

**A suggested Address to mark the 60th anniversary
of the publication of Anne Frank's diary
and its meaning for the world**

Anne Frank was a child. She was not a philosopher, a Nobel prize winner, a campaigner or a politician.

She did not rule the world, not even for a single day.

But she has influenced and inspired millions. Today as we mark the sixtieth anniversary of the publication of her famous diary, we acknowledge the power for good of one human being – one child.

Anne was the most well-known victim of the Holocaust but the beginning of her life was not dissimilar to most European children in the early years of the twentieth century.

She was born into a Jewish family - the younger daughter of Otto and Edith Frank, and she had an older sister called Margot. The family lived in a prosperous neighbourhood in Frankfurt until 1933, the year Adolf Hitler and the Nazis came to power in Germany.

By the end of 1933, the increasing anti-Jewish measures that the Nazis had brought in forced the Frank family to flee Germany for Amsterdam in Holland.

After a few happy years in Amsterdam, World War II broke out – Germany attacked Poland, and the German Army went through Europe taking over country after country. Holland never expected to be attacked by their neighbours Germany, but the country was invaded and taken over in 1940.

Now the Nazi policies against Jews would be put in place here too.

The Frank family again feared for their lives so they went into hiding. For over two years Anne kept a diary of her experiences in hiding. Her last diary entry was written only three days before the family were arrested on 1 August 1944.

The Frank family were sent to concentration camps in Eastern Europe. Edith Frank died in Auschwitz in January 1945. Anne and her sister Margot, both still teenagers, died in Bergen-Belsen just days before its liberation by the British Army.

Only Anne's father Otto survived the concentration camps. On his return to Amsterdam Anne's diary was presented to him by one of the non-Jewish helpers who had sought to protect the family in hiding.

Through reading the diary, it became clear to Otto that Anne had always dreamt of having an impact upon the world through her writing. She must have felt that her dreams were shattered forever once she was taken into captivity.

In what must have been a very painful decision, Otto decided to publish the diary. The diary was published in 1947 and has since been translated into over 66 languages. I am sure that many of us here today remember reading Anne's enduring words at some time in our lives.

Anne Frank didn't rule the world – but she was born into a time when evil forces dictated her destiny. But thanks to her father's determination that his lost daughter's words would become a force for good, Anne did make a difference.

Through her diary she has transformed people's views of many situations; she has given people hope and she continues to have an impact upon the millions who have read her diary.

On 15 July 1944, after over two years in hiding, Anne wrote:

“It’s difficult in times like these: ideals, dreams and cherished hopes rise within us, only to be crushed by grim reality. It’s a wonder I haven’t abandoned all my ideals, they seem so absurd and impractical. Yet I cling to them because I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart.

It’s utterly impossible for me to build my life on a foundation of chaos, suffering and death. I see the world being slowly transformed into a wilderness, I hear the approaching thunder that, one day, will destroy us too, I feel the suffering of millions.

And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better, that this cruelty too will end, that peace and tranquillity will return once more.

In the meantime, I must hold on to my ideals. Perhaps that day will come when I’ll be able to realize them!”

Just three weeks after writing these words Anne and her family were betrayed, arrested and deported to Auschwitz.

Many in this world are still suffering from violence and conflict. Prejudice and discrimination surround us.

Bono, the lead singer of the rock band U2, said:

“I can’t change the world but I can change the world in me.”

Let us now pray together that Anne Frank’s hopes and dreams of a better world will continue to remind us that we must each do all in our power to make the world a better place for our children.

Dear God, you created us all in your own likeness.

We thank you for the wonderful diversity of races and cultures in your world.

Enrich our lives by ever-widening circles of fellow feeling and understanding;

show us your presence in those most different from us, so that in all our

relationships, both by what we have in common and by things in which we differ,

we may come to know you more fully in your creation.

Amen

The Anne Frank Address for an Act of Worship

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