

# Canopy of Prayer

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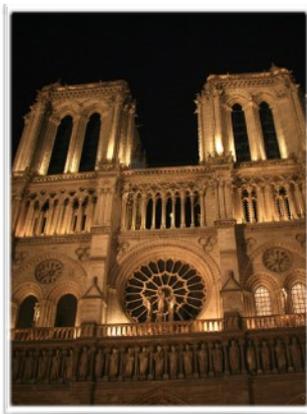
## Dear praying friends in Europe

### You will know them by their fruit

At the World Congress of Families last month politicians, faith leaders and NGOs each took their turn to declare themselves champions of the family, of life and of Christian Europe. Outside angry radical feminists protested the intolerance of these “medieval losers”. The polarity of European politics is worrying, particularly as we enter European election season. We would do well to follow Jesus’s statement that we will know the nature of a person by the fruit that they produce. “Every good tree bears good fruit” (Matt. 7:17). Before casting our votes, we should discover who best represents our views as Christians; who are people of integrity, and who are the pretenders? We know that the kingdom will not come through politics but we must pray for all our leaders.

Paul Moynan

## Out of the ashes



The burning roof lights up the Paris night skyline, a helpless nation looks on horrified, but the indestructible image of the cross shines on.

As the world watched the sad destruction of parts of Notre Dame Cathedral, many have speculated on the symbolism of this emblem of Paris, of faith, and of Europe. After the shock, the words of empathy sent by global leaders and pop stars and the desire to find the cause of this repairable cultural catastrophe, there came signs of hope. Pledges of millions of euros from the super-rich, resolute words of defiance from the President who vowed to rebuild the cathedral in five years and tales of heroism as priceless relics were saved from destruction. The destructible testing our faith in the indestructible.

As Christians we know that our faith is one held in “jars of clay” which are vulnerable, sure to be destroyed in the grave, but of eternal worth and endurance. Our foundation is unshakeable, even if we suffer in this life.

What is interesting to note from this fire, is the importance this house of worship is given, even for those not practising any faith. What was a historic landmark has suddenly been embraced as a symbol of so much more - and something undeniably Christian.

Even though French society values and defends its “laïcité” (secularism), a hidden spirituality has risen up in many French people. The fire-damaged cathedral of Notre Dame has become a symbol of this. We see a sign where God is at work unexpectedly. This should encourage us to proclaim what God has begun to do.

We proclaim already that “Europe shall be saved” – how can this happen? Only by a change in culture which the Holy Spirit alone can bring about. Our proclamation of the will of God over European society will help those deeper roots of Christian faith in our culture to come up again.

The rise in religious reflection at the destruction in Paris and the questioning of secularism should prompt us to pray, “let your kingdom come”. As modern culture is shaken, there is a great opportunity to proclaim the risen King.

## Prayer

- **Pray** that many would look beyond Notre Dame as a cultural symbol and think about what is really important – a personal relationship with God through Jesus.
- **Pray** for Parliamentary candidates putting themselves forward for the European elections, that they would boldly declare their principles, ideas and even faith, so that the electorate can make wise choices.
- **Pray** for leaders to rise up who will challenge us to follow the narrow path, to proclaim and protect life, faith and the Truth.



## European elections

The candidates have now been selected, and the campaigning now begins in earnest for the election of Members to the European Parliament for the next mandate from 2019 – 2024. It is important to look for integrity in those we will elect. We must also be aware at this time of the need for heightened security for the candidates. But we have all become more alert to the increased need for vigilance against interference from other foreign powers which could influence the results. It is our responsibility as the Christian community to uphold all those in authority, and also those seeking positions of authority at these times.

## Additional prayer points:-

1. **Sri Lanka:** Let us continue to pray for all those affected by the terrible acts of terrorism in this country, particularly against the Christian community. But let us also give thanks for the public testimony of the priest who declared to the terrorists “We forgive you and we love you”.
2. **Brexit:** As members of the UK parliament return to their duties after the Easter recess, pray that the process will continue in an atmosphere which does not give rise to destructive animosity between leaders, nations, factions and political parties.

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