

**International Ecumenical Movement  
-Kenya Chapter (IEM-K)**

---

This booklet has been compiled by the International Ecumenical Movement-Kenya Chapter (IEM-K) from the materials that came from the Committee mandated jointly by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

The IEM-K is a voluntary member organization at the service of ecumenism at the grassroots in Kenya. Its members hold monthly fellowship meetings, the first Saturday of every month, two Round-Tables in a year to discuss topical and emerging issues, and a National Ecumenical Conference every three years (the next one is in May 2021).

The IEM-K partners with churches, organizations, and institutions committed to ecumenism in planning and execution of ecumenical endeavours in our context. It is always willing and ready to assist any church, organization and institution with ecumenical education and development.



Email: [info@iemkenya.org](mailto:info@iemkenya.org)  
Website: [www.iemkenya.org](http://www.iemkenya.org)

**WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY  
18<sup>TH</sup> - 25<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2021**

**ABIDE IN MY  
LOVE...YOU  
SHALL BEAR  
MUCH FRUIT.**

**JOHN 15:1-17**

## FOREWORD

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, this year's theme for the week of prayer for Christian unity was prepared by the monastic community of Grandchamp in Switzerland in collaboration with the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity (PCPCU.) The community of Grandchamp has a long ecumenical tradition. It is composed of 50 nuns from different Christian traditions and different nationalities who dedicate their lives to a life of silent prayer, daily meditation on the word of God and contemplation of the mystery of Christ. The theme is inspired from their daily experience. The nuns are a witness of the Unity so much desired by our Lord Jesus Christ. We are being reminded that our unity is centred on the person of Christ. The more we come closer to Christ, the more we come closer to each other. This unity is anchored in the love of Christ. The theme is taken from John 15: 1-17. The images of the vine, the vinedresser and the branches are quite appropriate as we pursue our journey towards a visible unity of the Church of Christ. Our unity flows from the unity of the Triune God. In our desire to collaborate together and our search for unity, we are invited to refocus ourselves on Christ, through silent listening to the word of God. "If you abide in me, and my word abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you" says Jesus. (John 15:7).

The unity so much desired by Christ will never be accomplished without sacrifice. We know how resistant we are in walking the path of unity. While we acknowledge the road travelled so far and the fruits of the ecumenical engagements for more than a century; we still need to be pruned so that we can bear much fruits towards our unity. The work of pruning is an uncomfortable activity. If we really want to belong together to Christ, as different branches are grafted to the same tree, we need to accept to be pruned. This is the price that each one needs to pay in order to achieve Christian unity. The community of Grandchamp invites us to rediscover the essence of our Christian unity centred and anchored on Christ, outside of whom there is no life. Apart from Christ, we cannot bear fruit. Hence the invitation to abide in Him. The more we come closer to Christ, the more we shall come closer to each other.

This material has been adapted to our local situation by the International Ecumenical Movement Kenya-Chapter (IEM-Kenya). It is designed to be used in a single ecumenical celebration and within our daily or weekly individual liturgical celebrations. I would like to encourage more ecumenical celebrations so that we can experience the joy of belonging together to Christ. We are invited to listen together to the word of God. Our concrete way of realising this is to form in our neighbourhood, ecumenical groups of prayer and reflection on the word of God. I wish that this will not be a single once ecumenical celebration but an ecumenical celebration throughout the year.

May God bless our efforts towards a visible unity in Christ, centred around the word of God.

Fr. Maganya Innocent, M.Afr

*Chairperson of the International Ecumenical Movement – Kenya Chapter*

## INTRODUCTION

Together with our Christian Brothers and Sisters globally, this week, we commemorate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (WOPCU, 2021). We join our prayer with the passionate prayer of Jesus in John 17, 20-21. We commemorate this week not only to pray, but also to re-commit ourselves to acting in the same spirit throughout the year.

The international group jointly sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches to prepare materials for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2021 met in Grandchamp, Areuse, in the canton of Neuchatel, Switzerland, 15-18 September. The World Council of Churches had invited the Community of Grandchamp to choose a theme and draft a text for the Week of Prayer. The whole Community worked over the course of several months on this draft, which then formed the basis of the drafting work with the international group.

