



Sanmaargi

— to shepherd HIS flock —



MDB 01/2021

MYSORE DIOCESAN BULLETIN

JAN & FEB 2021



*Is any among you sick?
Let him call for the elders of the church,
and let them pray over him,
anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;*

James 5:14

February 11 is World Day of the Sick, an observation started by Pope John Paul II as a way for believers to offer prayers for those suffering from illnesses.

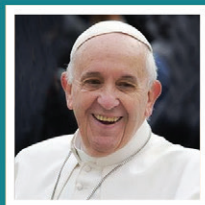
BISHOP'S HOUSE
#2939, MOTHER THERESA ROAD, P. B. NO. 12
MYSURU - 570 001

☎: 0821-2443545 (O) | Fax: 0821-2565708
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HOLY FATHER'S Intention

January 2021

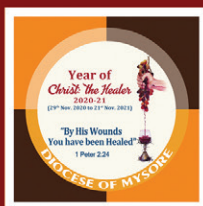
May the Lord give us the grace to live in full fellowship with our brothers and sisters of other religions, praying for one another, open to all.



Februaury 2021

We pray for women who are victims of violence, that they may be protected by society and have their sufferings considered and heeded.

DIOCESAN Intention



January 2021

To have a new and healthy life

Februaury 2021

To take care of our health and well-being

Hearty Congratulations

Dear Bishop
Most Rev. Dr. K. A. William

On your Anniversary of
Episcopal Ordination

&

Happy Birthday

27th February





MDB 01/2021

MYSORE DIOCESAN BULLETIN

JAN & FEB 2021



SHEPHERD'S VOICE



Dear & Rev. Fathers/Brothers/Sisters/Laity,

"Do not look forward to what may happen tomorrow; the same everlasting Father who cares for you today, will take care of your tomorrow and every day. Either He will shield you from suffering or He will give you unfailing strength to bear it".

- St. Francis De sales

The Pandemic Covid-19 became a scare on the face of the earth in the year 2020. A year forever to remember for this generation, a year with lockdowns and seclusion. Yet! We have completed the year 2020 with this unexpected deadly Pandemic Covid-19, which shattered the whole world and brought us to standstill. Many of our near and dear ones, known and unknown have left us to the Eternal bliss in the past year. Nevertheless, we know how God changed this disturbed time into a blessing by kindling in people, to become more generous and to be kind towards the needy. While the Pandemic COVID -19 and the vaccine to cure is yet to be made available for people, once again the Mutant Coronavirus which spreads faster than the former one has started disturbing the mankind. However, we have learnt to overcome this virus and started living our normal lives by stepping into this New Year 2021, with hopes of blessings and healing.

To bring in physical, mental and spiritual healing - our Diocese has decided to commemorate this year with the theme: **"The Year of Christ: The Healer"**. While we were preparing for the same, the Holy Father announced and dedicated this year as **"The Year of St. Joseph"** marking the 150th Anniversary of the declaration of St. Joseph as the Patron of the

Universal Church. This is a co-incidence and a blessing to our Diocese to commemorate **“The Year of St. Joseph”** along with **“The Year of Christ: the Healer”** as he is the patron of our Diocese. Through the intercession of St. Joseph, Jesus will listen to our plea and heal us granting good health of mind and body, and set us all free from this deadly pandemic. Let us blend both the themes of the Diocese and the Universal Church and celebrate meaningfully. May we be persons who are healed and become the instruments to bring God’s healing in our families, communities, neighbourhood, our society and our Diocese. May God bless us all. Let St. Joseph intercede for us.

With God’s blessings

†**Bishop William**
Diocese of Mysore

IMPORTANT EVENTS

THANK YOU

I take this opportunity to thank you for conveying your wishes to me on the occasion of Christmas and New Year - 2021 through Greeting Cards, Phone Calls, Messages and visiting me. I thank you for your thoughtfulness and praying for me.



SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

Every year on the 1st of January, we celebrate the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. This feast helps us to meditate on the Motherhood of Mary, who is the bearer of God. She was a faithful and a humble servant of God. Her life indicates a life of prayer, obedience and sacrifice. Let us imbibe these qualities of Mother Mary in our lives and take her as our model all through this New Year-2021.



NEW YEAR

New Year brings a ray of hope. We have spent the past year 2020 in the pandemic situation and lockdowns. Many have lost their lives and are not able to witness the New Year-2021 and most of us have felt that the previous year was wasted. We hope this year will be truly happy and brings good cheer in our lives, being free from Covid-19.



While we thank the Lord for whatever has happened during the year-2020, we also praise God for giving us the necessary grace and protection upto this day. During the year, let us shape our life, inculcate good values and virtues, more specially promoting fraternity and harmony in our parishes, communities, diocese and society. May this New Year bring us God's choicest blessings. I bless you with this traditional Irish blessing: *"May the road rise to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face; the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of His hand".*

Let us also offer this New Year into the maternal care of Mother Mary. May you take newer resolutions to make your life better and productive by thinking and reflecting positively.

I wish you all a Happy and Bright New Year-2021.

EPIPHANY

The feast of Epiphany has a special significance. This is the feast where Christ is manifested as the Saviour of the Nations. Some Orthodox Churches celebrate Christmas on this day. Many parishes have the practice of placing the three wise men traditionally called the three kings in the crib and have special celebration by offering a special meal called the Pongal. May Christ the Light of the World bless us all to give this Light to others.



UNITY OCTAVE

“Ut Unum Sint; That they may be one.” This was the prayer of Jesus for His disciples. We Christians are divided based on denominations and sects, on different grounds of theological understanding through the course of history. Yet, we are called to be united as brothers and sisters in the Lord. We must also realize that Unity is not uniformity. Thus, we need to accept our differences and constantly learn the best from one another, so that we grow in Christ.



Thus, to mark this fraternal unity and fellowship in the name of our Lord, we are called to celebrate the Unity Octave from 18th - 25th Jan, to bear witness in the world that, “We are One in the Spirit and One in the Lord”. This year the theme for prayer and reflection for eight days is *“Abide in My Love...You Shall Bear Much Fruit”* (Jn 15: 5-9).

We strongly urge you all to commemorate this great event in your parishes by organizing a prayer service along with our separated Christian brethren with an open heart during the Unity Octave service. In the level of the UCF (United Christian Forum) in Mysuru, we would be conducting prayers in various Churches at 06:00 pm. We recommend those of you, who are able to make it up for the prayer service, to be present for the same. For the themes of each day, kindly refer the **Annexure-1** and for the document by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity *“The Bishop and Christian Unity: An Ecumenical Vademecum”*, kindly refer **Annexure-2**. For more details kindly contact **Rev. Fr. Arul Selva Kumar** - 9449712816.

REPUBLIC DAY

On the 26th of January, we are celebrating the Republic Day of our nation. It is a day to remember and pray for our Nation. It is on this day, India was declared a Sovereign Republic State after the Independence. Let us hold on to

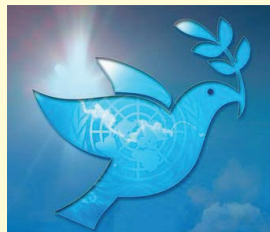


the Democratic and Secular values, thoughts, and principles in respecting and promoting fraternity, love, peace and brotherhood amidst us. Let the flag of our country fly high spreading these values.

Jai Hind!

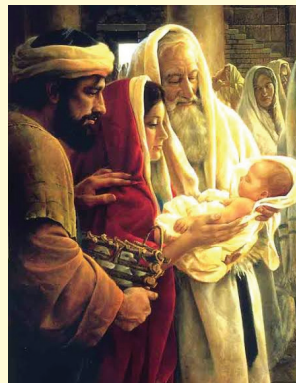
WORLD PEACE DAY

Peace is a precious gift that all seek and for which we pray to the Lord. Our world is troubled by wars, plagues, pandemic, hunger, poverty and so on and so forth. Man wants to overcome these and seek peace in the depths of his heart. Realizing this need of the hour, the Catholic Church on the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God on 1st January, dedicates and prays for peace. In the past years, the World Peace Day was celebrated in St. Joseph's Cathedral, Mysuru on Martyrs day - 30th January in collaboration with the Department of Christianity, University of Mysore. This year too, we would be celebrating the World Peace Day in the similar manner. May Jesus reign in our hearts to grant peace in our lives. Let us become the channels of peace.



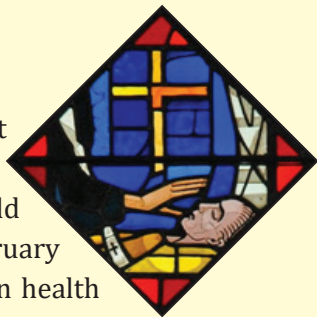
FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

The feast of the Presentation of the Lord is also known as Candle Mass Feast. It is a very important feast in the Church. This feast reminds us of our baptism and our presentation to the Church by our parents. On this day, the religious men and women renew their vows and commitment to the Lord and His Church. I wish and pray that our commitment to the Lord may deepen our love for Him and dedicate our lives for His kingdom to serve the humanity.



WORLD DAY OF THE SICK

The world has several sicknesses and the recent ones affect the lives of the people seriously. The Holy Mother Church celebrates the “World Day of the Sick” every year on the 11th of February to pray for the sick and the ones who serve in health ministry. On the Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes, let us remember the sick and pray for them. It is one of the corporal works of charity. We need to be empathetic, and serve our sick brethren. Specially in this time of Pandemic, we not only pray for them, but also show our solidarity towards the sick in our family and those in hospitals. We need to have the face of Christ, and make them experience the Love and Mercy of Christ through our service.

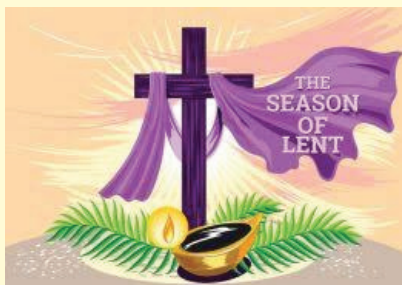


Let us also specially pray for the doctors, medical assistants and the corona warriors, so that they may be moved by the Spirit to go selflessly an extra mile to treat the sick. May God bless their generosity and sacrifice.

N.B: While administering the Communion to the sick, let us make sure the family members participate in the prayer reverently. There can be special prayer and blessing over the sick, at the end of the Holy Mass on 11th Feb 2021.

LENT AND ASH WEDNESDAY

The Season of Lent is a Holy Season to meditate on the Life, Passion and Death of Jesus who brought salvation to the Whole Humanity. May we prepare duly with the Sacrament of Reconciliation, with more Prayer, Alms-giving and Fasting. To mark the beginning of this Holy Season, we have the Ash Wednesday on the 17th of February. May these Liturgical Celebrations enable us to renew our lives and pray for our own and the well-being of



the World. I urge you all to take part in the Stations of the Cross conducted in your Churches/Chapels, and also meditate them during your family prayers. Let us pray in the words of the Hymn - Sabat Mater Dolorosa:

“Christe, cum sit hinc exire, da per Matrem Me venire ad palmam victoriae”(Christ, when you shall call me, hence by your Mother my defense, by your Cross my Victory)

BISHOP’S BIRTHDAY AND CONSECRATION DAY

Every year there is a fellowship gathering of the priests and religious on the 27th of February, on the birthday and consecration day of the Bishop. This year due to the Pandemic situation, we need to stand in solidarity with the suffering people. Therefore, we will not be having the same. May I request you all for your valuable prayers and also your support towards the diocesan program for the cancer patients, instead of spending money on the bouquets, as informed last year.

THE SUNDAY OF THE WORD OF GOD

This special commemoration was instituted by His Holiness Pope Francis to be celebrated every year beginning from this year, on the 3rd Sunday of Ordinary Time. The special commemoration of the Word of God Sunday, helps us to give primary and equal importance to the Word of God in the Liturgy. It is good that many of our devout members of our Church revere with high regards, the Eucharistic Altar and the Holy Eucharist. But sadly we forget the Altar of the Word and its proclamation.

Thus, this significant day would surely enable to create awareness among priests, religious and the faithful to give importance to the Word of God and make it a lively and integral part of the Liturgy. There are various Church Documents, which can help us in identifying the beauty of the Liturgy of the Word, its ritual and practices, which are found on the Vatican site. The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of Sacraments has sent a note regarding the same. Kindly refer the **Annexure-3** for further details.

REMINDERS

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LITURGICAL CELEBRATION

In our Christian life, liturgical celebrations bring us Grace of God. To make this celebration as a Divine experience, the liturgical animator plays an important role. All liturgical norms are to be followed in accordance with the Roman Liturgical Calendar and GIRM. It is better to have good co-ordination between the parish priests, religious communities and laity with regard to the arrangements for liturgical celebrations to make our liturgy vibrant and God - experiencing one to foster the Faith of people. Kindly follow the diocesan guidelines in this regard.

A Gentle reminder:

- During the Holy Eucharistic Celebration, con-celebrants are to join from the beginning of the Holy Mass. ***No priest is allowed to join the con-celebration in between.*** In case of late arrival, he can join the congregation without vesting. It is applicable to guest priests too. If such situations arise, kindly guide them. The parish priests should look into it.
- Mass timings and language for the common Masses in the Parish Churches has to be kept up without any alteration. Any changes have to be made only with the written permission of the Bishop.
- Holy Masses cannot be offered in houses. In case of need, like for the very sick/aged, permission of the Bishop is required.
- Special masses can be given at any suitable time and language as per the need of the people.
- During the celebrations like parish feasts, Jubilees, First Holy Communion, Confirmation etc., cannot be held during the same mass. Each of these celebrations have special prayers and readings which has to be followed strictly and not mix up.
- Suitable Psalms and songs, specially Gloria etc., are to be used.

OUT-STATION VISITS

Some of our priests are absent in the parish and are travelling out of the Diocese for personal reasons without information to the Bishop. Kindly follow CIC-Can. 533 § 2- *“In order to be absent from the parish for more than a week, however, a pastor is bound to inform the local ordinary.”* It will be good and appreciated, if you send an email to the Bishop or make a phone call explaining your absence in the parish. It is also good to know, the arrangements made for the faithful for their spiritual needs during your absence from the parish. This will help in the parish administration. Kindly co-operate.

ANNUAL STATISTICS

Every year, each Diocese has to send the Annual Statistics to Vatican by the last week of January. Hence, I request you to make arrangements to prepare the forms (A-J) and send them by 30th January 2021 in two copies to the Chancellor, Bishop's House, Mysuru. Please do not delay.

