

THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

and throughout the year 2026

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling"

(Ephesians 4:4)

Ephesians 4:1-13

I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high, he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people." (When it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) He himself granted that some are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the Body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

New Revised Standard Version

REFLECTIONS AND PRAYERS FOR THE EIGHT DAYS

DAY 1

Our calling

Verse for the day

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called (Eph 4:1). Additional Scripture passages Micah 6:6-8 Psalm 133 Mark 3:13-15

Reflection

In Ephesians 4:1, Paul emphasizes the significance of living a life worthy of the "calling to which you have been called", which is intrinsically linked to the unity of the Christian community. In the midst of a divided society, the Gospel calls believers to overcome barriers and foster reconciliation. This divine calling invites us to embody God's values within the fellowship of believers. By aligning our conduct with this calling, we not only reflect Christ's teachings but also contribute to the unity and growth of the Body of Christ. Recognizing and embracing this calling is essential for living out the true essence of Christian community and nurturing a harmonious, supportive fellowship.

A question to consider

How does reflecting on the "calling to which you have been called" as described in Ephesians 4:1 inspire you to actively contribute to unity within your local and wider church communities?

Prayer

God of light, you have called us out of darkness into your light. May our response to your call lead us to actively seek reconciliation and share your light in the world. Amen

DAY 2

Bearing with one another in love

Verse for the day

With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bear with one another in love (Eph 4:2). Additional Scripture passages Zechariah 7:8-10 Psalm 25:6-10 Luke 10:30-36

Reflection

The Apostle Paul exhorts us to live in a manner worthy of our Christian calling by providing profound social guidance. He calls believers “with all humility and gentleness, with patience” to “bear with one another in love” (Eph 4:2). This divine calling is not merely a personal journey but is vividly expressed in our interactions with others. The four virtues Paul highlights – humility, gentleness, patience, and tolerance – are all crucial for nurturing loving relationships. To embody these virtues means approaching others with a spirit of genuine humility, extending gentleness even towards those who test our patience, and showing forbearance with those who challenge us. Most profoundly, it involves “bearing with one another” despite our differences, thereby reflecting a love that transcends all earthly divides and embodies the grace of God's boundless compassion.

A question to consider

How can the virtues of humility, gentleness, patience and tolerance, as mentioned in the letter to the Ephesians, help us as believers navigate and overcome divisions within our local Christian communities?

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you show us how to be patient with one another in humility and gentleness. May the light you have shined on our path lead us towards unity and help us heal the wounds of division and indifference that often break communities apart. Amen.

DAY 3

The bond of peace

Verse for the day Make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (cf. Eph 4:3). Additional Scripture passages Isaiah 11:6-9 Psalm 86:8-13 John 14:27-31

Reflection

Peace is a crucial factor in maintaining unity within the Church. In Ephesians 4:3, the “bond of peace” signifies a vital and active principle that not only connects but also sustains the unity of the Christian community. Christ, the Prince of Peace (cf. Isaiah 9:6), preached peace and reconciliation. Peace is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22), both a gift and a result of the Spirit at work. The “bond of peace” is an active force that maintains church cohesion, holding diverse members together, despite differences in

background or opinion. Peace fosters meaningful relationships, allowing believers to interact harmoniously and more readily forgive one another. Paul highlights the fact that true unity requires ongoing commitment to peace. It calls for active cultivation and promotion of peace among members.

A question to consider

How does St Paul's teaching that peace is a fruit of the Spirit impact our daily interactions and relationships within our communities, especially where there is need for reconciliation or forgiveness?

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Prince of Peace. Strengthen the bond of peace among us and in our troubled world. Change the hearts of all who make war; touch the wounds of all who are afflicted by war. We pray especially for the people of Armenia and Artsakh, and their kindred throughout the world. Let the light of your love shine in all the dark places of our world and hasten the day when all peoples may dwell in peace with justice. Amen.

DAY 4

Called to one hope

Verse for the day

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling (Eph 4:4).

Additional Scripture passages Deuteronomy 6:4-9 Psalm 24:1-6 John 17:20-26

Reflection In Ephesians 4:4 the Apostle Paul highlights the profound unity that binds the Church worldwide. This unity is rooted in the one Spirit and the one hope that connect all Christians in their faith. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit ignited the global mission of the Church. This same Spirit empowers us and nurtures our collective mission today, fostering a universal Church that transcends national and cultural boundaries. Our shared hope in salvation through Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of this unity, drawing together diverse peoples into one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. As Christians, we are defined by this singular hope and the one Spirit through whom we are baptized and renewed. Our task is to ensure that this unity is not just a concept but a lived reality, reinforcing our shared mission and love for one another.

A question to consider

In what ways can we, as a church or community, embrace the challenge of our one calling, while maintaining our unique identity and traditions?