The Community of Grandchamp is a monastic community that brings together sisters from different churches and countries. The Community was established in the first half of the twentieth century, and from its inception had close ties with both the Community of Taizé and Abbé Paul Couturier, a seminal figure in the history of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Today there are about fifty sisters in the community, committed to seeking the path of reconciliation between Christians, across the human family, and with respect to the whole of creation.

## ORDER OF CELEBRATION

### **Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit (cf. Jn 15:5-9)**

L: *Leader*

C: *Congregation*

R: *Reader*

### **Invitation to prayer**

### **Entrance Hymn**

*A hymn invoking the Holy Spirit (to be chosen locally)*

### **Word of Welcome**

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

**C:** And also with you.

**R1:** 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”.**

**R2:** 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 the difference of ‘the other’, 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.

**R1:** 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 his 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.

**L:** In peace let us pray to the Lord: Lord, you are the vinedresser 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**

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

**R1:** We sing your praise in the midst of the world and among all peoples,

**R2:** We sing your praise in the midst of creation and among all creatures.

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

**R1:** We sing your praise among suffering and tears,

**R2:** We sing your praise among promises and achievements.

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

**R1:** We sing your praise in the places of conflict and misunderstanding;

**R2:** We sing your praise in the places of encounter and reconciliation.

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

**R1:** We sing your praise in the midst of rifts and divisions,

**R2:** We sing your praise in the midst of life and death, the birth of a new heaven and a new earth.

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

Hymn: (*Chose locally*)

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

Psalm: 103 (*sung*)

Reading: Jn 15:1-17

Short silence (approximately 1 minute)

Choir

### **Intercessions**

**R:** 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.

### **C: The joy of our heart is in God. (if sung, p. 20)**

**R:** 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.

**C: The joy of our heart is in God.**

**R:** God who gathers, you knit us together as one vine in your Son Jesus. May your loving Spirit abide in us at parish meetings and local ecumenical gatherings. Grant that together we might celebrate you with joy.

**C: The joy of our heart is in God.**

**R:** 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 pave the way for bridging rivalries and overcoming tensions.

**C: The joy of our heart is in God**

Action: A time of silence

**R:** 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 in God’s love, to rest in him.

**Silence (approximately 5 minutes)**

**Choir**

### **Second Vigil: The visible unity of Christians**

Psalm: 85 (*sung*)

Reading: 1 Cor 1:10-13a

Silence (approximately 1 minute)

**Choir**

### **Intercessions**

**R:** 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”.

**C: Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy)**

**R:** 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.

**C: Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy)**

**R:** Holy Spirit, Consoler of all, open our hearts to forgiveness and reconciliation and bring us back from our wanderings.

**C: Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy)**

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

**C: Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy)**

**R:** 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.

**C: Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy)**

**Action:** Sharing a Sign of Peace

**R:** The Lord calls us to be united among ourselves. He gives us his peace and invites us to share it. Let us exchange a sign of his peace with our neighbours. Everyone turns to those near them and offers a sign of peace, in keeping with their local context.

### **Third Vigil: The unity of all peoples and all creation**

Psalm: 96 (*sung*)

Reading: Rev. 7: 9-12

Silence (approximately 1 minute)

#### **Choir**

#### **Intercessions**

**R:** 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.

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

**R:** 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.

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

**R:** 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.

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

**R:** 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.

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

**Action:** Moving to the centre and out to the world (inspired by a text of Dorotheus of Gaza)

**R:** We are called to be ministers of God's healing and reconciling love. This work can only be fruitful when we abide in God, as branches of the true vine which is Jesus Christ. As we come

closer to God we draw closer to one another. Imagine a circle drawn on the ground. Imagine that this circle is the world. (The designated persons stand up and form a circle around a central candle.)

**R:** The centre represents God, and the paths to the centre are different ways people live. When people living in this world, desiring to draw closer to God, (walk toward the centre of the circle... The persons take several steps toward the centre).

**R** ... to the extent that they move closer to the centre, to God, they move closer to one another. And the closer they come to one another... (The persons move to the centre together).

**R** ... the closer they come to God. (When the candle-bearers reach the centre they each light their candle. As they stand together at the centre; all keep a time of prayer in silence).