MARRIAGE PREPARATORY COURSES

Due to the Covid-19, we were not able to organize the Marriage Preparatory Courses in a class room setting. We have decided to begin these courses once again from 9th January 2021. The courses will resume at Catholic Center, Mysuru on the 2nd Saturday and following Sunday in Kannada, and 4th Saturday and following Sunday in English. Those whose marriages are arranged can attend the same. The candidates should bring a letter from the respective parish priests. All the precautions of social distancing, thermal screening, sanitizing, etc., should be followed. Those who did not have this preparatory course but received the Sacrament of Marriage due to Covid-19, can also attend the same, as it will help the couple to know more about Christian Marriage. Please Contact **Rev. Fr. Michael Augustine Pro - 9901910549** in this regard.

MISSION SUNDAY COLLECTIONS

(This year inspite of Covid-19 the Parish Priests, Superiors etc., have collected contributions towards Mission Sunday. I thank you for your co-operation in this regard.) I request all the parish priests, religious superiors, rectors and heads of the Institutions to send the Mission Sunday Collections by 30th of January 2021. Please send the total amount to the Financial Administrator by Cheque or D. D. to the account head '*Mission Sunday*'. In turn, the same will be forwarded to Pontifical Mission Society, Rome through the National Office. Please co-operate.

INFORMATION

VISITOR'S DAY:

The Bishop will be available to meet the concerned persons on the following days from morning 09.00 am. to 12.00 pm with prior appointment.

Sunday	Bishop's out - station program
Monday	Bishop's out - station program
Tuesday	Diocesan Priests
Wednesday	Charity Day
Thursday	Bishop's out - station program
Friday	Religious
Saturday	Laity

Kindly contact **Rev. Fr. Praveen Kumar, Bishop's Secretary at 0821-2443545/ 8088320291** to get the prior appointment. For any emergency visit, you may contact us.

Please Note: For information and updates from the Bishop's House (specially the Religious in the Diocese), kindly save the Whatsapp number of Bishop's Secretary- 8088320291, and send your Name and Institution details. As informed earlier, better to have a particular Whatsapp mobile number to the community. Kindly co-operate.

NEW WEBSITE

St. Anthony's Basilica at Dornahalli has a new official website: www.dornahallistantony.in for updates regarding Holy Mass Timings, Feasts days and Special days, etc., The booking of Holy Masses and sending contributions also can be done online. You can benefit from the same to receive the blessings of St. Anthony of Dornahalli. I congratulate and thank **Rev. Fr. N.T. Joseph** and **Rev. Fr. Issac Ratnakar** for the same.



CHARISMATIC PRAYER SESSIONS

Due to the pandemic, the gathering of people for Charismatic Prayer Sessions were suspended. Now, as there are relaxations and reasonable number of people are gathering for occasions, we can resume the Charismatic Prayer Sessions in our Diocese. However, precautionary measures like wearing masks, maintaining social distance, etc., has to be taken care. Let prayers help us all to overcome the difficulties created due to the Pandemic.



LET US PRAY FOR FARMERS

We know the struggles of the thousands and lakhs of farmers who are protesting to protect their rights and privileges even in rain and severe cold season. Let us keep them in our prayers, that there is peace and progress in our country. May the poor and needy are taken care. The Church always considers that there can be Peace only by Justice. May God Bless our Nation.



BLESSING AND INAGURATION

BLESSING OF THE NIRMALA MATHE CHURCH AT KUTTA

On the 8th of December 2020, **Nirmala Mathe Church** was Blessed and Consecrated at Kutta. We specially Congratulate and Thank **Rev. Fr. Lourdu Prasad** who took keen interest in building this beautiful Church. He managed to bring a 24 KT gold plated Icon picture from Rome which is a source of Grace and attraction to the new Church. May God bless Fr. Lourdu Prasad, the parishioners, and all the donors for the effort taken in completing this Church.



BLESSING OF THE NEW SCHOOL BUILDING

On the 8th of December 2020, **St. Francis Kids World** and **St. Francis Peace Center** of the Franciscan Missionary Brothers were blessed and inaugurated by **Very Rev. Fr. Dominic Vaz** -



President of the CRI. We congratulate the Superior and the community for the same. **St. Francis Peace Centre** is envisioned to discover God, enlighten Humanity and transform the World. It promotes Peace in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi. We implore God's blessings on them and their institution, to serve the Lord and the people through the Education Ministry.

CAROL SINGING COMPETETION

The Catholic Association of Mysore, marked their Platinum Jubilee Celebration by organizing an Online Carol singing Competition on the 19th of December 2020.



Many Choirs from various Parishes, Seminaries, Convents, Institutions and Religious houses participated in it. The program was successful and it spread the Joy of Christmas. We Congratulate and Thank the President and the members of the **Catholic Association of Mysore** for organizing this event. The thanksgiving celebration of Platinum Jubilee will be held on 22nd Jan 2021 at 6:00 pm at St. Joseph's Cathedral, Mysuru with Holy Mass followed by a program.

UCF CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

On 12th Dec 2020, the **United Christian Forum (UCF)** of Mysore had organised a Christmas Fellowship at ICRM Church, Bamboo Bazar, Mysuru. This Christmas fellowship manifests the unity among the Christian Churches, and to spread the message and peace of Christ among each other. **Bishop Emeritus Thomas Vazhapilly**, and many important leaders were also present to share their joy and fellowship. We Congratulate and Thank **Rev. Fr. Arul Selva Kumar** and all the organizers for the beautiful programme. The highlight of this program was the Christmas message delivered by the representatives from different denominations and religions on Christmas. There were Carols singing by various Choir groups and a prayer with lighted candle. Let us relate well with other Churches and Faith in unity, peace and harmony.



RENOVATED CHURCH AND PRESBYTERY AT PRAKASHPALYA

The renovated **St. Louis Church** and the **presbytery** at **Prakash palya** was blessed on 12th December 2020. This Church is now in the Solvaic-architectural design. It is eye catching and marvelous. We take this opportunity to express sincere thanks to **Rev. Fr. Uday Kumar SDB** for taking keen interest in completing these projects. May God bless him, the donors and the parish community.



CONVOCATION AT DEEPANJALI, MYSORE

The Ursuline Franciscan Sisters had the Convocation for the Spiritual courses conducted at Deepanjali, Mysore. We Congratulate and Thank the Directress, Sisters of the Ursuline Franciscan Congregation and also the participants for this study course and the program. I wish them God's blessings and best wishes for their future Ministry.



CENT PERCENT RESULTS

We are happy to inform that the 9th batch of St. Joseph's College of Nursing, Mysore have secured Cent Percent results announced by the RGUHS, Bangalore for the year 2019 - 20. Out of 41 students who appeared for the exams, 21 have secured distinction and the rest First Class. I Congratulate the Director, Administrator, Staff and the Students for this achievement. I also thank **Rev. Fr. George Martiz**, the previous Director for his Contribution in this regard.



FIRST RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY OF CSSJ

The Carmelite Sisters of St. Joseph (CSSJ) have started their First Community in T. Narsipura. On 28th of December 2020, their First Religious House was Blessed and Inaugurated. I Congratulate and Thank **Sr. Geetha Kallipurakkal** for her effort and role for the same. I wish the community all the best in their Mission to continue to Serve God and His Church according to their Charism.



BIRTHDAY

The following priests of our Diocese have their Birthdays during the months of January and February. Our Prayerful wishes to them.

JANUARY

- | | |
|----|--------------------------------|
| 01 | Rev. Fr. Vijay Kumar |
| | Rev. Fr. Roxan Baros |
| 04 | Rev. Fr. J. Anthonappa |
| 08 | Rev. Fr. Praveen Kumar. A |
| 09 | Rev. Fr. Prashanth Kumar |
| 12 | Rev. Fr. Vijeth Martin |
| 13 | Rev. Fr. Stephen Joseph |
| 15 | Rev. Fr. M. Christopher |
| 16 | Rev. Fr. Charles Noronha |
| 18 | Rev. Fr. John Peter Rego |
| | Rev. Fr. Rony Ravi Kumar |
| 21 | Rev. Fr. Vincent D'Souza |
| | Rev. Fr. Christopher Sagayaraj |
| 23 | Rev. Fr. Tenny Kurian |



FEBRUARY

- | | |
|----|-------------------------------|
| 02 | Rev. Fr. Cyril D'Souza |
| 08 | Rev. Fr. Denis D'Souza |
| 11 | Rev. Fr. Alfred John Mendonca |
| | Rev. Fr. Anthony Raj R |
| 12 | Rev. Fr. Jebamalai Muthu |
| 14 | Rev. Fr. Valentine R. Kumar |
| 15 | Rev. Fr. John G. D'Cunha |
| 22 | Rev. Fr. L. Santiago |
| 27 | Most Rev. Dr. K. A. WILLIAM |

We also wish a happy birthday to all the Religious fathers, brothers and sisters who celebrate their birthdays in the month of January and February

NECROLOGY

We fondly remember the Mysore Diocesan Priests on their death anniversary during the month of January and February. With gratitude we pray for the departed for their service.

JANUARY

03-01-2012	Rev. Fr. Felix J. Tauro
09-01-1970	Rev. Fr. Comelius Lobo
10-01-1987	Rev. Fr. Albert Gonsalves
18-01-1970	Rev. Msgr. Ignatius H. Lobo
27-01-1964	Most Rev. Dr. Rene Feuga

FEBRUARY

05-02-2019	Rev. Msgr. N.S. Marie Joseph
14-02-2015	Rev. Fr. Michael Gonsalves
16-02-2000	Rev. Fr. Joseph Jaunet
18-02-2000	Rev. Fr. Peter Penven
23-02-1979	Rev. Fr. Freeman Joseph
28-02-1999	Rev. Fr. F. Michael

We also pray for the departed souls of religious priests, brothers and sisters on their death anniversary in the month of January and February for their service in our Diocese.



MESSAGES SENT THROUGH WHATSAPP DURING THE MONTH OF DECEMBER-2020

Gentle Reminder

Dear & Rev. Fathers

07-12-2020

CLERGY RECOLLECTION

Due to Covid-19, as we had the online Retreat, we would be having our Recollection on Thursday, 10th December 2020 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, in view of preparing for the Birth of Our Lord Jesus. For the Sacrament of Reconciliation, kindly contact the nearest clergy and avail the service which is part of preparation during the Advent Season. (privately in sitting position with social distance). Kindly keep yourself free from other commitments and participate in the Clergy Recollection online at www.mysorediocese.com (diocesan website / Youtube)

Preacher: Rev. Fr. John Sequeira OCD (Pushpashrama, Mysuru)

Time Table:

09:00 AM	First Talk
12:00 Noon	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament & Talk
4:00 PM	Second Talk

Let us participate in this online recollection to prepare ourselves for the coming of Our Saviour.

**Bishop's House,
Mysore**

17-12-2020

Dear & Rev. Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and Lay faithful,

A Hindi TV Serial titled 'YESHU' is starting on 22nd December on & TV at 8pm. The entire script is written by Rev. Fr. John Paul SVD. Kindly publicize to ensure the continuity of telecasting this TV serial which will depend on viewing popularity. Please co-operate.

**Bishop's house
Mysore**

17-12-2020

Dear & Rev. Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and Lay faithful,

This is with regard to the Christmas and New Year celebrations in the Diocese of Mysore. Due to the pandemic, all the parish priests and the concerned in-charges are requested to kindly see to that there is thermal screening, social distancing, wearing mask and using sanitizers. With regard to vigil services and masses during the day, you may continue to follow as in the previous years, unless the civil authorities guide us with other norms. We shall co- operate with them.

We wish you a Happy Christmas and bright New Year-2021.

Bishop's house

Mysore

18-12-2020

Sad Demise

Dear & Rev. Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and Lay faithful,

Mr. Chandra Kumar, our diocesan auditor (K. K. Nayar and co.) aged 68 years, passed away yesterday night. He was under medical treatment in Bangalore. His burial service will be held today, 18th Dec 2020 in Bangalore after 03:00 PM.

Infact his father late Mr. Nayar was the first chartered accountant in Bangalore during the British period and he has served our diocese from before 1960. After his death, Mr. C. Kumar took up the responsibility and served us from 1985 till date. He was a noble and co-operative person. He was helpful to our parishes and institutions- priests and religious in auditing our accounts. He was also guiding and helping us in implementing the changing norms of the IT Department. When in difficulty, he was also representing us to sort out the issues in the Department.

With gratitude, let us pray for the repose of the soul of late Chandra kumar.

May his soul rest in peace.

Bishop's house

Mysore

19-12-2020

Dear & Rev. Fathers,

As the Celebration of Christmas, New Year and other Solemnities are close at hand, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Rome has decreed granting permission to all the priests to Celebrate upto Four Holy Masses on Christmas Day(25th Dec.), Solemnity of Mary Mother of God (1st Jan.) and the Epiphany(6th Jan.) to facilitate small gathering of people for the Holy Masses in the background of pandemic Covid-19.

You may avail this permission and announce the timings by grouping of faithful according to zones/ wards/locality/streets, etc., in advance to the parish community tomorrow (20th Dec.) and also during the Christmas Holy Masses, so that they may participate in the Liturgical Celebrations accordingly on the above mentioned dates and timings.

Once again, we request you to have the Liturgical Celebrations as usual, including the Vigil Services, in addition to the permission granted to have Extra Holy Masses as mentioned above.

However, kindly maintain the norms of Social Distancing, Sanitizing, Wearing Masks, etc., for safety of everyone. In case, the Civil Authorities give any written directions and there may require changes, we abide and follow them. Please co - operate.

Have a Grace - filled Liturgical Celebrations.

Bishop's House
Mysore

19-12-2020

Dear & Rev. Father,

As in the past, this year also the Doordarshana Chandana TV Channel is presenting Christha Namana programe on 24th Dec. from 7.30 pm to 10.30 pm (with a half an hour break for news bulletin) and on 25th Dec.

from 10.30 pm to 0.30 am (26th). Kindly announce about the same to the parish community tomorrow (20th Dec.) and also during the Christmas Holy Masses.

With Seasonal Greetings

Bishop's House
Mysore

23-12-2020

URGENT & IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Dear Rev. Fathers/Sisters/ Brothers/ Laity faithful,

In the light of the announcement of night curfew from today 23rd Dec. 2020 to 02nd Jan. 2021 between 10:00 pm to 6:00 am by the State Govt of Karnataka due to the Pandemic, kindly abide and follow the directions of the Govt.

