

Written prayer

## for cities in distress

*This prayer was written on 31 March, 2016 to capture some core themes that came out of several times prayer and worship following the events in Lahore on Easter Sunday (27 March) and the other violent attacks still fresh in our memories, and prayers, in other cities over the last few weeks and months.*

*(You can find more written prayers, songs and creative prayer ideas to help you pray for this situation – and others – at [www.thesanctuarycentre.org/whereworldandworshipmeet](http://www.thesanctuarycentre.org/whereworldandworshipmeet) )*

### A prayer for cities in distress

Lahore, Brussels, Istanbul, Ankara, Paris...  
our list of great cities in distress is growing Lord.  
But we know in bringing them to you  
we come to the one whose heart carries them all daily -  
never forgetting -  
but always loving, grieving, interceding and holding back in mercy  
your earnest desire to return and bring perfect safety now  
for the sake of those who still might accept your offer to be safe forever.

Parks, airports, shopping centres, cafes, airports,  
these are the places we have played in,  
related in, begun new beginnings and adventures in,  
said preciously painful goodbyes in -  
these are places people have felt safe.  
But East and West alike weep over them now  
as they see their desolation,  
for destruction and fear robbed and destroyed  
and return again and again in memories that linger and threaten.

But oh our Lord, this we also remember,  
as we share your heart today -  
that there is a river that makes glad the city of our God  
and by it grows a tree whose leaves will heal the nations.  
And dear Lord, we ask you please,  
could this river burst the banks of eternity  
and rush through each city with comfort and hope today?  
Washing away all that fear and trauma  
in the wake of a mighty, pure, transforming love.  
And could this tree, and these priceless leaves  
- won for us by you on Easter's tree at such a cost -

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**for cities in distress**

be protective, loving shade and ministering salve  
and all else that you alone know is needed today?  
Bringing good out of evil even here  
as hearts turn to peace and justice.

On earth as it is in heaven...  
Lord Jesus, please come  
and bring the beauty-from-ashes-gladness of your kingdom  
into the parks, airports, shopping centres, cafes and airports  
of these great cities  
and into the streets, homes and hearts of all who live in them.  
And to us Lord, here in our cities, break the power of fear  
and hold us back from closing our hearts and our land  
to those who need refreshing welcome, shelter  
and a safe city in which to heal.