**Short Silence:** (approximately 1 minute)

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

**L:** With the words that Jesus taught us, let us now pray together:

**C:** 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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

**Hymn: Chosen locally (During the singing the candle-bearers return and share with the congregation the light that they have received by lighting their candles).**

**R:** 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:

**C:** 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.

#### **Choir**

#### **Blessing**

**L:** Be one, so that the world may believe! Abide in his love, go into the world and bear the fruits of this love.

**C:** 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.

Final hymn (*to be chosen locally*) or "Enda Nasi"

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnql8PYbbv4&frags=wn&ab\\_channel=KigameMediaTV](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnql8PYbbv4&frags=wn&ab_channel=KigameMediaTV)

## Day 1

### Called by God

“You did not choose me but I chose you” (Jn 15:16a)

Gen 12:1-4 The call of Abraham

Jn 1:35-51 The call of the first disciples

### Meditation

The start of the journey is an encounter between a human being and God, between the created and the Creator, between time and eternity. Abraham heard the call: Like Abraham we are called to leave that which is familiar and go to the place that God has prepared in the depths of our hearts. Along the way, we become more and more ourselves, the people God has wanted us to be from the beginning. And 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. In our lives, as in the Gospel of John, God's call is heard in different ways. Touched by his love, we set out. In this encounter, we walk a path of transformation - the bright beginning of a relationship of love that is always started anew.

*One day you understood that, without your being aware of it, a yes had already been inscribed in your innermost depths. And so you chose to go forward in the footsteps of Christ.... In silence in the presence of Christ, you heard him say, “Come, follow me; I will give you a place to rest your heart.” (The Sources of Taizé (2000) p. 52)*

### 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 so that we may be transformed and become witnesses of your tenderness for the world. Amen.

### Let us pray for the Orthodox Churches

Each day, we will pray for the conversion to Christ for a specific Church, believing that getting closer to Christ by a genuine daily effort to imitate him, we will get closer to one another as disciples of the Gospel. Today we pray for the Holy Orthodox Churches, for the Ecumenical Patriarch of Istanbul, Bartholomeo, for the Patriarch of Moscow, Kyrill, for the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem, the Coptic Patriarch of Cairo, those of Antioch and the other Churches and their faithful. We pray that they all be faithful to the Gospel of Christ and that they come closer to him in their daily lives. We pray in particular for the Church members in the Middle East who are migrating in great numbers because of war or persecution; may the Lord have mercy on them, show them his love and protect them. Amen.

## Day 2

### Maturing internally

“Abide in me as I abide in you” (Jn 15:4a)

Eph 3:14-21 May Christ dwell in our hearts

Lk 2:41-52 Mary treasured all these things

### Meditation

The encounter with Christ gives rise to the desire to stay with him and to abide in him: a time in which fruit matures. Being fully human, like us Christ grew and matured. He lived a simple life, rooted in the practices of his Jewish faith. In this hidden life in Nazareth, where apparently nothing extraordinary happened, the presence of the Father nourished him. Mary contemplated the actions of God in her life and in that of her son. She treasured all these things in her heart. Thus, little by little, she embraced the mystery of Christ. We too need a long period of maturation, 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.

*“Letting Christ descend into the depths of our being ... He will penetrate the regions of the mind and the heart, he will reach our flesh unto our innermost being, so that we too will one day experience the depths of mercy.” (The Sources of Taizé (2000) p. 134)*

### 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. Amen.

### Let us pray for the Anglican Communion

This Church is experiencing tremendous turmoil because of issues dividing the various parts of the Church around the world. Let us pray for the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Primate of the Anglican Communion, for all the bishops, priests and faithful: for their continual conversion to Christ and their service to the poor and needy. We pray in particular for the Anglican Church in Kenya and her Archbishop the Most Reverend Dr. Jackson Ole Sapit; that he may keep his flock in unity and peace. Amen.

## Day 3

### Forming one body

“Love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 15:12b)

Col 3:12-17 Clothe yourself with compassion

Jn 13:1-15; 34-35 Love one another

### Meditation

On the eve of his death, Jesus knelt to wash the feet of his disciples. He knew the difficulty of living together and the importance of forgiveness and mutual service. “Unless I wash you,” he said to Peter, “you have no share with me.” Peter received Jesus at his feet; he was washed and was touched by the humility and gentleness of Christ. Later he would follow Jesus’ example and serve the fellowship of the faithful in the early church. Jesus wishes 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. In Christ we are invited to be clothed in compassion, through countless new beginnings. 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. With almost nothing, are you a creator of reconciliation in that communion of love, which is the Body of Christ, his Church?