Prayer

Jesus Christ, you have brought us together in all our diversity as your family and church. In the face so many situations on earth where hope has given way to despair and wounded hearts, renew our hope in the Holy Spirit's work of changing the world. Move us to spread this hope to everyone everywhere. You are the true Light, who casts out the darkness of sin, and shines into our hearts the joy and hope of your eternal love. Amen

DAY 5

One faith, one baptism

Verse for the day

One Lord, one faith, one baptism (Eph 4:5). Additional Scripture passages Zechariah 14:6-9 Psalm 100 Matthew 28:16-20

Reflection

In Ephesians 4:5, the Apostle Paul emphasizes that the act of baptism solidifies Christian unity by marking the entrance of individuals into the Church's fellowship, affirming their shared commitment to the same Lord. Baptism creates the collective identity of the Church since we are one in the Body of the Lord. This sacrament serves as a powerful reminder that, while members may come from varied backgrounds, their unity in faith and baptism transcends all divisions. By focusing on these unifying elements, the Church can celebrate its diversity while remaining steadfastly united. This challenges us to prioritize our shared identity in Christ over our differences, reinforcing the bond that unites all Christians.

A question to consider

What collaborative initiatives can our various communities undertake to celebrate our shared faith in Jesus Christ and the unity established through baptism?

Prayer

Spirit of God, and true God, who descended on the river Jordan, and into the upper-room; who enlightened us by the baptism of the Holy Font, we have sinned against Heaven and before you, purify us again with your divine fire, as you did the Apostles with fiery tongues. Have mercy on Your creatures and especially on us. Amen.

St Nersess the Gracious (adapted)

DAY 6

One Lord and Father

Verse for the day

One God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all (Eph 4:6). Additional Scripture passages 1 Kings 8:56-60 Psalm 148:7-13 Matthew 5:44-48

Reflection

In Ephesians 4:6, St Paul emphasizes the profound oneness of God, declaring that he is "above all and through all and in all". God is both transcendent, existing beyond all, and immanent, actively present within his creation. This foundational truth calls the Church to embody and live out unity, rooted in the shared belief in one true God who is the Father of all believers. "All" signifies that every person created in God's image falls under God's authority. Worshiping one God creates a strong bond of unity among

Christians. Just as family members find common ground through their love for a parent, Christians are called to be united in their devotion to the same Father.

A question to consider

In what ways can the image of God as the loving and caring Father of all be integrated into the mission and ministry of our different church communities so as to promote a more unified Christian witness in the world?

Prayer

We confess with faith and worship you, Loving Father, for you are in heaven beyond words, and on earth beyond understanding, through your Son, Jesus Christ. In your tender care, you are the beginning and fulfilment of everything. Glory forever to you, Father, with the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

St Gregory of Narek (adapted)

DAY 7

God's gift given in baptism

Verse for the day But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift (Eph 4:7).

Additional Scripture passages Jeremiah 1:4-9 Psalm 131 Matthew 25:14-18

Reflection The churches and all local communities are diverse in their God-given unity, with grace given according to the gift of Christ building up God's kingdom. These spiritual gifts are granted by one Lord, in one baptism, for one purpose. Diversity in unity: this is the unique Christ-centred richness and power of the Church in the movement of the Holy Spirit.

A question to consider

How will our relations change if we accept that diversity of gifts is not a reason for opposition and competition but for mutual strengthening and sharing?

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, by the action of the Holy Spirit in the one baptism, you have bestowed wonderful graces and multiple gifts upon us for the sake of building up your Body, the Church. Grant us now the willingness to fully appreciate the richness of their diversity and use them fully to further the spread of the Gospel. In your name we pray. Amen

DAY 8

Growing into Christ

Verse for the day The gifts he gave were for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ (cf. Eph 4:13). Additional Scripture passages Proverbs 9:10-12 Psalm 119:97-104 John 17:3-7

Reflection

In Ephesians 4:13 the apostle Paul summarizes the vision of the Body of Christ in three key areas: unity in faith, maturity in knowledge, and fullness in Christ. Maturity comes through an ever-deepening knowledge of Jesus Christ. This is life-changing knowledge that leads us to renew our minds and put it into practice in actions rather than just intellectual comprehension. We resemble him more and more as we get to know him better. To gain this knowledge, one must both study his teachings and live them in obedience daily. The “full stature of Christ” is the goal of Christian maturity. It means becoming more like Jesus in every way: loving as he loves, serving as he serves, and reflecting his character. We are called to evaluate our spiritual journey, seeking unity with each other, growing in our knowledge of the Son of God, and striving for his fullness in us.

A question to consider

How are we growing in our knowledge of Christ and allowing that knowledge to shape our actions, thoughts and relationships?

Prayer

O Christ, True Light of the world, make my soul worthy to see the light of your glory with joy on the day of my calling, and to rest with the hope of good things in the house of the righteous, until the day of your great coming. Have mercy upon your creation, and on me, a great sinner. Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.