



“Week of Prayer for Christian Unity”

Sunday 24th January 2021

Rev Jenny Pathmarajah and Ecumenical Friends in St Brelade's Parish

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use as you are unable to attend church. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

Call to worship

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you always!

And also with you.

Hymn StF 372

Come down O love Divine

Seek thou this soul of mine,
And visit it with thine
own ardour glowing;
O comforter, draw near,
Within my heart appear,
And kindle it, thy holy flame
bestowing.

O let it freely burn,
Till earthly passions turn
To dust and ashes,
in its heat consuming;
And let thy glorious light
Shine ever on my sight,
And clothe me round, the while
my path illuming.

Let holy charity

Mine outward vesture be,
And lowliness
become mine inner clothing;
True lowliness of heart,
Which takes the humbler part,
And o'er its own shortcomings
weeps with loathing.

And so the yearning strong,
With which the soul will long,
Shall far outpass
the power of human telling;
For none can guess its grace,
Till he become the place -
Wherein the Holy Spirit makes his
dwelling.

*Discendi, amor santo Bianco da Siena
(died 1434) translated Richard Frederick
Littledale (1833-1890)*



Introduction

Brothers and sisters in Christ, this year the theme of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, chosen by the sisters of the Community of Grandchamp, in Switzerland, is: "Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit".



It is the great desire of God, expressed by Jesus, that we might come to him and abide in him. He waits for us tirelessly, hoping that, united to him in love, we will bear fruit that will bring life to all. Faced with our differences, we risk withdrawing into ourselves and seeing only that which separates us. But let us listen to how Christ calls us to abide in his love, and so bear much fruit.

In the three moments of prayer that follow, we remember the call of Christ, we turn to his love, to him who is the centre of our life. For the path of unity begins in our intimate relationship with God. Abiding in God's love strengthens the desire to seek unity and reconciliation with others. God opens us up to those who are different from us. This is an important fruit, a gift of healing for the divisions within us, between us, and in the world.

Prayer:

In peace let us pray to the Lord: Lord, you are the vine dresser who cares for us with love.

You call on us to see the beauty of each branch united to the vine, the beauty of each person. And yet, too often the differences in others make us afraid. We withdraw into ourselves.

Our trust in you is forsaken. Enmity develops between us. Come and direct our hearts toward you once again. Grant us to live from your forgiveness so that we may be together and praise your name.

Litany of praise

All You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to you!

We sing your praise in the midst of the world and among all peoples,

We sing your praise in the midst of creation and among all creatures.

All You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to you!

We sing your praise among suffering and tears,

We sing your praise among promises and achievements.

All You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to you!

We sing your praise in the places of conflict and misunderstanding.

We sing your praise in the places of encounter and reconciliation.

All You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to you!

We sing your praise in the midst of rifts and divisions,

We sing your praise in the midst of life and death, the birth of a new heaven and a new earth.

All You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to you!

First Vigil: Abiding in Christ –
The unity of the whole person

Reading:

John 15:1-17 (NIV)

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.

Short silence



Intercessions

God of love, through Christ you said to us: "You did not choose me but I chose you." You seek us, you invite us to receive your friendship and abide in it. Teach us to respond more deeply to this invitation and grow in a life that is ever more complete.

The joy of our heart is in God.

God of life, you call us to be praise in the midst of the world and to welcome one another as a gift of your grace. May your loving gaze, which rests upon each person, open us to receive each other just as we are.

The joy of our heart is in God.

God you who gather, you knit us together as one vine in your Son Jesus. May your loving Spirit abide in us at local church and community meetings and ecumenical gatherings. Grant that together we celebrate you with joy.

The joy of our heart is in God.

God of the one vineyard, you call us to abide in your love in all we do and say. Touched by your goodness, grant us to be a reflection of that love in our homes and workplaces. May we bridge rivalries and overcome tensions.

The joy of our heart is in God.

A time of silence

Very often we think of prayer as something we do, an activity of our own. In this short time we

are invited to an interior silence, and to turn aside from all the noise and concerns of our lives and thoughts. In this silence the action belongs to God. We are simply called to abide and rest in God's love.

Short silence

Hymn StF 242

A new commandment

I give unto you:
that you love one another
as I have loved you,
that you love one another
as I have loved you.
By this the world shall know
that you are my disciples,
if you have love one for another.
By this the world shall know
that you are my disciples,
if you have love one for another.

Anonymous

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Second Vigil:

The visible unity of Christians

Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:10-13a (NIV)

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ." Is Christ divided?

There is One Lord,
One Faith, One Baptism.

Intercessions

Holy Spirit, you create and re-create the Church in all places. Come and whisper in our hearts the prayer which Jesus addressed to his Father on the eve of his passion: "that they may all be one... so that the world may believe".

Lord have mercy

Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace, light the fire of your love in us so that suspicions, contempt and misunderstanding cease in the Church. May the walls that separate us fall.

Lord have mercy

Holy Spirit, Consoler of all, open our hearts to forgiveness and reconciliation and bring us back

from our wanderings.