You are also recommended to have the Christmas Eve and the New Year Eve Holy Masses by 7 pm, so that the people may return home before 10:00 pm.

On Christmas and New Year days, you can have more Holy Masses from 6:00 am onwards at multiple time and places in the Church Campus, to have smaller group for the Liturgy.

However, the usual precautions like thermal screening, social distancing, wearing mask and sanitization is a must.

Kindly pass on this information immediately to others and make due arrangements.

Bishop's House
Mysore.

23-12-2020

CLARIFICATION

Dear & Rev. Fathers, Brothers, Sisters & Laity,

The State Government of Karnataka had declared night curfew from today (23rd Dec. 2020) upto 2nd Jan 2021. In the evening, it declares that the night curfew will be from tomorrow (24th Dec. 2020) from 11:00 pm to 5.00 am. At the same time, it says that we Christians can have the Christmas Vigil Holy Mass in the Midnight.

There are possibilities of inconveniences to our people from others. In the interest of our people when they come to the church and return home in the Midnight, it is better that we have for this year the Christmas Eve Holy Mass at 7:00 pm as informed earlier.

Kindly see to that all leave the church campus immediately after the Holy Mass to reach their home before 10:00 pm.

On Christmas day, we can have Holy Masses from 5:00 am as per our earlier directions.

Kindly note the above, and have a safe and healthy Christmas Celebration taking all precautions like Thermal Scanning, Social Distancing, Sanitizing and Wearing Mask for the safety of everyone.

Kindly co-operate

**Bishop's House
Mysore**

26-12-2020

Dear & Rev. Fathers/Sisters/ Brothers/ Laity,

Greetings of the Season.

With regard to the Midnight Vigil Holy Mass for Christmas, we had the Eve Holy Mass at 7.00 pm to avoid confusions.

Now, for New Year Vigil Holy Mass, since we have clear direction from the State Govt. that there will be NO night curfew, we shall have the

Thanksgiving Adoration of Blessed Sacrament followed by the Vigil Holy Mass at the Mid night of the 31st Dec. 2020.

On 1st Jan.2021, Holy Masses can be at multiple time in multiple places in the Church Campus to facilitate small gatherings for Liturgy in the zonal/wards/localities level in the Church Campus. Let us follow strictly the Govt. guidences of wearing mask, sanitizing, maintaing social distance, etc.,

Kindly make due announcements during the Holy Masses on 27th Dec. 2020 about the same.

With God's Blessings.

**Bishop's House
Mysore**

30-12-2020

Sad Demise

Dear & Rev. Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and Lay faithful,

We regret to inform you the sad demise of very Rev. Fr. J. B. Xavier, aged 84 years, a priest of our Mysore Diocese. He was staying with his family members in Bangalore for sometime during the Pandemic. Yesterday, he came to his brother's house in Mysore. Today (29th Dec 2020) in the evening, he was brought to St. Joseph's Hospital for emergency. The doctors confirmed that he has expired at 05:00 pm. His mortal remains will be kept for public homage in St. Mary's Minor Seminary, Bannimantap, Mysuru from today evening until tomorrow 8-30 am.

The mortal remains will be shifted to St. Joseph's Cathedral, Mysore and later at 10:00 am the Requiem Holy Mass will be offered for the departed soul. The burial service along with Holy Mass will be held in his native place at Shettihalli in the Diocese of Chickmagalur at 3-30 pm tomorrow.

We Express our heartfelt condolences to bereaved family members.

May his soul rest in peace.

Kindly see the **Annexure-4** for the obituary.

**Bishop's house
Mysore**

Annexure -1

TO THOSE ORGANIZING THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

The search for unity: throughout the year

The traditional period in the northern hemisphere for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is 18-25 January. Those dates were proposed in 1908 by Paul Wattson to cover the days between the feasts of St Peter and St Paul, and therefore have a symbolic significance. In the southern hemisphere where January is a vacation time churches often find other days to celebrate the Week of Prayer, for example around Pentecost (suggested by the Faith and Order movement in 1926), which is also a symbolic date for the unity of the Church.

Mindful of the need for flexibility, we invite you to use this material throughout the whole year to express the degree of communion which the churches have already reached, and to pray together for that full unity which is Christ's will.

Adapting the text

This material is offered with the understanding that, whenever possible, it will be adapted for use in local situations. Account should be taken of local liturgical and devotional practice, and of the whole social and cultural context. Such adaptation should ideally take place ecumenically. In some places ecumenical structures are already set up for adapting the material; in other places, we hope that the need to adapt it will be a stimulus to creating such structures.

Using the Week of Prayer material

- For churches and Christian communities which observe the Week of Prayer together through a single common service, an order for an ecumenical worship service is provided.
- Churches and Christian communities may also incorporate material from the Week of Prayer into their own services. Prayers from the ecumenical worship service, the "eight days", and the selection of additional prayers can be used as appropriate in their own setting.
- Communities which observe the Week of Prayer in their worship for each day during the week may draw material for these services from the "eight days".
- Those wishing to undertake bible studies on the Week of Prayer theme can use as a basis the biblical texts and reflections given in the eight days. Each day the discussions can lead to a closing period of intercessory prayer.
- Those who wish to pray privately may find the material helpful for focusing their prayer intentions. They can be mindful that they are in communion with others praying all around the world for the greater visible unity of Christ's Church.

BIBLICAL TEXT FOR 2021

Jn 15:1-17

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

New Revised Standard Version

INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME FOR THE YEAR 2021

Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit

(cf. Jn 15:5-9)

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2021 was prepared by the Monastic Community of Grandchamp.¹ The theme that was chosen, “*Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit*”, is based on John 15:1-17 and expresses Grandchamp Community’s vocation to prayer, reconciliation and unity in the church and the human family.

In the 1930s a number of Reformed women from French-speaking Switzerland who belonged to a group known as the “Ladies of Morges” rediscovered the importance of silence in listening to the Word of God. At the same time they revived the practice of spiritual retreats to nourish their life of faith, inspired by the example of Christ who went apart to a lonely place to pray. They were soon joined by others who took part in regularly organized retreats in Grandchamp, a small hamlet near the shores of Lake Neuchâtel. It became necessary to provide a permanent presence of prayer and welcome for the growing number of guests and retreatants.

Today the community has fifty sisters, all women from different generations, church traditions, countries and continents. In their diversity the sisters are a living parable of communion. They remain faithful to a life of prayer, life in community and the welcoming of guests. The sisters share the grace of their monastic life with visitors and volunteers who go to Grandchamp for a time of retreat, silence, healing or in search of meaning.

The first sisters experienced the pain of division between the Christian churches. In this struggle they were encouraged by their friendship with Abbé Paul Couturier, a pioneer of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Therefore, from its earliest beginnings prayer for Christian unity was at the heart of the life of the community. This commitment, together with Grandchamp’s fidelity to the three pillars of prayer, community life and hospitality, form the foundations of these materials.

1. See also the presentation on the community at the end of this booklet, as well as www.grandchamp.org

To abide in God's love is to be reconciled with oneself

The French words for monk and nun (moine/moniale) come from the Greek *μόνος* which means alone and one. Our hearts, bodies and minds, far from being one, are often scattered, being pulled in several directions. The monk or nun desires to be one in his or her self and united with Christ. "Abide in me as I abide in you," Jesus tells us (Jn 15:4a). An integrated life presupposes a path of self-acceptance, of reconciliation with our personal and inherited histories.

Jesus said to the disciples, "abide in my love" (Jn 15:9). He abides in the love of the Father (Jn 15:10) and desires nothing other than to share this love with us: "I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father" (Jn 15:15b). Grafted into the vine, which is Jesus himself, the Father becomes our vinedresser who prunes us to make us grow. This describes what happens in prayer. The Father is the centre of our lives, who centres our lives. He prunes us and makes us whole, and whole human beings give glory to the Father.

Abiding in Christ is an inner attitude that takes root in us over time. It demands space to grow. It can be overtaken by the struggle for the necessities of life and it is threatened by the distractions, noise, activity and the challenges of life. In the turmoil of Europe in 1938, Geneviève Micheli, who would later become Mother Geneviève, the first mother of the community, wrote these lines which remain relevant today:

We live in a time that is both troubling and magnificent, a dangerous time where nothing preserves the soul, where rapid and wholly human achievements seem to sweep beings away ... And I think that our civilization will die in this collective madness of noise and speed, where no being can think ... We Christians, who know the full value of a spiritual life, have an immense responsibility and must realize it, unite and help each other create forces of calmness, refuges of peace, vital centres where the silence of people calls on the creative word of God. It is a question of life and death.

Abiding in Christ until we bear fruit

"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit" (Jn 15:8). We cannot bear fruit on our own. We cannot bear fruit separated from the vine. It is the sap, the life of Jesus flowing through us, that produces fruit. Remaining in Jesus's love, remaining a branch of the vine, is what allows his life to flow through us.

When we listen to Jesus his life flows through us. Jesus invites us to let his word abide in us (John 15:7) and then whatever we ask will be done for us. By his word we bear fruit. As persons, as a community, as the entire church, we wish to unite ourselves to Christ in order to keep his commandment of loving one another as He has loved us (Jn 15:12).

Abiding in Christ, the source of all love, the fruit of communion grows

Communion with Christ demands communion with others. Dorotheus of Gaza, a monk in Palestine in the 6th century, expressed this in the following way:

Imagine a circle drawn on the ground, that is, a line drawn in a circle with a compass, and a centre. Imagine that the circle is the world, the centre is God, and the radii are the different paths or ways people live. When the saints, desiring to draw near to God, walk toward the middle of the circle, to the extent that they penetrate its interior, they draw closer to each other; and the closer they draw to each other, the closer they come to God. Understand that the same thing applies conversely, when we turn away from God and withdraw toward the outside. It then becomes obvious that the more we move away from God, the more we move away from each other, and the more we move away from each other, the more we also move away from God.

Moving closer to others, living together in community with others, sometimes people very different from ourselves, can be challenging. The sisters of Grandchamp know this challenge and for them the teaching of Brother Roger of Taizé² is very helpful: “There is no friendship without purifying suffering. There is no love of one’s neighbour without the cross. The cross alone allows us to know the unfathomable depth of love.”³

Divisions among Christians, moving away from one another, are a scandal because it is also moving further away from God. Many Christians, moved to sorrow by this situation, pray fervently to God for the restoration of that unity for which Jesus prayed. Christ’s prayer for unity is an invitation to turn back to him and so come closer to one another, rejoicing in the richness of our diversity.

As we learn from community life, efforts at reconciliation are costly and demand sacrifice. We are sustained by the prayer of Christ, who desires that we might be one, as he is one with the Father so that the world may believe (cf. Jn 17:21).

Abiding in Christ the fruit of solidarity and witness grows

Though we, as Christians, abide in the love of Christ, we also live in a creation that groans as it waits to be set free (cf. Rom 8). In the world we witness the evils of suffering and conflict. Through solidarity with those who suffer we allow the love of

2. The Community of Grandchamp and that of the brothers of Taizé in France are bound together first of all in view of the history of their origins, but also by the fact that the sisters of Grandchamp based their Rule on the book mentioned in footnote 3.

3. Frère Roger de Taizé, *Les écrits fondateurs, Dieu nous veut heureux* (Taizé: Les Ateliers et Presses de Taizé, 2011), 95.

Christ to flow through us. The paschal mystery bears fruit in us when we offer love to our brothers and sisters and nurture hope in the world.

Spirituality and solidarity are inseparably linked. Abiding in Christ, we receive the strength and wisdom to act against structures of injustice and oppression, to fully recognize ourselves as brothers and sisters in humanity, and to be creators of a new way of living, with respect for and communion with all of creation.

The summary of the rule of life⁴ that the sisters of Grandchamp recite together each morning begins with the words “pray and work that God may reign”. Prayer and everyday life are not two separate realities but are meant to be united. All that we experience is meant to become an encounter with God.

For the eight days of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2021, we propose a journey of prayer:

- Day 1: Called by God: “You did not choose me but I chose you” (Jn 15:16a)
- Day 2: Maturing internally: “Abide in me as I abide in you” (Jn 15:4a)
- Day 3: Forming one body: “Love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 15:12b)
- Day 4: Praying together: “I do not call you servants any longer ... but I have called you friends” (Jn 15:15)
- Day 5: Letting oneself be transformed by the Word: “You have already been pruned by the word...” (Jn 15:3)
- Day 6: Welcoming others: “Go and bear fruit, fruit that will last” (Jn 15:16b)
- Day 7: Growing in unity: “I am the vine, you are the branches” (Jn 15:5a)
- 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) \

4. During the ecumenical celebration, we propose reciting this text together; see p. 18.

THE PREPARATION OF THE MATERIAL FOR THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2021

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. Four of the sisters also worked with the international group during the September meeting. The meeting was chaired jointly by the director of the World Council of Churches Faith and Order Commission, Revd Odair Pedroso Mateus, and Revd Anthony Currer from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

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.

The theme chosen by the local writing group was *Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit* (cf. Jn 15:5-9). This allowed the sisters to share the experience and wisdom of their contemplative life abiding in the love of God, and to speak about the fruit of this prayer: closer communion with one's brothers and sisters in Christ and greater solidarity with the whole of creation.

Participants in the International Team

Ms Anne-Noëlle Clément	Unité Chrétienne
Revd Peter Colwell	Deputy General Secretary of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
Revd Anthony Currer	Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity
Dr Ani Ghazaryan Drissi	Programme Executive of the Faith and Order Secretariat at the WCC

Ms Virag Kinga Mezei	Intern at the WCC
Dr Hanne Lamparter	German Lutheran Church
Sr Leticia Candelario Lopez	Verbum Dei Missionary Fraternity (Singapore)
Revd Dr Odair Pedroso Mateus	Director of Faith & Order
Revd Father James Puglisi	Friar of the Atonement, Centro Pro Unione
Revd Dr Mikie Roberts	Programme Executive for Spiritual Life at the WCC
Dr Clare Watkins	University of Roehampton

Participants from the Community of Grandchamp

Sr Anne-Emmanuelle Guy
Sr Gesine Rohrbach
Sr Embla Vegerfors
Sr Svenja Wichmann

Secretarial Support was provided by Mr Alexander Freeman of the WCC.

ECUMENICAL CELEBRATION

Introduction

This celebration reflects the ways in which the sisters of Grandchamp pray. In this tradition three of the monastic prayer services – sometimes called ‘vigils’ or ‘nocturns’ in the Benedictine tradition– traditionally said during the night are combined into one evening service. In the same way, our service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is shaped by three sections, called ‘vigils’, which follow a pattern used by the community of Grandchamp.

