



8 Days of Prayer – Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2021

DAY 1 *Called by God*

“Go into all the world and proclaim the Good News” (Mk 16:15)

Mark 16:15-20 | The Ascension the Great Commission

Reflection: The disciples heard the call: "Go out into all the world". Like them we are called to leave that which is familiar and go out into our communities, our workplaces. By following the call that is addressed to us, we become a blessing for our loved ones, our neighbours, and the world. The love of God seeks us. God became human in Jesus, in whom we encounter the gaze of God. Touched by God's love, we set out.

Prayer

Jesus Christ,
you seek us, you wish to offer us your friendship
and lead us to a life that is ever more complete.
Grant us the confidence to answer your call to go out
and become witnesses of your tenderness for the world.

DAY 2 *Maturing in Christ*

“Do you believe – at last?” (Jn 16:31)

Jn 16: 29-33 | I have conquered the world

Reflection: The sustained time with Jesus enabled the disciples to understand the mission and believe in Jesus. Their understanding of Jesus grew and matured. The presence of Jesus in their lives nourished them. We too need a time with Jesus, an entire lifetime, in order to plumb the depths of Christ's love, to let him abide in us and for us to abide in him. Without our knowing how, the Spirit makes Christ dwell in our hearts. And it is through prayer, by listening to the Word, in sharing with others, by putting into practice what we have understood, that the inner being is strengthened.

Prayer

Holy Spirit,
May we receive in our hearts the presence of Christ,
and cherish it as a secret of love.
Nourish our prayer,
enlighten our reading of Scripture,
act through us,
so that the fruits of your gifts can patiently grow in us

DAY 3

To know God

“Eternal life is this – to know you” (Jn 17:3)

Jn 17: 1-11 | Jesus’ prayer

Reflection

Jesus prays that we may know God through our lives in community. He prays that life and love circulate through us as the sap through the vine, so that Christian communities be one body. But today as in the past, it is not easy to live together. We are often faced with our own limitations. At times we fail to love those who are close to us in a community, parish, or family. There are times when our relationships break down completely. Christ is with us; we are protected and cherished. The recognition that we are loved by God moves us to welcome each other with our strengths and weaknesses. It is then that Christ is in our midst.

Prayer

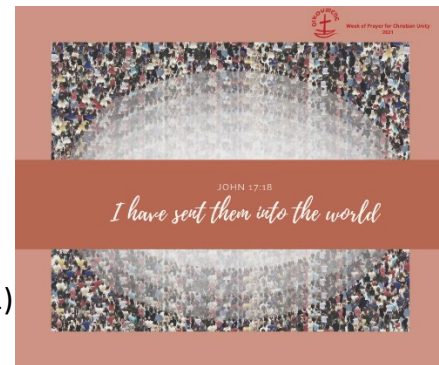
God our Father,
you reveal to us your love through Christ and through our brothers and sisters.
Open our hearts so that we can welcome each other with our differences
and live in forgiveness.
Grant us to live united in one body,
so that the gift that is each person comes to light.
May all of us together be a reflection of the living Christ.

DAY 4

Unity in Christ

“So they may be one like us” (Jn 17:11)

John 17:11-19 | Jesus’ prayer for unity



Reflection

God thirsts for relationship with us. God searches for us as he searched for Adam and Eve calling to them in the garden: "Where are you?" (Gen 3:9) In Christ, God came to meet us. Jesus lived in prayer. Sometimes Jesus prayed alone and at other times with the disciples. Prayer can be solitary or shared with others. Getting together in a group offers us support. Through hymns, words and silence, communion is created. If we pray with Christians of other traditions, we may be surprised to feel united by a bond of friendship that comes from the One who is beyond all division. The forms may vary but it is the same Spirit that brings us together.

Prayer

Lord Jesus,
your entire life was prayer, perfect harmony with the Father.
Through your Spirit, teach us to pray according to your will of love.
May the faithful of the whole world unite in intercession and praise,
and may your kingdom of love come.

DAY 5 Being One in Christ

“May they all be one” (Jn 17:21)

John 17:20-26 | Jesus’ petition to God

Reflection

The Word of God is very close to us. It is a blessing and a promise of happiness. If we open our hearts, God speaks to us and patiently transforms that which is dying in us. God removes that which prevents the growth of real life, just as the vine grower prunes the vine.

Regularly meditating on a biblical text, alone or in a group, changes our outlook. As we discover the wellspring hidden within our inner landscape, the hunger for justice, and the thirst to engage with others for a world of peace, grows in them. We are constantly called to renew our commitment to life, through our thoughts and actions. There are times when we taste, here and now, the blessing that will be fulfilled at the end of time.

Prayer

Blessed are you, God our Father, for the gift of your word in Holy Scripture.

Blessed are you for its transforming power.

Help us choose life and guide us by your Spirit,

so that we can experience the happiness which you want so much to share with us.

DAY 6 Loving All

“Feed my sheep!” (Jn 21:17)

John 21:15-19 | Peter is called to radical love



Reflection

When we let ourselves be transformed by Christ, his love in us grows and bears fruit. Welcoming the other is a concrete way of sharing the love that is within us.

Even today Jesus draws us to be co-workers in his unconditional care. Sometimes something as small as a kind look, an open ear, or our presence is enough to make a person feel welcome. When we offer our abilities to Jesus, he uses them in a surprising way. We then experience that it is by giving that we receive, and when we welcome others, we are blessed in abundance.

Prayer

Jesus Christ, we desire to welcome fully the brothers and sisters who are with us.

You know how often we feel helpless in the face of their suffering,

yet you are always there ahead of us

and you have already received them in your compassion.

Speak to them through our words, support them through our actions,

and let your blessing rest on us all.

DAY 7

Growing in unity

“Follow me!” (Jn 21:22)

John 21:20-25 | Challenge to witness to Christ

Reflection

Each Christian tradition seeks to lead us to the heart of our faith: communion with God, through Christ, in the Spirit. The more we live this communion, the more we are connected to other Christians and to all of humanity. Paul had an inclusive and broad vision of Church "All are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God" (1 Cor 3:22-23). Paul welcomed all who came to visit him in prison no matter their faith stories. Christ's will commits us to a path of unity and reconciliation. It also commits us to unite our prayer to his: "that they may all be one... so that the world may believe".

Prayer

Holy Spirit, animating fire and gentle breath, come and abide in us.
Renew in us the passion for unity
so that we may live in awareness of the bond that unites us in you.
May all who have put on Christ at their Baptism
unite and bear witness together to the hope that sustains them.

DAY 8

The Gift of the Holy Spirit

“You too will be my witnesses (Jn 15:26)

John 15:26,27 16:12-15 | The Advocate will come

Reflection

Even in the distress of our world the Spirit is at work encouraging us to become involved with all people of good will in tirelessly seeking justice and peace, and ensuring the earth is once again a home for all creatures. We participate in the work of the Spirit so that creation in all its fullness may continue to praise God. When nature suffers, when human beings are crushed, the Spirit of the risen Christ far from allowing us to lose heart invites us to become part of his work of healing. The newness of life that Christ brings, however hidden, is a light of hope for many. It is a wellspring of reconciliation for the whole of creation and contains a joy that comes from beyond ourselves: "so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete" (Jn 15:11).

Prayer

Thrice-holy God, we thank you for having created and loved us.
We thank you for your presence in us and in creation.
May we learn to look upon the world as you look upon it, with love.
In the hope of this vision, may we be able to work for a world
where justice and peace flourish, for the glory of your name.

