

Loving God, in this season of Lent, we bring you our prayers for a world enduring testing times. We trust in your promises through scripture and turn to you in faith that you will hear us.

God of truth, in testing times, **be our strength and guide.**

We hear of corruption, prejudice, dishonour and greed from people in positions of power and influence across the world. We pray for those who seek to make a positive difference in the world with honesty and integrity. Strengthen them to stand against the tide as the voice of reason. When we are tempted to despair or apathy, help us to stand for justice, using our democratic rights wisely and prayerfully.

God of truth, in testing times, **be our strength and guide.**

We pray for the inhabitants of countries currently affected by war, conflict or terrorism, whose daily life is punctuated with fear and violence and who long for peace and security. We pray especially for Ukraine, for the Sudan, for Gaza, for Myanmar.

We feel the ever growing tension between national pride and nationalism. We remember any feeling threatened, excluded or disadvantaged, especially when fleeing conflict or persecution as refugees or when legal citizenship is questioned. This week, whenever we hear about the winter Olympics, may we value the cooperation, unity and diversity they were designed to celebrate.

God of truth, in testing times, **be our strength and guide.**

This week unemployment reaches a five-year high, with the rate of wage increases dropping, leaving people struggling to find work to cover their most basic expenses. Thank you, Lord, for individuals, organisations and charities that work tirelessly to help with food, accommodation, advice and support for mental health, though we long for a time when these things might not be needed.

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Lord, we know of many facing testing times too personal to make headlines but no less challenging or debilitating, preventing them experiencing life in all its fullness as you desire for them. For those troubled in mind, body or spirit and for those who stand patiently and lovingly by them, we ask for healing and peace of mind. For those who are bereaved or grieving in any way, we ask for comfort. For those who are anxious or stressed or who anticipate major life changes, we ask your blessing and encouragement through your Holy Spirit. The week that many people celebrate Lunar New Year, we pray for anyone needing the opportunity for a new start, especially those coming from broken or abusive homes or relationships, facing redundancy, fighting addiction, paroled from prison, leaving the care system, or simply feeling they have lost their way. And we bring before you our own needs, spoken and unspoken, trusting in your promises to hear our prayers.

God of truth, in testing times, **be our strength and guide.**

Amen