Each vigil follows the same pattern: readings from scripture; a sung response; a time of silence; and intercessions. Each vigil also has an action reflecting its theme; these are outlined below. Each ends with the singing of *Light of God (Lumière de Dieu)*, composed by a member of the community of Grandchamp.

The first vigil is centred on the unity of the whole person and our abiding in Christ. Participants are invited to five minutes of silence. These moments are repeated throughout the celebration.

The second vigil expresses the desire to rediscover the visible unity of Christians. Anchored in the love of Christ, we turn to our neighbours and exchange with each other a sign of his peace.

The third vigil opens us up to the unity of all peoples, all creation. The action in it is inspired by a text of Dorotheus of Gaza (see introduction). Several people are positioned around a circle, and move towards the centre. The closer we move to God - the centre - the closer we draw to each other.

There is a variety of ways in which this action may be choreographed depending on the space being used, and the traditions of those involved. The following may serve as a guide:

- Each person in the congregation will need to have an unlit candle.
- Organisers may wish to consider whether it is possible for the congregation to be “in the round” with radial aisles to facilitate this action.
- A large, raised lit candle (for example the Easter candle in many traditions) is set as the central point of a circle.
- Six to eight people from different Christian traditions surround the candle in a circle that may be outlined on the ground, or shaped by the congregation’s sitting in the round.
- Each of these people carries a small unlit candle raised high so all can see.
- During the reading accompanying the action (see p. 17), each person in the circle takes steps at the same pace towards the centre.

- When they reach the centre they light their unlit candles and return to the congregation. Everyone's candle is then lit.
- During the lighting of the congregation's candles, *Lumière de Dieu (Light of God)* is sung.
- Everyone holds their lighted candle through to the Dismissal. In some places, where it is appropriate and practicable, the congregations may process out of the place of worship into the wider world, with candles lit.

The litany at the beginning can be read or sung – if possible, by two different people. The psalms can also be read or sung, or replaced by a hymn related to the theme of the vigil. The responses during the prayers of intercession can be read, sung or replaced by others. The intercessions can be prolonged by adding time for free prayer. Musical settings of the litany, responses and intercessions used at Grandchamp can be found on pp. 19-22.

Hymns can be accessed and heard on the website of the Community of Grandchamp: www.grandchamp.org.

You can also listen to their common prayer online every day at: www.grandchamp.org/prier-avec-nous

Order of the 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!

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

Psalm: 103

Reading: Jn 15:1-17

Response: Ubi caritas (p. 19)

Short silence (*approximately 1 minute*)

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*)

Hymn: Lumière de Dieu (Light of God) (p. 20)

Second Vigil | The visible unity of Christians

Psalm: 85

Reading: 1 Cor 1:10-13a

Response: There is One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism (p. 21)

Short silence (*approximately 1 minute*)

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.

Hymn: Lumière de Dieu (Light of God) (p. 20)

Third Vigil | The unity of all peoples and all creation

Psalm: 96

Reading: Rev. 7: 9-12

Response: O you who are beyond all things (p. 21)

Optional homily

Short silence (*approximately 1 minute*)

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! (*if sung, p. 22*)

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...**

Hymn: Lumière de Dieu (Light of God) (p. 20)

During the singing the candle-bearers return and share with the congregation the light that they have received.

- 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.

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

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*)

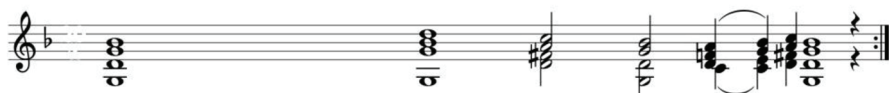
ADDITIONAL MATERIAL*

1. Litany of praise: "You who call us"

T: Esaie 62,7

Litanie "Toi qui nous appelles"

M: Grandchamp

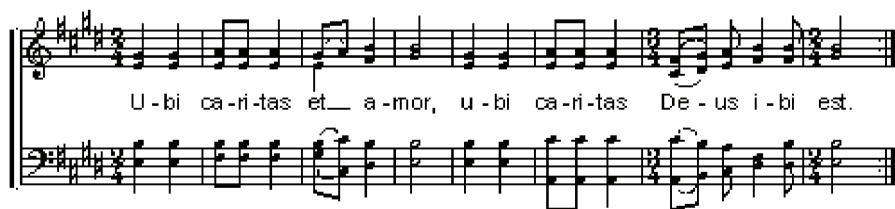


Toi qui nous appelles à être lou-ange au mi-lieu de la terre : Gloi-re à Toi !

2. First vigil: Response after Jn 15:1-17: "Ubi Caritas"

Ubi caritas Deus ibi est

♩ = 58



♪ Where there is char-i-ty, self-less love, Where there is char-i-ty, God—is tru-ly there. / Ten, kur gai-les-tis ir mei-lè, ten, kur gai-les-tis, Die-vasten y-ra. /
いつくしみあいの あるところが-みともに

Music: J. Gelineau

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* These hymns have been suggested by the Community of Grandchamp, which prepared the first project of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2021, and are published under their responsibility.

3. First vigil: Response for the intercession: “The joy of our hearts”

La joie de notre cœur

M+T: Grandchamp



4. At the end of each vigil: “Light of God”

Lumière de Dieu

T+M : Grandchamp



1. Lu miè - re de Dieu, in - on - de la ter - re,
2. Komm, gött - li - ches Licht, er - leuch - te die Er - de,
3. Come light, light of God, give light to cre - a - tion,
4. O god - de - lijk licht kom on - der ons wo - nen,
5. Ó luz do Senh - or que vens so - bre a ter - ra,
6. Kom, Gud, med ditt ljus, och ge - nom - lys värl - den,
7. Za - plav ce - lou zem, svè - tlo Bo - ži tvá - ře,
8. Mwa - nga - za wa Mungu, u - ja - za un - do - go,
1. vi - si - te nos cœurs et de - meure a - vec nous,
2. er - full' un - sre Her - zen, nimm Woh - nung in uns,
3. en - light - en our hearts and re - main with your world,
4. door - dring de - ze aar - de, daal neer in ons hart,
5. in - on - da meu ser, per - ma - ne - ce em nós,
6. och fyll vå - ra hjär - tan, med när - va - ron din,
7. vej - di do srd - ci a zù - stá - vej u nás,
8. tembe - le - a mioyo yetu, na u - ka - e na - si.

5. Second vigil: Response after 1 Cor 1:10-13: “There is one Lord”

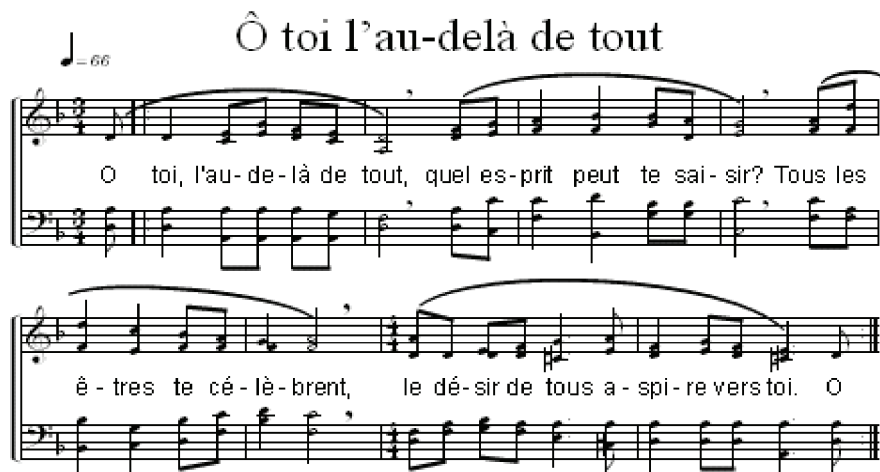
T : Eph. 4
M : J. Berthier



There is one Lord one faith, one bap - ti - sm ;
there is one God who is Fa - ther of all.

*Un seul Seigneur, une seule foi, un seul baptême,
un seul Dieu qui est Père de tous.*

6. Third vigil after Rev. 7:9-12: “O you who are beyond all things”

 **Ô toi l'au-delà de tout**
♩ = 66

O toi, l'au-de-là de tout, quel es-prit peut te sai-sir? Tous les
ê-tres te cé-lè-brent, le dé-sir de tous a-spi-re vers toi. O

(You who are beyond all things, what mind can grasp you? All that lives celebrates you; the desire of all reaches out towards you. / Oh tú, el más allá de todo, ¿qué espíritu puede comprenderte? Todos los seres te celebran, el deseo de todos aspira a ti. / Tu che sei oltre ogni cosa, chi potrà mai afferrarti? Ogni creatura ti onora; verso te i desideri di tutti. / O du, der alles überragt, wie kann unser Verstand dich schauen? Jedes Wesen jubelt dir zu; allen gemeinsam ist die Sehnsucht nach dir. / Tyś jest ponad wszystko, jakież duch Cię ogarnie? Wszystkie stworzenia wystawiają Ciebie, wszyscy Ciebie pragną. S. Grégoire de Nazianze)

Music: Taizé

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7. Third vigil: Response for the intercession: “God of peace, God of love”

 **Dieu de paix, Dieu d'amour, en toi notre³espérance - ce.**

BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS AND PRAYERS FOR THE EIGHT DAYS

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: “Go to the land I will show you”. 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.

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 Jesus 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 Jesus 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 Jesus.

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 Tai   (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.

DAY 3

Forming one body

“Love one another as I have loved you”

(Jn 15:12b)

Col 3:12-17

Jn 13:1-15; 34-35

Clothe yourself with compassion

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.

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.

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.

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.

The rule of Taizé in French and English (2012) p. 103

Will the people we welcome day after day find in us men and women radiant with Christ, our peace?

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.

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.

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.

THE COMMUNITY OF GRANDCHAMP AND THE ECUMENICAL EXPERIENCE OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE*

In the 1930s, a group of women of the Reformed Church of French-speaking Switzerland known as the “Ladies of Morges” rediscovered the importance of silence in listening to the word of God, taking as their model Christ, who often retired alone to pray. They hosted spiritual retreats, which they opened up to others, and gradually found a regular home for these retreats in Grandchamp, a small hamlet near Lake Neuchâtel. Subsequently, the need arose for a permanent presence for prayer and hospitality. Thus, a woman who would later become Sister Marguerite settled in Grandchamp. She was quickly joined by two other women. Geneviève Micheli, the initiator of these retreats, led this modest beginning in prayer and encouraged the first three sisters on their journey. At their request, she became the first mother of the community in 1944.

Lacking experience and having neither a service book nor a monastic rule, and since at that time there were no monastic communities in the Reformation churches, the first sisters turned to monasteries of other confessions for guidance. They opened themselves up to the treasures of these other traditions. They had to learn everything: how to live a life based on the word of God and daily contemplation, how to live in community and how to receive others in hospitality.

The first sisters suffered over the division of Christians – particularly Mother Geneviève, who therefore understood the full importance of ecumenical and theological work. However, this work had to be founded on that which was essential for her, prayer in the light of John 17:21: “that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” She sought to give her life for unity in Christ and through Christ, until the day when God would be all in all. The ecumenical calling of the community was therefore not a choice but a gift, a grace received from the beginning and born of poverty.

This grace was confirmed and stimulated by several decisive encounters. One such encounter for the fledgling community was that with Father Paul Couturier. A Catholic priest in Lyon, he was one of the pioneers of ecumenism and of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity as we know it today. Deep bonds developed between him and the first sisters, and he accompanied them faithfully on their spiritual journey, as evidenced by their correspondence. In 1940, he wrote to Mother Geneviève:

* This text is reproduced under the sole authority and responsibility of the Community of Grandchamp which wrote the source texts for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2021.

... No spiritual retreat should take place without having Christians leave it with acute suffering over separations and the determination to work for unity through fervent prayer and progressive purification ... For me, the problem of unity is primarily and fundamentally a problem of the orientation of one's inner life. Thus, you understand how much importance I attach to your request and to the work of spiritual retreats. Let us pray fervently, in other words, let us freely let Christ into us.

Another very important encounter was that with Roger Schutz, the future Brother Roger of Taizé, who visited Grandchamp in 1940. His own search was encouraged by that of the sisters with whom he would keep in contact. Bonds of communion developed over the years and these deepened in 1953 when the Community of Grandchamp adopted both the Rule of Taizé and the Taizé Office immediately upon its publication. Brother Roger wrote:

The constant search for unity harmonizes the human being; it provides thought with deeds and being with action. This equilibrium is acquired to the extent that we strive — in successive steps — to be consistent with what is best in ourselves and what is at our innermost core: Christ within us.⁵

Very soon, in conjunction with the brothers of Taizé and the Little Sisters of Jesus, the sisters of Grandchamp were also called to live out the simple presence of prayer and friendship in small communities often in underprivileged areas, particularly in Algeria, Israel, Lebanon and in working-class areas in various countries of Europe. The deep ties established with local neighbours and churches allowed them to discover a diversity of liturgical rites in the universal church and opened them up to encounters with other religions.

Grandchamp's ecumenical vocation commits it to the work of reconciliation between Christians, within the human family, and with respect to all creation. As a community the sisters of Grandchamp discovered very quickly that this vocation requires them to embody reconciliation, first and foremost within themselves and among themselves. Immediately after the Second World War, German and Dutch sisters (influenced by recent events), followed by sisters from Indonesia, Austria, Congo, the Czech Republic, Sweden and Latvia belonging to different denominations, joined the first sisters from Switzerland and France. The community currently numbers about fifty sisters from different generations.

Like all the baptized, the sisters are called to become that which they already are at a deeper level: beings in communion. How can we be such beings if we do not learn first to accept ourselves with our differences? Differences are both a gift of God and a formidable challenge. With a diversity of confessions, languages, cultures and

5. Frère Roger, de Taizé, *Les écrits fondateurs, Dieu nous veut heureux* (Taizé: Les Ateliers et Presses de Taizé, 2011) p. 121.

generations the community faces the challenge of living unity in diversity in its own small way. This diversity also entails different ways of praying, thinking, doing, being in a relationship, as well as a diversity of characters. How then can one work for reconciliation except by living forgiveness day after day? Above all, this requires work on one's inner self and then work in our relationships, trusting in God's mercy. It all starts inside one's heart, where the root of all division is to be found, the deepest wounds waiting to be visited in order to receive God's healing peace. The unity between us is thus the fruit of the slow and patient transformation of our lives which the Spirit accomplishes with our consent.