*Sustained by a shared momentum, rejoice! You are no longer alone, in all things you are advancing together with your brothers and sisters. With them, you are called to live the parable of community. (The Sources of Taizé (2000) pp. 48-49)*

### 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. Amen.

### Let us pray for the Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya

2017 had marked the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation when Martin Luther posted his 95 thesis for reformation of the Church on the castle chapel door of Wittenberg. We rejoice that the Lutherans and the Roman Catholics in Germany came together to make this anniversary an ecumenical event of great importance for the reconciliation of the Christians not only in their country but throughout the Church of Christ. May the Church continue to ever be reformed through the grace of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We pray for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya (ELCK) and the Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church (KELC) for their respective presiding bishops that they may be granted wisdom in leading their flock in the ways of righteousness to the glory of your holy name. Amen

## Day 4

### Praying together

“I do not call you servants any longer... but I have called you friends” (Jn 15:15)

Rom 8:26-27 The Spirit helps us in our weakness

Lk 11:1-4 Lord, teach us to pray

### Meditation

God thirsts for relationship with us. He searches for us as he searched for Adam, calling to him in the garden: “Where are you?” (Gen 3:9) In Christ, God came to meet us. Jesus lived in prayer, intimately united to his Father, while creating friendships with his disciples and all those he met. He introduced them to that which was most precious to him: the relationship of love with his Father, who is our Father. Jesus and the disciples sang psalms together, rooted in the richness of their Jewish tradition. At other times, Jesus retired to pray alone. Prayer can be solitary or shared with others. It can express wonder, complaint, intercession, thanksgiving or simple silence. Sometimes the desire to pray is there, but one has the feeling of not being able to do so. Turning to Jesus and saying to him, “teach me”, can pave the way. Our desire itself is already prayer. 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.

*In the regularity of our common prayer, the love of Jesus springs up within us, we know not how. Common prayer does not exempt us from personal prayer. One sustains the other. Let us take a time each day to renew our personal intimacy with Jesus Christ. (The Rule of Taizé in French and English Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Great Britain pp. 19 & 21)*

### 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. Amen.

### Let us pray for the Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Churches

Many Protestant Churches have been committed to the ecumenical spirit from the beginning of the modern ecumenical movement and the creation of the World Council of Churches. Many of their leaders had a great vision to see the Church of Christ re-united for the purpose of true evangelism, particularly in mission countries. May the testimony of their devoted lives inspire more Christians to put in practice the Gospel values, especially where God is less known. Assist the current generation not to flag in zeal, but rather to rekindle that interest that together we may walk towards that unity that Christ prayed for. Amen.

## Day 5

### Letting oneself be transformed by the Word

“You have already been pruned by the word...” (Jn 15:3)

Deut 30:11-20 The word of God is very close to you

Mt 5:1-12 Blessed are you

### Meditation

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. He 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. Many Christians pray the Beatitudes every day. The Beatitudes reveal to us a happiness that is hidden in that which is unfulfilled, a happiness that lies beyond suffering: blessed are those who, touched by the Spirit, no longer hold back their tears but let them flow and thus receive consolation. As they discover the wellspring hidden within their 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 already taste, here and now, the blessing that will be fulfilled at the end of time.

*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)*

### 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. Amen.

### Let us pray for the Pentecostal Churches and all Evangelicals

Many depressed areas in Kenya have Evangelical chapels where the Sunday Service is a moment of intense worship and praises to the Lord. Poor people express their faith in traditional songs and intercessions. Christ is alive in their lives and is hope for a better future out of misery. Let us rejoice that they celebrate the Gospel joyfully and wholeheartedly. We pray for their pastors that they may bring to their congregations a ray of light and peace. May the Lord bless their families and provide opportunities for all. Let us pray that guided by God's Word which is truth they will not be misled by false visions and prophecies.

