
www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/TDOR2023-Playlist.pdf

List of Deaths to October 2023 www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/TDOR2023-Deaths4.pdf
For a shorter table use: www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/TDOR2023-Deaths5.pdf

Service and reflection videos www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/TDOR2023-Videos.pdf

Copyright and Playlist

Be Not Afraid. ©BBC
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p09n01g9>

Be Still My Soul. ©BBC
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0dvvbkhv>

List of Names
www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/TDOR2023-Deaths4.pdf
For a shorter table use: www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/TDOR2023-Deaths5.pdf
More information
<https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/>
<https://tdor.translivesmatter.info/reports>

My Song is Love Unknown. ©BBC
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=789478249156280>

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<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00jlxp7>

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