Liturgical prayer is the backbone of Grandchamp's day and gathers the community four times every day. The various times of liturgical worship help the sisters internalize the life of Christ through the Holy Spirit.

The icon of the Trinity in the centre of Grandchamp's chapel welcomes the sisters in silence. It invites them to enter into the communion of love between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, to let this love grow within and flow among them and toward those who come as visitors. Then there is often an exchange of gifts. The sister's like to say that they always receive more than they give!

This welcoming has enabled surprising encounters with people who have sensitized the community to the non-violence of the gospel: Jean and Hildegard Goss, Joseph Pyronnet and Simone Pacot, who initiated the "Bethesda" sessions, a profound evangelization. At the same time, the sisters' awareness of ecology has increased in a very palpable way through the development of an organic garden, their use of environmentally friendly produce, and careful consideration of the way they feed themselves, travel, the management of goods, and what it means to live in solidarity. This is why the sisters take care to forge links and exchanges with other communities, groups, movements and committed people, particularly with the networks of religious and/or monastic communities at the local, regional, international and ecumenical levels, with ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, movements for reconciliation, justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

Despite a renewal for which the sisters are grateful, like many other communities in Europe they are also confronted with the weakening of their lifeblood – ageing, which forces them to be creative. Just as the first sisters had to depend on help from others, so the sisters today depend on outside help in order to welcome others. The volunteer work that they offer is a sharing of their life of prayer and work. It is first and foremost open to young people, but it is also without age limits and open to people from all continents who are looking to give meaning to their lives, to Christians of different denominations, sisters and brothers from other communities, sometimes Jews, Muslims and adherents of other religions, and to people without any specific religious attachments. In this way the community wishes to become a house of prayer for everyone, a place of welcome, dialogue and encounter.

The poverty of other religious communities has opened up a new ministry, one which forces the sisters to listen with other religious and to discern how to respond to the

calls that are being addressed to them. It is a new grace to be able to be a place of prayer and a sign of reconciliation together. Thus, for six years, one of the Grandchamp sisters has lived in France in an ecumenical sisterhood comprised of sisters from four different communities. For several years now sisters have made simple journeys, for the duration of a three-month visa, to experience life in Israel. One of the sisters joined a sisterhood of the Little Sisters of Jesus in order to share their everyday lives. A little later two other sisters experienced life in a community of Carmelites of St. Joseph. Today, some sisters are present in Taizé on an informal basis. These new experiences bring new gifts into the community.

The work of the World Council of Churches occupies an important place in Grandchamp's prayer. Every Monday evening, the sisters pray with the intercessions of the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle proposed by the WCC. The sisters have had the privilege of participating in several WCC assemblies – in Vancouver, Harare and Porto Alegre. For several years, the sisters were present at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, a small community of prayer, hospitality and friendship during the months of the graduate school.

Religious life occupies a privileged place – although very hidden – on the path of the reconciliation of the churches. It sings of the risen Christ, the gift of a communion that is always being offered, which the Holy Spirit causes to blossom in a multitude of faces and gifts. It can serve as leaven in the dough, a ferment of unity, because it takes us to the depths of the mystery of faith, on a path of continual conversion, of transformation. And in some circumstances religious life can help individuals to transcend themselves. Sometimes, and unbeknownst to us, this can have repercussions in some other part of the Body of Christ. André Louf expressed this in the following words:

In a divided church, the monastery instinctively constitutes the “no-man’s land” of the Spirit. The monastery should be an ecumenical land par excellence. It can prefigure communions that exist elsewhere only in hope. Wherever it may be, a monastery does not fundamentally belong to Orthodoxy or Catholicism, to the extent that they are still temporarily opposed. It is already a sign of the undivided church toward which the Spirit is powerfully driving us today.⁶

For more information visit: www.grandchamp.org

6. Dom André LOUF, lecture on 16 December 1979 in Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris for the inauguration of the Saint Benedict Year.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Themes 1968-2021

*Materials jointly prepared by the WCC Faith and Order Commission
and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity were first used in 1968*

- 1968 To the praise of his glory (Ephesians 1:14)
- 1969 Called to freedom (Galatians 5:13)
(Preparatory meeting held in Rome, Italy)
- 1970 We are fellow workers for God (1 Corinthians 3:9)
(Preparatory meeting held at the Monastery of Niederaltaich,
Federal Republic of Germany)
- 1971 ...and the communion of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:13)
(Preparatory meeting in Bari, Italy)
- 1972 I give you a new commandment (John 13:34)
(Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1973 Lord, teach us to pray (Luke 11:1)
(Preparatory meeting held at the Abbey of Montserrat, Spain)
- 1974 That every tongue confess: Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:1-13)
(Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1975 God's purpose: all things in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-10)
(Material from an Australian group – Preparatory meeting held in Geneva,
Switzerland)
- 1976 We shall be like him (1 John 3:2) or, Called to become what we are
(Material from Caribbean Conference of Churches.
Preparatory meeting held in Rome, Italy)
- 1977 Enduring together in hope (Romans 5:1-5)
(Material from Lebanon, in the midst of a civil war.
Preparatory meeting held in Geneva)
- 1978 No longer strangers (Ephesians 2:13-22)
(Material from an ecumenical team in Manchester, England)

- 1979 Serve one another to the glory of God (1 Peter 4:7-11)
(Material from Argentina – Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1980 Your kingdom come (Matthew 6:10)
(Material from an ecumenical group in Berlin, German Democratic Republic
– Preparatory meeting held in Milan)
- 1981 One Spirit - many gifts - one body (1 Corinthians 12:3b-13)
(Material from Graymoor Fathers, USA – Preparatory meeting held in
Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1982 May all find their home in you, O Lord (Psalm 84)
(Material from Kenya – Preparatory meeting held in Milan, Italy)
- 1983 Jesus Christ - the life of the world (1 John 1:1-4)
(Material from an ecumenical group in Ireland – Preparatory meeting held in
Céligny (Bossey), Switzerland)
- 1984 Called to be one through the cross of our Lord (1 Corinthians 2:2 and
Colossians 1:20)
(Preparatory meeting held in Venice, Italy)
- 1985 From death to life with Christ (Ephesians 2:4-7)
(Material from Jamaica – Preparatory meeting held in Grandchamp,
Switzerland)
- 1986 You shall be my witnesses (Acts 1:6-8)
(Material from Yugoslavia (Slovenia) – Preparatory meeting held in
Yugoslavia)
- 1987 United in Christ - a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17-6:4a)
(Material from England – Preparatory meeting held in Taizé, France)
- 1988 The love of God casts out fear (1 John 4:18)
(Material from Italy – Preparatory meeting held in Pinerolo, Italy)
- 1989 Building community: one body in Christ (Romans 12:5-6a)
(Material from Canada – Preparatory meeting held in Whaley Bridge,
England)
- 1990 That they all may be one...That the world may believe (John 17)
(Material from Spain – Preparatory meeting held in Madrid, Spain)
- 1991 Praise the Lord, all you nations! (Psalm 117 and Romans 15:5-13)
(Material from Germany – Preparatory meeting held in Rotenburg an der
Fulda, Federal Republic of Germany)
- 1992 I am with you always... Go, therefore (Matthew 28:16-20)
(Material from Belgium – Preparatory meeting held in Bruges, Belgium)
- 1993 Bearing the fruit of the Spirit for Christian unity (Galatians 5:22-23)
(Material from Zaire – Preparatory meeting held near Zurich, Switzerland)

- 1994 The household of God: called to be one in heart and mind (Acts 4:23-37)
(Material from Ireland – Preparatory meeting held in Dublin, Republic of Ireland)
- 1995 Koinonia: communion in God and with one another (John 15:1-17)
(Material from Faith and Order – Preparatory meeting held in Bristol, England)
- 1996 Behold, I stand at the door and knock (Revelation 3:14-22)
(Material from Portugal – Preparatory meeting held in Lisbon, Portugal)
- 1997 We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God
(2 Corinthians 5:20)
(Material from Nordic Ecumenical Council – Preparatory meeting held in Stockholm, Sweden)
- 1998 The Spirit helps us in our weakness (Romans 8:14-27)
(Material from France – Preparatory meeting held in Paris, France)
- 1999 He will dwell with them as their God, they will be his peoples
(Revelation 21:1-7)
(Material from Malaysia – Preparatory meeting held in Monastery of Bose, Italy)
- 2000 Blessed be God who has blessed us in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-14)
(Material from the Middle East Council of Churches – Preparatory meeting held La Verna, Italy)
- 2001 I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life (John 14:1-6)
(Material from Romania – Preparatory meeting held at Vulcan, Romania)
- 2002 For with you is the fountain of life (Psalm 36:5-9)
(Material CEEC and CEC – Preparatory meeting near Augsburg, Germany)
- 2003 We have this treasure in clay jars (2 Corinthians 4:4-18)
(Material churches in Argentina – Preparatory meeting at Los Rubios, Spain)
- 2004 My peace I give to you (John 14:23-31; John 14:27)
(Material from Aleppo, Syria – Preparatory meeting in Palermo, Sicily)
- 2005 Christ, the one foundation of the church (1 Corinthians 3:1-23)
(Material from Slovakia – Preparatory meeting in Piestany, Slovakia)
- 2006 Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them
(Matthew 18:18-20)
(Material from Ireland – Preparatory meeting held in Prosperous, Co. Kildare, Ireland)
- 2007 He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak (Mark 7:31-37)
(Material from South Africa – Preparatory meeting held in Faverges, France)

- 2008 Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:(12a) 13b-18)
(Material from USA – Preparatory meeting held in Graymoor, Garrison, USA)
- 2009 That they may become one in your hand (Ezekiel 37:15-28)
(Material from Korea – Preparatory meeting held in Marseille, France)
- 2010 You are witnesses of these things (Luke 24:48)
(Material from Scotland – Preparatory meeting held in Glasgow, Scotland)
- 2011 One in the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer
(cf. Acts 2:42)
(Material from Jerusalem – Preparatory meeting held in Saydnaya, Syria)
- 2012 We will all be changed by the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ
(cf. 1 Corinthians 15:51-58)
(Material from Poland – Preparatory meeting held in Warsaw, Poland)
- 2013 What does God require of us? (cf. Micah 6:6-8)
(Material from India – Preparatory meeting held in Bangalore, India)
- 2014 Has Christ been divided? (1 Corinthians 1:1-17)
(Material from Canada – Preparatory meeting held in Montréal, Canada)
- 2015 Jesus said to her: Give me to drink (John 4:7)
(Material from Brazil – Preparatory meeting held in São Paulo, Brazil)
- 2016 Called to proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord (cf. 1 Peter 2:9)
(Material from Latvia – Preparatory meeting held in Rīga, Latvia)
- 2017 Reconciliation - The love of Christ compels us (2 Cor 5:14-20)
(Material from Germany – Preparatory meeting held in Wittenberg, Germany)
- 2018 Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power (Ex 15:6)
(Material from the Caribbean – Preparatory meeting held in Nassau, Bahamas)
- 2019 Justice and only justice you shall pursue (Deut 16:18-20)
(Material from Indonesia – Preparatory meeting held in Jakarta, Indonesia)
- 2020 They showed us unusual kindness (Acts 28:2)
(Material from Malta – Preparatory meeting held in Rabat, Malta)
- 2021 Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit (cf. John 15:5-9)
(Material from Community of Grandchamp – Preparatory meeting held at Areuse, Switzerland)

KEY DATES IN THE HISTORY OF THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

- c. 1740 In Scotland a Pentecostal movement arose, with North American links, whose revivalist message included prayers for and with all churches.
- 1820 The Rev. James Haldane Stewart publishes “Hints for the General Union of Christians for the Outpouring of the Spirit”.
- 1840 The Rev. Ignatius Spencer, a convert to Roman Catholicism, suggests a “Union of Prayer for Unity”.
- 1867 The First Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops emphasizes prayer for unity in the Preamble to its Resolutions.
- 1894 Pope Leo XIII encourages the practice of a Prayer Octave for Unity in the context of Pentecost.
- 1908 First observance of the “Church Unity Octave” initiated by the Rev. Paul Wattson.
- 1926 The Faith and Order movement begins publishing “Suggestions for an Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity”.
- 1935 Abbé Paul Couturier of France advocates the “Universal Week of Prayer for Christian Unity” on the inclusive basis of prayer for “the unity Christ wills by the means he wills”.
- 1958 Unité Chrétienne (Lyon, France) and the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches begin co-operative preparation of materials for the Week of Prayer.
- 1964 In Jerusalem, Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I prayed together Jesus’ prayer “that they all may be one” (John 17).
- 1964 The Decree on Ecumenism of Vatican II emphasizes that prayer is the soul of the ecumenical movement and encourages observance of the Week of Prayer.
- 1966 The Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity [now known as the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity] begin official joint preparation of the Week of Prayer material.
- 1968 First official use of Week of Prayer material prepared jointly by Faith and Order and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity.

- 1975 First use of Week of Prayer material based on a draft text prepared by a local ecumenical group. An Australian group was the first to take up this plan in preparing the 1975 initial draft.
- 1988 Week of Prayer materials were used in the inaugural worship for The Christian Federation of Malaysia, which links the major Christian groupings in that country.
- 1994 International group preparing text for 1996 included representatives from YMCA and YWCA.
- 2004 Agreement reached that resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity be jointly published and produced in the same format by Faith and Order (WCC) and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (Catholic Church).
- 2008 Commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. (Its predecessor, the Church Unity Octave, was first observed in 1908).
- 2017 Marking the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, the materials for the Week of Prayer in 2017 were prepared by Christians in Germany.

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR PROMOTING
CHRISTIAN UNITY

THE BISHOP
AND CHRISTIAN UNITY:
AN ECUMENICAL
VADEMECUM



TYPIS POLYGLOTTIS VATICANIS
MMXX

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Preface

The ministry entrusted to the bishop is a service of unity both within his diocese and of unity between the local church and the universal church. That ministry therefore has special significance in the search for the unity of all Christ's followers. The bishop's responsibility for promoting Christian unity is clearly affirmed in the Code of Canon Law of the Latin Church among the tasks of his pastoral office: "He is to act with humanity and charity toward the brothers and sisters who are not in full communion with the Catholic Church and is to foster ecumenism as it is understood by the Church" (Can 383 §3 CIC 1983). In this respect, the bishop cannot consider the promotion of the ecumenical cause as one more task in his varied ministry, one that could and should be deferred in view of other, apparently more important, priorities. The bishop's ecumenical engagement is not an optional dimension of his ministry but a duty and obligation. This appears even more clearly in the Code of Canons of Eastern Churches, containing a special section dedicated to the ecumenical task, in which it is particularly recommended that pastors of the Church "work zealously in participating in ecumenical work" (Can 902–908 CCEO 1990). In the service of unity, the bishop's pastoral ministry extends not just to the unity of his own church, but to the unity of all the baptized into Christ.