## Day 6

### Welcoming others

“Go and bear fruit, fruit that will last” (Jn 15:16b)

Gen 18:1-5 Abraham hosts the angels at the Oak of Mamre

Mk 6:30-44 Jesus' compassion for the crowds

### Meditation

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. Throughout his life, Jesus welcomed those he met. He listened to them and let himself be touched by them without being afraid of their suffering. In the gospel account of the multiplication of the loaves, Jesus is moved with compassion after seeing the hungry crowd. He knows that the entire human person must be nourished, and that he alone can truly satisfy the hunger for bread and the thirst for life. But he does not wish to do this without his disciples, without that little something they can give him: five loaves and two fish. Even today he 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 poor abilities to Jesus, he uses them in a surprising way. We then experience what Abraham did, for it is by giving that we receive, and when we welcome others, we are blessed in abundance. It is Christ himself whom we receive in a guest.

*Will the people we welcome day after day find in us men and women radiant with Christ, our peace? (The rule of Taizé in French and English (2012) p. 103; The Sources of Taizé (2000) p. 60)*

### 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. Amen.

### Let us pray for the Roman Catholic Church around the world

Since the beginning of his pontificate, Pope Francis has shown a desire to reform the Church and bring her closer to the Gospel of Christ. Three key words come to our mind in reference to his ministry: simplicity, joy and mercy. May all Catholics walk along this line of action and come closer to Christ. Let them accept the invitation of Pope Francis to boldly go to the margins of society and announce the Good News of salvation. We pray for the leaders of the Church that they may inspire deep conversion and work for unity, fraternal love and service to the needy.

## Day 7

### Growing in unity

“I am the vine, you are the branches” (Jn 15:5a)

1 Cor 1:10-13; 3:21-23 Is Christ divided?

Jn 17:20-23 As you and I are one

#### Meditation

On the eve of his death, Jesus prayed for the unity of those the Father gave him: “that they may all be one ... so that the world may believe”. Joined to him, as a branch is to the vine, we share the same sap that circulates among us and vitalizes us. Each 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 warns us against an attitude that had already threatened the unity of the first Christians: absolutizing one’s own tradition to the detriment of the unity of the body of Christ. Differences then become divisive instead of mutually enriching. Paul had a very broad vision: “All are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God” (1 Cor 3:22-23). 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” (Jn 17:21).

*Never resign yourself to the scandal of the separation of Christians who so readily profess love for their neighbour, and yet remain divided. Make the unity of the body of Christ your passionate concern. (The Rule of Taizé in French and English (2012) p. 13)*

#### Prayer

Holy Spirit, vivifying 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.

#### Let us pray for Christians involved in ecumenical groups

The theologians of all Churches have done a great job in the last 50 years in putting to the fore all that unite the Christians coming from various denominations. Now, it is time for the faithful to commit themselves to a greater sense of unity in praying together, acting together for the service of the needy and working together for the protection of creation. We ask the Lord to inspire them with genuine initiatives that will give hands to their faith and that reconciliation among them will spring out from their desire to serve Christ in neighbour and society.

## Day 8

### Reconciling with all of creation

“So that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete” (Jn 15:11)

Col 1:15-20 In him all things hold together

Mk 4:30-32 As small as a mustard seed

#### Meditation

The hymn to Christ in the epistle to the Colossians invites us to sing the praise of God’s salvation, which encompasses the entire universe. Through the crucified and risen Christ, a path of reconciliation has been opened up; creation too is destined for a future of life and peace. With the eyes of faith, we see that the kingdom of God is a reality that is very close but still very small, hardly visible – like a mustard seed. However, it is growing. Even in the distress of our world the Spirit of the Risen One is at work. He encourages 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).

*Do you wish to celebrate the newness of life that Christ gives through the Holy Spirit, and let it live in you, among us, in the church, in the world and in all of creation? (Second promise made during profession at the Community of Grandchamp)*

#### 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. Amen.

#### Let us pray for Christians who have left the Church and for the non-believers

In many public places in today’s society God is not present anymore. People have come to live without reference to God. Many have grown individualistic, self-centred even cynical about politics, wars, poverty and religious matters. Yet, some individuals have seen the necessity of solidarity, consciousness about climate change, the flow of migrants and economic disparity. Always God looks at the heart of people. May those who put efforts in responding to the challenges of this world come to realize that only in Jesus is their work fulfilled and may they find a deep sense of serving and bring light and peace around them in him and by seeing the connection between their work and faith to the glory of God.