

Week of prayer for Christian Unity
18th-25th January 2025
Readings and reflections

DAY 1 The fatherhood and care of God who rules the universe

Scripture Readings Isaiah 63:15-17 Psalm 139:1-3, 13, 23, 24b 1 Corinthians 8:5-6

For reflection:

1. How have you experienced God's fatherly care and motherly compassion in your own life?
2. What hinders us from recognising each person as a child of God?
3. How does acknowledging God as the Father of all affect our perception of and relationship with others?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, according to your great goodness you grant us a way of life through the Law and the Prophets. Merciful Father, in Jesus, your Son, you proclaimed the good news of the kingdom. Father of compassion, renew our faith in you and bind us together through your love, so that we can recognise each other as your children, and come together as one. We praise you through Jesus Christ, your only begotten Son, in the communion of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

DAY 2 Creation as God's work

Scripture Readings Genesis 1:1-5 Psalm 148:1, 3, 9-14 Romans 8:19-23

For reflection:

1. We believe that God is present in all of creation although his presence is sometimes difficult to perceive.
2. Creation is a gift of God subjected to suffering, often inflicted by human beings. How can we better recognize our responsibility for its care and preservation?
3. If possible, spend some time in nature and think about how it connects us with the Creator.

Prayer

We praise you and give you thanks, God of steadfast love for the great signs of your favour and your mercy for the whole creation. You have made all things. You declared them to be good, for your Spirit dwells in them all and they belong to you, O Lord, who love the living. Giving voice to the whole creation and gathering together every grief and joy, we glorify you and give you thanks. Lord God, you made all things, and will soon change them,

clothing them with your glory. Lord God, Father of lights, strengthen our hearts in expectation and hope as we work for unity and together seek the harmony of all creation. Let us be burning lamps, until the day of the coming of your Son in glory, with all his saints in the everlasting kingdom. Blessed are you, now and forever, and to the ages of ages. **Amen**

DAY 3 The Incarnation of the Son

Scripture Readings Jeremiah 33:14-16 Psalm 72:7, 12, 16-17 John 1:1-14

For reflection:

1. How does faith in Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, inspire and shape our lives?
2. How have you experienced Christ's consoling presence in your life?
3. Wherever we see someone who is thirsty, hungry, weeping or suffering, Christ is present.

Prayer

Word of God, you became flesh, and came to dwell among us. You have shared our life in all things; you died as we all die. Son of David, desired by the righteous and the prophets, you have proclaimed the good news to the poor; you have proclaimed the Lord's time of favour. You came to break the chains of bondage; you went about doing good; you have opened the way to the presence of God for all. You came into the world in weakness and poverty; you have confounded the proud with your humility; you have drawn the weary and overburdened to you. You are the Lamb of God and our Shepherd, the Servant of God and our Lord: you were made sin for us, our Redeemer. **Amen**

DAY 4 The Paschal Mystery: Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus

Scripture Readings Exodus 3: 7-8 Psalm 16:5, 7, 10, 11 Philippians 2:5-11

For reflection:

1. We know that we will all die. How does belief in Jesus destroying death change the way we approach this reality?
2. "God lets himself be pushed out of the world onto the cross. He is weak and powerless in the world, and that is precisely the way, the only way, in which he is with us and helps us." (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)
3. As the Risen One, Jesus is with us until the end of all time. In what ways does his companionship encourage you in your daily life?

Prayer

Every tongue will confess that you are the Lord. Let us rejoice and sing praises to you, O Christ, beloved Son of the Father: you are the Risen One, you call us to live in you. We adore you, we glorify you, for you are King of kings and Lord of lords: you have opened to

us the kingdom of heaven. We give you thanks at all times, and we bless your Name: you are with us always, to the end of the age. O Lord our God, Lord our God, glorifying your Son Jesus, you have freed us from death. Through his resurrection, awaken our slumbering hearts, enlighten all who seek you and make the morning star shine upon us, Jesus Christ, the Living One, who is Lord for ever and ever. **Amen**

DAY 5 The Holy Spirit, the giver of life and joy

Scripture Readings Ezekiel 36:24-28 Psalm 104:24-25, 27-29, 33-34 John 3:4-8

For reflection:

1. God's Spirit renews the face of the earth every day, calling us to cooperation.
2. What are the sources of joy in your life and how are they related to the Holy Spirit?
3. Where do we see the Holy Spirit at work, overcoming our divisions and drawing us into deeper unity, and how can we join in this work?

Prayer

God our Father, you have revealed to us the wondrous mystery of your life, sending your Son into the world, and sharing with us your Spirit of holiness and joy. Let us rejoice in the Spirit, who renews the face of the earth and draws us towards unity. We confess our faith in you, the One God, three times Holy: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Blessed are you, now and for ever and ever. **Amen**

DAY 6 The Church: Community of Believers

Scripture Readings Isaiah 2:2-4 Psalm 133 Ephesians 4:1-6

For reflection:

1. The Church is called to shed forth the light of Christ over the world. Where do you perceive this reality in your own context?
2. Even though in Christ the Church is one body, historically the churches are divided. How have you experienced the pain of this division?
3. The Church as the community of the Holy Spirit, the giver of peace, is sent to live and spread the message of peace in the world. In what ways might churches enable their members to fulfil this calling?

Prayer

God of heaven and earth, your Son Jesus Christ has revealed you as our Father and promised us the gift of the Holy Spirit: grant to your Church to overcome the scandal of our divisions, so that we may bear witness to your life of communion, in the unity of our profession of faith and in the love of mutual service. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen**

DAY 7 Baptism into the Death and Resurrection of the Lord

Scripture Readings Micah 7:18-19 Psalm 51:1, 7, 10, 12 Matthew 28:16-20

1. Christians are baptised into the death and resurrection of Christ. What does your baptism mean to you today?
2. Sin disfigures us in various ways. Through baptism, God liberates us from this humiliation.
3. In spite of different church traditions and practices, how does confessing “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph. 4:5) affect our relationships with other Christians?

Prayer

For having called us to faith in baptism, for the communion we share in the New Covenant, for your presence in the holy Church. For the witness of persecuted Christians, for the suffering of their martyrdom, for their participation in Christ’s passion. For all servants of communion, for those who pray and work for the reconciliation of churches, for those who offer their lives for unity. God our Father, we praise you and bless your name. Accept our thanksgiving for the unity Christians already enjoy in the confession of Jesus the Lord. Hasten the day, we beg you, of the full mutual recognition of our churches in the communion that you desire, and for which your Son prayed. We ask this in the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

DAY 8 Waiting for the Kingdom and the life to come

Scripture Readings Revelation 21:1-4 Psalm 85:8, 10-12 Luke 12:35-40

For reflection:

1. Love will be the reality of the Kingdom of God. Concrete actions of charity make this Kingdom present in our lives.
2. Living in expectation of the Kingdom of God, how do we embody signs of the coming Kingdom in the world today?
3. We are called to be ready for the second coming of the Lord. How do we prepare ourselves for it?

Prayer

O Lord, hasten the coming of your great and glorious day! In our darkness, many men and women no longer dare to hope. Protect the flame of faith in the hearts of the weak and the suffering. May the Church be a faithful herald of the victory of Christ your Son over death and a beacon of expectation for his return in glory. He is the Living One, with you and with the Holy Spirit. now and forever and ever. **Amen**

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