*Dear Lord,*

*We gather here this morning as one city, invoking Your Name and asking You to bless us, the people of Sydney.*

*We gather here believing that you are the merciful God, the one who knows each of us, who cares for each of us, who will come for us, lost and sinful though we are, and adopt us through the work of your Son, Jesus, the Good Shepherd.*

*We gather here aware that we are a city that has experienced recent tragedy, especially the loss of two of our citizens in the Lindt Cafe siege last year.*

*We gather here painfully aware of the divisions and difficulties that exist in our city, in our nation and in our world.*

*We gather here knowing that Christ's own elsewhere, suffer martyrdom and persecution because they trust in Christ.*

*We ask for your blessing, Lord, upon our city and our nation.  We ask for your particular blessing Lord on those who have done so much in the last year to protect our nation and our city, particularly those in the Police, the Firefighters, the Paramedics and the members of the armed forces, especially those now in harm's way.*

*We ask for your blessing, Lord, on our fellow Christians and, also, on those who do not yet know Christ, that they may come to accept and trust in Christ.*

*We ask for your blessing Lord, on each of us, that in the days of struggle that are yet to come, that we may manifest a love of Your Truth, that we persevere in all difficulties, knowing that You are with us always, to the end of the age.*

*We ask all this, in our Lord Jesus' most holy name.*

*Amen*