The present document, issued by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, *The Bishop and Christian Unity. An Ecumenical Vademecum*, is offered as an aid to diocesan and eparchial bishops to help them better understand and fulfil their ecumenical responsibility. The genesis of this Vademecum began with a request from a Plenary Assembly of this Pontifical Council. The text was developed by the Council's officials in consultation with experts and with the agreement of the relevant dicasteries of the Roman Curia. We are now

happy to publish it with the blessing of the Holy Father Pope Francis.

We place this work in the hands of the world's bishops, hoping that in these pages they will find clear and helpful guidelines, enabling them to lead the local churches entrusted to their pastoral care towards that unity for which the Lord prayed and to which the Church is irrevocably called.



Kurt Cardinal Koch

President



✠ Brian Farrell

Titular Bishop of Abitine

Secretary

Abbreviations

CCEO *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches* (1990)

CIC *Code of Canon Law* (1983)

ED *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms of Ecumenism* (1993), Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

EG *Evangelii gaudium* (2013), Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis

LG *Lumen gentium* (1964), Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of the Second Vatican Council

PCPCU Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

UR *Unitatis redintegratio* (1964), Decree on Ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council

UUS *Ut unum sint* (1995), Encyclical letter of Saint John Paul II on the ecumenical commitment

Introduction

1. *The search for unity as intrinsic to the nature of the Church*

Our Lord's prayer for the unity of his disciples "that they may all be one" is tied to the mission that he gives to them, "so that the world may believe" (Jn 17:21). The Second Vatican Council stressed that division among Christian communities "openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages the holy cause of preaching the Gospel to every creature" (*Unitatis redintegratio* [UR] §1). Insofar as Christians fail to be the visible sign of this unity they fail in their missionary duty to be the instrument bringing all people into the saving unity which is the communion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In this we understand why the work of unity is fundamental to our identity as Church, and why Saint John Paul II could write in his milestone encyclical *Ut unum sint*, "the quest for Christian unity is not a matter of choice or expediency, but a duty which springs from the very nature of the Christian community" (*Ut unum sint* [UUS] §49, see also §3).

2. *A real, though incomplete, communion*

The Second Vatican Council's Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio*, recognised that those who believe in Christ and are baptised with water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, are truly our brothers and sisters in Christ (see UR §3). Through baptism they "are incorporated into Christ" (UR §3), that is "truly incorporated into the crucified and glorified Christ, and reborn to a sharing of the divine life" (UR §22). Moreover, the Council recognised that the communities to which these brothers and sisters belong are endowed with many essential elements Christ wills for his Church, are used by the Spirit as "means of salvation," and have a real, though incomplete, communion with the Catholic Church (see

UR §3). The Decree began the work of specifying those areas of our ecclesial lives in which this communion resides, and where and why the extent of ecclesial communion varies from one Christian community to another. Lastly, in recognising the positive value of other Christian communities, *Unitatis redintegratio* also acknowledged that because of the wound of Christian division “the Church herself finds it more difficult to express in actual life her full catholicity in all her bearings” (UR §4).

3. *Christian unity as the concern of the whole Church*

“Concern for restoring unity,” wrote the fathers of the Second Vatican Council, “pertains to the whole Church, faithful and clergy alike. It extends to everyone according to the ability of each, whether it be exercised in daily living or in theological and historical studies” (UR §5). The insistence of the Council that the ecumenical endeavour demands the engagement of all the faithful, and not only of theologians and church leaders meeting in international dialogues, has been repeatedly emphasised in subsequent Church documents. Saint John Paul II in *Ut unum sint* wrote that the commitment to ecumenism, “far from being the responsibility of the Apostolic See alone, is also the duty of individual local and particular Churches” (§31). The real, though incomplete, communion that already exists between Catholics and other baptised Christians can and must be deepened at a number of levels simultaneously. Pope Francis has captured this in the phrase, “walking together, praying together and working together”. By sharing our Christian lives with other Christians, by praying with and for them, and by giving common witness to our Christian faith through action, we grow into the unity which is the Lord’s desire for his Church.

4. *The bishop as the “visible principle” of unity*

As a shepherd of the flock the bishop has the distinct responsibility of gathering all into unity. He is “the visible principle and foundation of unity” in his particular church (*Lumen gentium* [LG] §23). The service of unity is not just one of the tasks of the bishop’s ministry; it is fundamental to it. The bishop “should sense the urgency of promoting ecumenism” (*Apostolorum Successores* §18). Rooted in his personal prayer, concern for unity must inform every part of his ministry: in his teaching of the faith, in his sacramental ministry, and through the decisions of his pastoral care, he is called to build and strengthen that unity for which Jesus prayed at the Last Supper (cf. Jn 17). A further dimension of his ministry of unity became evident with the Catholic Church’s embrace of the ecumenical movement. As a consequence, the bishop’s concern for the unity of the Church extends to “those who are not yet of the one flock” (LG §27) but are our spiritual brothers and sisters in the Spirit through the real though imperfect bonds of communion that connect all the baptised.

The episcopal ministry of unity is deeply related to synodality. According to Pope Francis, “a careful examination of how, in the Church’s life, the principle of synodality and the service of the one who presides are articulated, will make a significant contribution to the progress of relations between our Churches”.¹ The bishops who compose one college together with the Pope exercise their pastoral and ecumenical ministry in a synodal manner together with the entire People of God. As Pope Francis has taught, “The commitment to build a synodal Church — a mission to which we are all called, each with the role entrusted him by the Lord — has significant ecumenical

1. Address marking the 50th anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops, 17 October 2015, citing the Address to the Delegation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, 27 June 2015.

implications”,² because both synodality and ecumenism are processes of walking together.

5. *The Vademecum as a guide to the bishop in his task of discernment*

The ecumenical task will always be influenced by the wide variety of contexts in which bishops live and work: in some regions Catholics will be in the majority; in others, in a minority to another or other Christian communities; and in others Christianity itself will be a minority. Pastoral challenges, too, are extremely diverse. It is always for the diocesan/ eparchial bishop to make an appraisal of the challenges and opportunities of his context, and to discern how to apply the Catholic principles of ecumenism in his own diocese/ eparchy.³ The *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms of Ecumenism* (1993, henceforth *Ecumenical Directory* [ED]) is the most important reference for the bishop in his task of discernment. This *Vademecum* is offered to the bishop as an encouragement and a guide in fulfilling his ecumenical responsibilities.

PART 1

The promotion of ecumenism within the Catholic Church

6. *The search for unity is first of all a challenge to Catholics*

Unitatis redintegratio teaches that the “primary duty” of Catholics “is to make a careful and honest appraisal of whatever needs to be done or renewed in the Catholic

2. *Ibid.*

3. It should be understood that all references to dioceses, diocesan bishops and diocesan structures apply equally to eparchies, their bishops and structures.

household itself' (§4). For this reason, rather than begin with our relations with other Christians, it is necessary for Catholics, in the words of the decree, first “to examine their own faithfulness to Christ's will for the Church and accordingly to undertake with vigour the task of renewal and reform” (§4). This inner renewal disposes and orders the Church towards dialogue and engagement with other Christians. It is an endeavour which concerns both ecclesial structures (Section A) and the ecumenical formation of the whole People of God (Section B).

A. Ecumenical structures at the local and regional level

7. The bishop as a man of dialogue promoting ecumenical engagement

Christus Dominus §13 describes the bishop as a man of dialogue, seeking out those of goodwill in a common pursuit of truth through a conversation marked by clarity and humility, and in a context of charity and friendship. The Code of Canon Law (CIC) Canon 383 §3 refers to the same idea, describing the ecumenical responsibilities of the bishop as “to act with humanity and charity toward the brothers and sisters who are not in full communion with the Catholic Church” and “to foster ecumenism as it is understood by the Church.” The ecumenical task of the bishop therefore is to promote both the “Dialogue of Love” and the “Dialogue of Truth”.

8. The bishop's responsibility to guide and direct ecumenical initiatives

Alongside the bishop's personal disposition to dialogue is his role of leadership and governance. *Unitatis redintegratio* envisages the People of God engaged in a variety of ecumenical activities but always under “the attentive guidance of their bishops” (§4). Canon 755, situated in the part of the Code dedicated to the teaching function of the Church, stipulates that it is “for the entire

college of bishops and the Apostolic See to foster and direct among Catholics the ecumenical movement” (CIC 755 §1). Moreover, it is the responsibility of bishops, both individually and in episcopal conferences or synods, to establish “practical norms according to the various needs and opportunities of the circumstances” while being “attentive to the prescripts issued by the supreme authority of the Church” (CIC 755 §2 and CCEO 904, see also *Apostolorum Successores* §18). In establishing norms bishops, acting either singularly or in conference, can ensure that confusion and misunderstandings do not arise and that scandal is not given to the faithful.

The Code of Canons of Eastern Churches (CCEO), which dedicates an entire Title to ecumenism (XVIII), underlines the “special duty” of the Eastern Catholic Churches in fostering unity among all the Eastern and Oriental Churches and highlights the role of the eparchial bishops in this endeavour. Unity can be furthered “through prayers, by example of life, by the religious fidelity to the ancient traditions of the Eastern Churches, by mutual and better knowledge of each other, and by collaboration and fraternal respect in practice and spirit”(Canon 903).

9. *The appointment of ecumenical officers*

The *Ecumenical Directory* §41 recommends that the bishop appoint a diocesan officer for ecumenism who is to be a close collaborator with, and counsellor to, the bishop in ecumenical matters. It also proposes that he establish a diocesan commission for ecumenism to assist him in implementing the ecumenical teaching of the Church as set out in its documents and in the directives of the episcopal conference or synod (§§42-45). The ecumenical officer and members of the ecumenical commission can be important points of contact with other Christian communities and may represent the bishop in ecumenical meetings. In order to ensure that Catholic parishes are also

fully engaged ecumenically in their locality, many bishops have found it helpful to encourage the appointment of parish ecumenical officers as envisaged in the *Ecumenical Directory* (§§45 & 67).

10. The Ecumenical Commission of Episcopal Conferences and Synods of Eastern Catholic Churches

Where the episcopal conference or synod is sufficiently large the *Ecumenical Directory* recommends that a commission of bishops should be formed with responsibility for ecumenism (§§46-47). These bishops should be assisted by a team of expert consultants and, if possible, a permanent secretariat. One of the principal tasks of the commission is to translate the ecumenical documents of the Church into concrete action appropriate to the local context. When the conference is too small for an episcopal commission at least one bishop should be made responsible for ecumenical activity (ED §46) and may be assisted by suitable advisors.

The commission should support and advise individual bishops as well as the various offices of the conference in fulfilling their ecumenical responsibilities. The *Ecumenical Directory* envisages the commission engaging with existing ecumenical institutions at the national or territorial level. Where it is judged to be appropriate the commission should establish dialogues and consultations with other Christian communities. Members of the commission should represent the Catholic community or nominate a suitable alternative when invited to attend an important event in the life of another Christian community. Reciprocally they should also ensure an appropriate level of representation of ecumenical guests or delegates at important moments in the life of the Catholic Church. *Apostolorum Successores* §170 suggests observers from other Christian communities should be

invited to diocesan synods, after consultation with the leaders of these communities.

The visit *ad limina apostolorum* provides an opportunity for bishops to share their own ecumenical experiences and concerns with the Pope, the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and other curial offices. It is also an occasion in which bishops can seek information or advice from the Pontifical Council.

B. The ecumenical dimension of formation

11. A people disposed to dialogue and engagement

Through formation the bishop can ensure that the people of his diocese are properly disposed for engagement with other Christians. *Unitatis redintegratio* §11 counsels that those engaging in ecumenical dialogue should approach their task with “love of the truth, with charity, and with humility”. These three fundamental dispositions provide a helpful guide for ecumenical formation of the whole People of God.

Firstly, ecumenism is not premised on compromise as if unity should be achieved at the expense of truth. On the contrary, the search for unity leads us into a fuller appreciation of God’s revealed truth. The bedrock of ecumenical formation, therefore, is that “the Catholic faith must be explained more profoundly and precisely, in such a way and in such terms as our separated brethren can also really understand” (UR §11). These explanations must convey an understanding “that in Catholic doctrine there exists a ‘hierarchy’ of truths, since they vary in their relation to the fundamental Christian faith” (UR §11). Though all revealed truths are believed with the same divine faith, their significance depends on their relation to the saving mysteries of the Trinity and salvation in Christ, the source of all Christian doctrines. By weighing truths rather than simply enumerating them, Catholics gain a more accurate understanding of the unity that exists among Christians.

Secondly, the virtue of charity demands that Catholics avoid polemical presentations of Christian history and theology and, in particular, that they avoid misrepresenting the positions of other Christians (see UR §4 & §10). Rather, formators informed by an attitude of charity will always seek to emphasise the Christian faith that we share with others and to present the theological differences that divide us with balance and accuracy. In this way the work of formation helps to remove obstacles to dialogue (see UR §11).

The Second Vatican Council insisted that “there can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart” (UR §7). An appropriately humble attitude enables Catholics to appreciate “what God is bringing about in the members of other Churches and Ecclesial Communities” (UUS §48), which in turn opens the way for us to learn and receive gifts from these brothers and sisters. Humility is again necessary when, through encounter with other Christians, truth comes to light “which might require a review of assertions and attitudes” (UUS §36).

i) The formation of laity, seminarians and clergy

12. *A summary guide to the Ecumenical Directory on formation*

The ecumenical dimension should be present in all aspects and disciplines of Christian formation. The *Ecumenical Directory* first of all offers guidelines for the ecumenical formation of all the faithful (§§58–69). It envisages this formation taking place through Bible study, the preached Word, catechesis, liturgy and spiritual life, and in a variety of contexts, such as the family, parish, school and lay associations. Next the document offers guidance for the formation of those engaged in pastoral work, both ordained (§§70–82) and lay (§§83–86). It proposes both that all courses be taught with an ecumenical dimension and sensitivity, and that a specific course in ecumenism be

a required part of the first cycle of theological studies (§79). The ecumenical dimension of seminary formation is particularly highlighted and it is recommended that all seminarians should be given ecumenical experience (§§70–82). The document also considers the continuing ecumenical formation of priests, deacons, religious and lay people (§91).