Lord have mercy

Lord Jesus, gentle and humble of heart, give us poverty of spirit so that we may welcome the unexpectedness of your grace.

Lord have mercy

Holy Spirit, you never abandon the men, women and children who are persecuted for their fidelity to the gospel. Give them strength and courage, and support those who help them.

Lord have mercy

Hymn StF 652

Lord, we come to ask your healing, - teach us of love;
all unspoken shame revealing,
teach us of love
Take our selfish thoughts and actions,
petty feuds, divisive factions,
hear us now to you appealing,
teach us of love.

Soothe away our pain and sorrow,
hold us in love;
grace we cannot buy or borrow,
hold us in love.
Though we see but dark and danger, - though we spurn both
friend and stranger
though we often dread tomorrow,
hold us in love.

Help us live for one another,
bind us in love: - stranger,
neighbour, father, mother
bind us in love.
All are equal at your table,
through your Spirit make us able
to embrace as sister, brother,
bind us in love.

Jean Holloway (born 1939)

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Third Vigil:

The unity of all peoples with all creation

Reading: Revelations 7: 9-12 (NIV)

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.¹⁰ And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."¹¹ All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,¹² saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honour and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"

O you who are beyond all things

Short silence



Intercessions

God of life, you have created every human being in your image and likeness. We sing your praise for the gift of our many cultures, expressions of faith, traditions and ethnicities.

Grant us the courage always to stand against injustice and hatred based on race, class, gender, religion, and fear of those not like ourselves.

*God of peace, God of love,
in you is our hope!*

Merciful God, you have shown us in Christ that we are one in you. Teach us to use this gift in the world so that believers of all faiths in every country may be able to listen to each other and live in peace.

*God of peace, God of love,
in you is our hope!*

O Jesus, you came into the world and shared fully in our humanity. You know the hardships of life for people who suffer in so many different ways. May the Spirit of compassion move us to share our time, life and goods with all those in need.

*God of peace, God of love,
in you is our hope!*

Holy Spirit, you hear the fury of your wounded creation and the cries of those already suffering from climate change. Guide us toward new behaviours. May we learn to live in harmony as part of your creation.

*God of peace, God of love,
in you is our hope!*

Jesus calls us to abide in him, as branches of the true vine. He calls us to bear the fruit of God's healing and reconciling love. He calls us to draw closer to God and to one another as we offer this love to the world.

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Imagine a circle drawn on the ground. Imagine that this circle is the world.

At the centre of the world is God, in whom all our desires and longings find their meeting place. As we move closer to God, so we draw closer to one another. And the closer we come to one another... the closer we come to God.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

Hymn "Songs of Worship" 064

We are one in the Spirit,

we are one in the Lord,
we are one in the Spirit,
we are one in the Lord,
and we pray that all unity
may one day be restored.

*And they'll know we are
Christians by our love,
by our love
yes, they'll know we are
Christians by our love.*

We will walk with each other,
we will walk hand in hand,
we will walk with each other,
we will walk hand in hand.
And together we'll spread the
news - That God is in our land.

We will work with each other,
we will work side by side.
We will work with each other,
we will work side by side.
And we'll guard each man's
dignity
and save each man's pride.

All praise to the Father
from whom all things come,
and all praise to Christ Jesus,
his only Son,
and all praise to the Spirit
who makes us one.

Peter Scholtes (born 1938)

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Spirituality and solidarity are inseparably linked. Prayer and action belong together. When we abide in Christ, we receive the Spirit of courage and wisdom to act against all injustice and oppression.

We say together:

Pray and work that God may reign. Throughout your day let the Word of God breathe life into work and rest. Maintain inner silence in all things so as to dwell in Christ. Be filled with the spirit of the Beatitudes: joy, simplicity, mercy.

*(These words are recited daily
by the Sisters of the
Grandchamp Community.)*

FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

We are reminded that before His death on the cross, Christ prayed for his disciples and asked that they “may all be one,” just as he and God are one, “so that the world may believe” and have life in his name (John 17).

*What can I do to help
make it to be true?*

Hymn StF 404

God's Spirit is in my heart,

he has called me and set me apart,-
this is what I have to do,
what I have to do.

*He sent me to give
the good news to the poor,
tell prisoners that they are
prisoners no more;
tell blind people that they can see, and
set the down-trodden free,
and go tell everyone the news that the
kingdom of God has come,
and go tell everyone the news that God's
kingdom has come.*

Just as the Father sent me
so I'm sending you out to be
my witnesses throughout the world,-
the whole of the world.

Don't carry a load in your pack,
you don't need two shirts
on your back; a workman
can earn his own keep,
can earn his own keep.

Don't worry what you have to say,
don't worry because on that day
God's Spirit will speak in your heart,
will speak in your heart.

Hubert J Richards (born 1921)

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Blessing:

Be one, so that the world may believe! Abide in God's love, go into the world and bear the fruits of this love.

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and all peace in faith, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.