

This prayer has now been published by The Iona Community, of which I am an associate, in "In the gift of this new day" Neil Paynter. ISBN 978-1-84952-447-6. See [www.lonabooks.com](http://www.lonabooks.com)

## IN A TIME OF AUSTERITY

I wrote this prayer for a demonstration with the relatives of people who had died after their income was stopped by a jobcentre with a sanction. It was called by UNITE Community, of which I am a member, outside the DWP Headquarters, Tothill Street, Westminster, on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015. The first paragraph of this prayer draws on the work of Psychologists Against Austerity (<https://psychagainstausterity.wordpress.com/>) who have listened to sanctioned people and from my own work with people struggling with unmanageable debt imposed by the State.

**We remember** all who have died while their income was sanctioned, who were overcome by any feelings of humiliation or shame, by fear or distrust, insecurity or loneliness; or by a sense of being trapped and powerless under the abuses of power by the State in a time of austerity.

In a time of austerity we pray, in solidarity with the 1000s of UK citizens currently suffering sanctions, which are imposed with the maximum use of the media to blame decent people for their own unemployment and poverty; for the millions of UK citizens who are suffering under unmanageable debts due to high rents, the council tax, the caps and cuts in social security imposed by Parliament, made worse by sanctions.

**We pray too for those in power, and seeking power, that they may find;**

**The courage** to work for and implement social and economic justice,

**The will** to build a well-being state on the ashes of the welfare state in which rich and poor and Parliament are in solidarity with each other.

**The policies** to ensure that no one will have to choose between heating or eating, the rent or the streets, life or death due to the unjust enforcement of debts against inadequate incomes, or no incomes at all, due to a sanction.

In the name of Jesus Christ,

Amen

Rev Paul Nicolson