In 1997, the Pontifical Council issued guidelines entitled *The Ecumenical Dimension in the Formation of Those Engaged in Pastoral Ministry*. Its two parts deal respectively with the need to give an ecumenical dimension to each area of theological formation, and with the necessary elements for a specific course on the study of ecumenism.

ii) The use of media and diocesan websites

13. An ecumenical approach in using the media

A lack of communication with each other over the centuries has deepened the differences among Christian communities. Efforts to foster and strengthen communication can play a key role in drawing divided Christians closer together. Those who represent the Church in social communications should be imbued with the ecumenical dispositions emphasised above. The Catholic presence through the media should demonstrate that Catholics esteem their Christian brothers and sisters and are a people open to listening and learning from them.

14. Some recommendations for diocesan websites

Increasingly the internet is the medium through which the face of the Church is perceived by the world. It is a place where both the Catholic faithful and others will find the local Church represented and from where they will judge its priorities and concerns. Attention should be given to this new dimension of ecclesial life. The Church's concern for Christian unity in obedience to Christ, and our love and esteem for other Christian communities, should be

immediately evident from the diocesan website. Those who administer diocesan websites must be aware of the responsibility that they have in Christian formation. The diocesan ecumenical officer and the ecumenical commission should be easily found and contacted through the website. The website can very profitably provide links to the webpage of the Ecumenical Commission of the Episcopal Conference or Synod, to the website of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and also to the local and national ecumenical councils.

The ecumenical page of a diocesan website is an excellent place to publicise events and news. However, permission should always be sought before using photographs of ecumenical partners as in some cases publicity can cause difficulties for them.

Practical Recommendations

- ▶ To be familiar with, and make use, of the *Ecumenical Directory*.
- ▶ To appoint a Diocesan Ecumenical Officer. The *Ecumenical Directory* §41 recommends that each diocese should have an ecumenical officer who acts as a close collaborator with the bishop in ecumenical matters and can represent the diocese to other local Christian communities. Where possible this role should be distinct from the officer for interreligious dialogue.
- ▶ To establish a Diocesan Ecumenical Commission. The *Ecumenical Directory* (§§42–44) proposes that each diocese should have a commission whose task it is to bring a suitably ecumenical dimension to every aspect of the local Church's life. This body should oversee ecumenical formation, initiate consultations with other Christian communities, and promote joint witness to our shared Christian faith.
- ▶ To promote the appointment of Parish Ecumenical Officers. The *Ecumenical Directory* envisages each parish as a “place of authentic ecumenical witness”

(§67, see also §45) with a parishioner appointed to be responsible for local ecumenical relations.

- ▶ To be familiar with the norms established by the episcopal conference or synod. The *Ecumenical Directory* (§§46–47) suggests that each conference or synod should have a commission of bishops with a permanent secretary, or failing that a nominated bishop, with responsibilities for ecumenical engagement. This body or bishop has responsibility not only for the aforementioned norms, but also for engaging with ecumenical bodies at the national level.
 - ▶ To ensure that there is a mandatory course in ecumenism at all seminaries and Catholic theology faculties in the diocese, and ensure that courses in sacred theology and other branches of knowledge have an ecumenical dimension.
 - ▶ To share documentation and ecumenical resources through your diocesan website.
 - ▶ To share ecumenical news through the website so that the faithful of a diocese can see their bishop meeting, praying and working with other Christian communities of the locality.
-

PART 2

The Catholic Church in its relations with other Christians

15. The many ways to engage ecumenically with other Christians

The ecumenical movement is one and indivisible and should always be thought of as a whole. Nonetheless it takes various forms according to the various dimensions of ecclesial life. Spiritual ecumenism promotes prayer, conversion and holiness for the sake of Christian unity.

The Dialogue of Love deals with encounter at the level of everyday contacts and co-operation, nurturing and deepening the relationship we already share through baptism. The Dialogue of Truth concerns the vital doctrinal aspect of healing division among Christians. The Dialogue of Life includes the opportunities for encounter and collaboration with other Christians in pastoral care, in mission to the world and through culture. These forms of ecumenism are here distinguished for clarity of explanation, but it should always be borne in mind that they are interconnected and mutually enriching aspects of the same reality. Much ecumenical activity will engage a number of these dimensions simultaneously. For the purposes of this document distinctions are made in order to help the bishop in his discernment.⁴

A. Spiritual ecumenism

16. Prayer, conversion and holiness

Spiritual ecumenism is described in *Unitatis redintegratio* §8 as “the soul of the whole ecumenical movement”. At each Eucharist Catholics ask the Lord to grant the Church “unity and peace” (Roman Rite, before the sign of peace) or pray for “the stability of the holy churches of God, and for the unity of all” (Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, Litany of peace).

Spiritual ecumenism consists not only of praying for Christian unity but also of a “change of heart and holiness of life” (UR §8). Indeed, “All the faithful should remember that the more effort they make to live holier lives according to the Gospel, the better will they further Christian unity and put it into practice” (UR §7). Spiritual

4. For example, because this *Vademecum* takes the perspective of the bishop, *communicatio in sacris* is here understood as a pastoral concern rather than an aspect of spiritual ecumenism.

ecumenism requires conversion and reform. As Pope Benedict XVI said: “Concrete gestures that enter hearts and stir consciences are essential, inspiring in everyone that inner conversion that is the prerequisite for all ecumenical progress.”⁵ Similarly, in his handbook of spiritual ecumenism Cardinal Walter Kasper wrote, “Only in the context of conversion and renewal can the wounded bonds of communion be healed”.⁶

17. Praying with other Christians

Because we share a real communion as brothers and sisters in Christ, Catholics not only can, but indeed must, seek out opportunities to pray with other Christians. Certain forms of prayer are particularly appropriate in the search for Christian unity. Just as at the conclusion of the rite of Baptism we recognise the dignity we have all gained in being made children of the one Father and so pray the Lord’s prayer, it is equally appropriate to pray this same prayer with other Christians with whom we share baptism.

Similarly, the ancient Christian practice of praying the psalms and scriptural canticles together (the Prayer of the Church) is a tradition that continues to be common throughout many Christian communities and therefore lends itself to be prayed ecumenically (see ED §§117–119).⁷

In promoting joint prayer Catholics should be sensitive to the fact that some Christian communities do not practise joint prayer with other Christians, as was once the case for the Catholic Church.

5. First Message of Pope Benedict XVI at the end of the Eucharistic Concelebration with members of the College of Cardinals in the Sistine Chapel, 20 April 2005.

6. Kasper, Walter, *A Handbook of Spiritual Ecumenism* (New York: New City Press, 2007) §6.

7. See also *O Lord, Open Our Lips*, 2014 document of the French Anglican-Roman Catholic Joint Committee.

18. *Prayer for unity: the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*

The Second Vatican Council taught that “human powers and capacities cannot achieve ... the reconciling of all Christians in the unity of the one and only Church of Christ” (UR §24). In praying for unity we acknowledge that unity is a gift of the Holy Spirit and not something we can achieve through our own efforts. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is celebrated every year from 18–25 January, or around the feast of Pentecost in some parts of the world. Each year materials are prepared by an ecumenical group of Christians in a particular region, centred on a scriptural text and providing a theme, a joint worship service and brief scriptural reflections for each day of the week. The bishop can very effectively advance the cause of Christian unity by participating in an ecumenical prayer service to mark the week with other Christian leaders, and by encouraging parishes and groups to work with other Christian communities present in the area to jointly organize special prayer events during this week.

19. *Prayer for one another and for the needs of the world*

An important aspect of spiritual ecumenism is simply to pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ, and in particular those who are our neighbours. Even if there are difficulties in local ecumenical relations, or if our openness to others is not reciprocated, we can continue to pray for the blessing of these Christians. Such prayer can become a regular part of our own personal prayer and of the intercessions in our liturgies.

Ut unum sint teaches that “There is no important or significant event which does not benefit from Christians coming together and praying” (§25). Christians from different traditions will share a concern for the local community in which they live and the particular

challenges that it faces. Christians can demonstrate their care by marking together significant events or anniversaries in the life of the community, and by praying together for its particular needs. Global realities such as warfare, poverty, the plight of migrants, injustice and the persecution of Christians and other religious groups also demand the attention of Christians who can join together in prayer for peace and for the most vulnerable.

20. *The Sacred Scriptures*

Unitatis redintegratio describes the scriptures as “an instrument of the highest value in the mighty hand of God for the attainment of ... unity” (§21). The *Ecumenical Directory* urges that everything possible should be done to encourage Christians to read the scriptures together. In so doing, the document continues, the bond of unity between Christians is reinforced, they are opened to the unifying action of God, and their common witness to the Word of God is strengthened (see §183). With all Christians, Catholics share the Sacred Scriptures and with many they also share a common Sunday lectionary. This shared biblical heritage presents opportunities to come together for scripturally-based prayer and discussion, for *lectio divina*, for joint publications and translations,⁸ and even for ecumenical pilgrimages to the holy sites of the Bible. The ministry of preaching can be a particularly powerful means of demonstrating that, as Christians, we are nourished from the common source of the Holy Scriptures. Where appropriate, Catholic and other Christian ministers may be invited to share the ministry of preaching in each other’s non-Eucharistic services (ED §135, see also 118–119).

8. See Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and United Bible Societies, *Guidelines for Interconfessional Cooperation in Translating the Bible* (revised edition 1987).

21. *Liturgical feasts and seasons*

Similarly, we share with most other traditions at least the principal elements of the liturgical calendar: Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. With many we will also share the liturgical seasons of Advent and Lent. In various parts of the world our shared calendar allows Christians to prepare together for the celebration of the main Christian feasts. In some dioceses the Catholic bishop joins with other Christian leaders to issue joint statements on these important celebrations.

22. *Saints and martyrs*

“Perhaps the most convincing form of ecumenism,” wrote Saint John Paul II in *Tertio millennio adveniente*, “is the ecumenism of the saints and of the martyrs.” He goes on, “The *communio sanctorum* speaks louder than the things which divide us” (§37). Our churches are already united by the communion that the saints and martyrs share. A common devotion to a particular saint, shrine or image can be the focus of an ecumenical pilgrimage, procession or celebration. Catholics generally, and Catholic bishops in particular, can strengthen the bonds of unity with other Christians by encouraging devotions which are already held in common.

In certain parts of the world Christians suffer persecution. Pope Francis has often spoken of the “ecumenism of blood”.⁹ Those who persecute Christians often recognise better than Christians do themselves the unity that exists among them. In honouring Christians from other traditions who have suffered martyrdom Catholics recognise the riches that Christ has bestowed on them and to which they bear powerful witness (see UR §4). Furthermore, although our own communion with the communities to which these martyrs belong remains

9. For example see the address of Pope Francis in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, 25 May 2014.

imperfect, “this communion is already perfect in what we consider the highest point of the life of grace, *martyria* unto death, the truest communion possible with Christ” (UUS §84, see also §§12, 47, 48, and 79).

23. The contribution of consecrated life to Christian unity

Consecrated life, which is rooted in the common tradition of the undivided Church, undoubtedly has a particular vocation in promoting unity. Established monastic and religious communities as well as new communities and ecclesial movements can be privileged places of ecumenical hospitality, of prayer for unity and for the “exchange of gifts” among Christians. Some recently founded communities have the promotion of Christian unity as their particular charism, and some of these include members from different Christian traditions. In his Apostolic Exhortation *Vita consecrata*, Saint John Paul II wrote, “There is an urgent need for consecrated persons to give more space in their lives to ecumenical prayer and genuine evangelical witness.” Indeed, he continued, “no Institute of Consecrated Life should feel itself dispensed from working for this cause” (§§100–101).

24. The healing of memories

The expression the “healing of memories” has its roots in the Second Vatican Council. On the penultimate day of the Council (7 December 1965) a joint statement of Saint Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras “removed from the memory” of the Church the excommunications issued in 1054. Ten years later, Saint Paul VI first used the expression the “healing of memories”. As Saint John Paul II wrote, “The Council thus ended with a solemn act which was at once a healing of historical memories, a mutual forgiveness, and a firm commitment to strive for communion” (UUS §52). In the same encyclical Saint John Paul II stressed the need to overcome “certain

refusals to forgive”, “an unevangelical insistence on condemning the ‘other side’ ” and “a disdain born of an unhealthy presumption” (§15). Because Christian communities have grown apart from one another, often harbouring resentments, attitudes such as these have, in some instances, become ingrained. The memory of many Christian communities remains wounded by a history of religious and national conflict. However, when communities on opposing sides of historical divisions are able to come together in a common rereading of history, a reconciliation of memories is made possible.

The commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 was also an example of the healing of memories. In the report *From Conflict to Communion*, Catholics and Lutherans asked themselves how they could hand on their traditions “in such a way that they do not dig new trenches between Christians of different confessions” (§12).¹⁰ They found it was possible to adopt a new approach to their history: “What happened in the past cannot be changed, but what is remembered of the past and how it is remembered can, with the passage of time, indeed change. Remembrance makes the past present. While the past itself is unalterable, the presence of the past in the present is alterable” (§16).

10. Lutheran–Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, *From Conflict to Communion* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt; Paderborn: Bonifatius, 2013).

Practical Recommendations

- ▶ To pray regularly for the unity of Christians.
 - ▶ To mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity with an ecumenically organized prayer service and encourage parishes to do the same.
 - ▶ To engage with other Christian leaders about the possibility of holding joint scripture study days, ecumenical pilgrimages/ processions, common symbolic gestures, or the possible exchange of relics and holy images.
 - ▶ To issue a joint message with another Christian leader or leaders at Christmas or Easter.
 - ▶ To hold an ecumenical prayer service for a matter of common concern with other local Christian communities.
 - ▶ To encourage your priests or pastoral assistants to meet regularly for prayer with other Christian ministers and leaders working in their neighbourhoods.
 - ▶ To be aware of the ecumenical work of communities of consecrated life and ecclesial movements, and encourage this work.
 - ▶ To ask the diocesan commission to work with other Christian communities to discern where a healing of memories might be necessary, and suggest concrete steps that may facilitate this.
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B. The Dialogue of Love

25. The baptismal basis of the Dialogue of Love

All ecumenism is baptismal ecumenism. While Catholics might recognise all as brothers and sisters by virtue of our common Creator, they recognise a much more profound relationship with baptised Christians from other Christian communities who are their brothers and sisters *in Christ*, following the usage of the New Testament and the Fathers of the Church. Therefore the Dialogue of Love (or the Dialogue of Charity) attends not simply to human

fraternity, but rather to those bonds of communion forged in baptism.

26. *A culture of encounter in ecumenical bodies and events*

Catholics should not wait for other Christians to approach them, but rather should always be prepared to take the first step towards others (see UR §4). This “culture of encounter” is a prerequisite for any true ecumenism. Therefore it is important that Catholics participate, as far as possible, in ecumenical bodies at the local, diocesan and national level. Bodies, such as Councils of Churches and Christian Councils, build mutual understanding and co-operation (see ED §§166–171). Catholics have a particular duty to participate in the ecumenical movement when they are in the majority (see ED §32). The Dialogue of Love is built up through the accumulation of simple initiatives which strengthen the bonds of communion: the exchange of messages or delegations on special occasions; reciprocal visits, meetings between local pastoral ministers; and twinings or covenants between communities or institutions (dioceses, parishes, seminaries, schools, and choirs). Thus, by word and gesture we show our love not only for our brothers and sisters in Christ but also for the Christian communities to which they belong, because we “joyfully acknowledge and esteem the truly Christian endowments” which we find there (UR §4).

It is the experience of many bishops that in the Dialogue of Love ecumenism becomes much more than a duty of their ministry and is discovered to be a source of enrichment and a fount of joy through which they experience “how very good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity” (Ps 133:1).

Practical Recommendations

- ▶ To take the first step to meet with other Christian leaders.
 - ▶ To pray personally and publically for other Christian leaders.
 - ▶ To attend, insofar as it is possible and appropriate, the liturgies of ordination/ instalment/ welcome of other Christian leaders in your diocese.
 - ▶ To invite, where appropriate, other Christian leaders to significant liturgical celebrations and events.
 - ▶ To be aware of Councils of Churches and ecumenical bodies in your diocese and to participate as far as is possible.
 - ▶ To inform other Christian leaders of important events and news.
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C. The Dialogue of Truth

27. Dialogue as an exchange of gifts

In *Ut unum sint*, Saint John Paul II wrote that dialogue “has become an outright necessity, one of the Church’s priorities” (UUS §31). Through ecumenical dialogue each participant “gains a truer knowledge and more just appreciation” of its dialogue partner (UR §4). Saint John Paul II wrote that “Dialogue is not simply an exchange of ideas. In some way it is always an ‘exchange of gifts’ ” (UUS §28). In this exchange “Each individual part contributes through its special gifts to the good of the other parts and of the whole Church” (LG §13). Pope Francis has called for an active attentiveness to gifts in the other or potential areas of learning from the other which address our own ecclesial needs. “If we really believe in the abundantly free working of the Holy Spirit, we can learn so much from one another! It is not just about being better informed about others, but rather about reaping what the Spirit has sown in them, which is also meant to be a gift for us” (EG §246).

28. *A dialogue that leads us into all truth*

The Dialogue of Truth is the theological dialogue which aims at the restoration of unity of faith. In *Ut unum sint* Saint John Paul II asked, “Who could consider legitimate a reconciliation brought about at the expense of the truth?” (§18). Rather, he insisted, full communion would come about “through the acceptance of the whole truth into which the Holy Spirit guides Christ’s disciples” (UUS §36). This is the same conviction expressed in the 2014 Jerusalem Common Declaration of Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew when they write, “We affirm once again that the theological dialogue does not seek a theological lowest common denominator on which to reach a compromise, but is rather about deepening one’s grasp of the whole truth that Christ has given to his Church, a truth that we never cease to understand better as we follow the Holy Spirit’s promptings.”

29. *Theological dialogue at the international, national and diocesan level*

In the years following the Second Vatican Council the Catholic Church has engaged in many bilateral international theological dialogues with Christian world communions. The task of these dialogue commissions has been to address the theological disagreements which have historically caused division, but doing so in a manner which lays aside the polemical language and prejudices of the past, and that takes as the point of departure the common tradition.¹¹ These dialogues have produced documents which have sought to map out the extent to which the dialogue partners hold the same faith. They have addressed differences and sought to expand what the dialogue partners hold in common, and have identified the areas where further work is needed. The results of the

11. Details of these theological dialogues can be found in the appendix to this document.

dialogue provide the framework for discerning what we can and cannot appropriately do together on the basis of shared faith.

No less important is the work of the many national dialogue commissions operating under the authority of episcopal conferences. The national commissions are often themselves in dialogue with the international commissions, suggesting new areas for fruitful exploration and also receiving and commenting upon the documents of the international commissions.

The Dialogue of Truth conducted at the national and diocesan levels can have a particular importance with respect to the meaning and valid celebration of baptism. Local Church authorities have been able to formulate common statements expressing the mutual recognition of baptism (see ED §94). Other ecumenical working groups and initiatives also make a valuable contribution to the Dialogue of Truth.¹²

30. The challenge of reception

Reception is the process by which the Church discerns and appropriates that which it recognises as authentic Christian teaching. From the first preached word, down through the long history of Ecumenical Councils and Church teaching, the Christian community has exercised this discernment. Reception takes on a new significance in the ecumenical era. While bilateral and multilateral dialogues have over the years produced many agreed statements and declarations, these texts have not always entered into the life of Christian communities. The Joint Working Group

12. E.g. The Groupe des Dombes, the Ökumenischer Arbeitskreis evangelischer und katholischer Theologen, the theological conversations with Oriental Orthodox Churches initiated by the Pro Oriente Foundation, the Malines Conversations, Catholics and Evangelicals Together, and the St Irenaeus Joint Orthodox–Catholic Working Group.

between the World Council of Churches and the Catholic Church in its document on reception described ecumenical reception as “the evangelical attitude necessary to allow [the results of dialogue] to be adopted in one’s own ecclesial tradition”.¹³ Saint John Paul II wrote that in order to receive the bilateral agreements “a serious examination needs to be made, which, by different ways and means and at various levels of responsibility, must involve the whole People of God” (UUS §80). This process of reception should involve the whole Church in the exercise of the *sensus fidei*: lay faithful, theologians, and pastors. Theological faculties and local ecumenical commissions play an important role in this regard. The Church’s teaching authority ultimately has the responsibility to express a judgment (see UUS §81). Bishops, therefore, are encouraged to read and evaluate particularly those ecumenical documents that are most relevant to their own contexts. Many contain suggestions which can be implemented at the local level.

While the texts produced by ecumenical dialogues do not constitute official teaching documents of the churches involved, their reception into the life of Christian communities helps all to reach a deeper understanding and appreciation of the mysteries of faith.

13. *Ninth Report of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches* (2007-2012), Appendix A “Reception: A Key to Ecumenical Progress” §15.

Practical Recommendations

- ▶ To identify what bilateral documents have been published between the Catholic Church and the principal Christian communities present in your diocese. The appendix of this *Vademecum* gives an introductory guide to the dialogues whose documents are available on the PCPCU website.
 - ▶ To establish a diocesan or regional dialogue commission involving lay and ordained theological experts. The commission might engage in a joint study of the documents of the international or national dialogues or may address issues of local concern.
 - ▶ To ask the commission to propose some concrete action that could be undertaken jointly by your diocese and another Christian community or communities on the basis of the ecumenical agreements that have been reached.
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D. The Dialogue of Life

31. The truths expressed jointly in theological dialogue seek concrete expression through joint action in pastoral care, in service to the world and through culture. The *Ecumenical Directory* states that the contribution Christians can make in these areas of human life “will be more effective when they make it together, and when they are seen to be united in making it”. “Hence,” the *Directory* continues, “they will want to do everything together that is allowed by faith” (§162). These words echo an important ecumenical principle, known as the Lund principle, first formulated by the World Council of Churches, that Christians should “act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately” (Third World Conference of the Faith and Order Commission in 1952). By working together Catholics begin to live deeply and faithfully the communion that they already share with other Christians.

In this undertaking Catholics are encouraged to have both patience and perseverance, twin virtues of ecumenism, in equal measure: proceeding “gradually and with care, not glossing over difficulties” (ED §23), under the guidance of their bishops; yet showing genuine commitment in this quest, motivated by the urgent need for reconciliation and by Christ’s own desire for the unity of his disciples (see EG §246, UUS §48).

i) Pastoral ecumenism

32. *Shared pastoral challenges as opportunities for ecumenism*

Very often Christian communities in a given locality face the same pastoral and missionary challenges. If there is not already a genuine desire for unity among Christians such challenges can exacerbate tensions and even promote a spirit of competition among communities. However, when approached with a properly ecumenical spirit these very challenges become opportunities for Christian unity in pastoral care, called here “pastoral ecumenism”. It is one of the fields which most effectively contributes to fostering Christian unity in the life of the faithful.

33. *Shared ministry and sharing resources*

In very many parts of the world, and in very many ways, Christian ministers from different traditions work together in providing pastoral care in hospitals, prisons, the armed forces, universities and in other chaplaincies. In many of these situations chapels or other spaces are shared to provide ministry to the faithful of different Christian communities (see ED §204).

Where the diocesan bishop discerns that it will not cause scandal or confusion to the faithful, he may offer other Christian communities the use of a church. Particular discernment is required in the case of the diocesan cathedral. The *Ecumenical Directory* (§137) envisages such situations in which a Catholic diocese comes to the

aid of another community which is without its own place of worship or liturgical objects to worthily celebrate its ceremonies. Likewise, in many contexts Catholic communities are the recipients of similar hospitality from other Christian communities. Such sharing of resources can build trust and deepen mutual understanding between Christians.

34. *Mission and catechesis*

Jesus prayed “that they may all be one ... so that the world may believe” (Jn 17:21), and from its origins the ecumenical movement has always had the Church’s mission to evangelise at its core. Division among Christians impedes evangelization and undermines the credibility of the Gospel message (see UR §1, *Evangelii nuntiandi* §77 and UUS §§98–99). The *Ecumenical Directory* stresses the need to ensure that the “human, cultural and political factors” involved in the original divisions between Christians not be transplanted to new missionary territories and calls for Christian missionaries from different traditions to work “with mutual respect and love” (§207).

The Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi tradendae* (1979) notes that in some situations bishops may consider it “opportune or even necessary” to collaborate with other Christians in the field of catechesis (§33, cited in ED §188 and in the *Directory for Catechism* §346). The document goes on to describe the parameters of such collaboration. The Catechism of the Catholic Church has proved to be a useful tool for co-operation with other Christians in the field of catechesis.

35. *Interchurch marriages*

The diocesan bishop is called upon to authorise interchurch marriages and sometimes to dispense from the Catholic rite for the wedding ceremony. Interchurch marriages should not be regarded as problems for they are

often a privileged place where the unity of Christians is built (see *Familiaris Consortio* §78, and *Apostolorum Successores* §207). However, pastors cannot be indifferent to the pain of Christian division which is experienced in the context of these families, perhaps more sharply than in any other context. The pastoral care of interchurch families, from the initial preparation of the couple for marriage to pastoral accompaniment as the couple have children and the children themselves prepare for sacraments, should be a concern at both the diocesan and regional level (see ED §§143–160). A special effort should be made to engage these families in the ecumenical activities of parish and diocese. Mutual meetings of Christian pastors, aimed at supporting and upholding these marriages, can be an excellent ground for ecumenical collaboration (see ED §147). Recent migratory movements have accentuated this ecclesial reality. From one region to another there is a great variety of practice regarding interchurch marriages, the baptism of children born of such marriages, and their spiritual formation.¹⁴ Local agreements on these pressing pastoral concerns are therefore to be encouraged.

36. *Sharing in Sacramental Life* (Communicatio in sacris)

As we have already seen, because we share a real communion with other Christians through our common baptism, prayer with these brothers and sisters in Christ is both possible and necessary to lead us into the unity that the Lord desires for his Church. However, the question of administering and receiving sacraments, and especially the Eucharist, in each other's liturgical celebrations remains an area of significant tension in our ecumenical relations. In treating the subject of "Sharing Sacramental Life with Christians of Other Churches and Ecclesial Communities"

14. The bishop should take account of CIC 1125 or CCEO 814 §1.

(ED §§129–132), the *Ecumenical Directory* draws on two basic principles articulated in *Unitatis redintegratio* §8 which exist in a certain tension and which must always be held together. The first principle is that the celebration of sacraments in a community bears “witness to the unity of the Church” and the second principle is that a sacrament is a “sharing of the means of grace” (UR §8). In view of the first principle the *Directory* states that “Eucharistic communion is inseparably linked to full ecclesial communion and its visible expression” (ED §129) and therefore, in general, participation in the sacraments of the Eucharist, reconciliation and anointing is limited to those in full communion. However, applying the second principle, the *Directory* goes on to state that “by way of exception, and under certain conditions, access to these sacraments may be permitted, or even commended, for Christians of other Churches and ecclesial Communities” (ED §129). In this sense the *Directory* expands on the second principle by stating that the Eucharist is spiritual food for the baptised that enables them to overcome sin and to grow towards the fullness of life in Christ. *Communicatio in sacris* is therefore permitted for the care of souls within certain circumstances, and when this is the case it is to be recognised as both desirable and commendable.

Weighing the claims of these two principles calls for the exercise of discernment by the diocesan bishop, always bearing in mind that the possibility of *communicatio in sacris* differs with respect to the Churches and Communities involved. The Code of Canon Law describes the situations in which Catholics can receive sacraments from other Christian ministers (see CIC 844 §2 and CCEO 671 §2). The canon states that either in danger of death, or if the diocesan bishop judges there to be a “grave necessity,” Catholic ministers can administer sacraments to other Christians “who seek such on their own accord, provided that they manifest Catholic faith in respect

to these sacraments and are properly disposed” (CIC 844 §4, see also CCEO 671 §3).

It is important to stress that the bishop’s judgement about what constitutes a “grave necessity” and when exceptional sacramental sharing is appropriate is always a pastoral discernment, that is, it concerns the care and the salvation of souls. Sacraments may never be shared out of mere politeness. Prudence must be exercised to avoid causing confusion or giving scandal to the faithful. Nevertheless, Saint John Paul II’s words should also be borne in mind when he wrote, “It is a source of joy to note that Catholic ministers are able, in certain particular cases, to administer the Sacraments of Eucharist, Penance and Anointing of the Sick to Christians who are not in full communion with the Catholic Church” (UUS §46).¹⁵

37. Changing ecclesial affiliation as an ecumenical challenge and opportunity

Changing of ecclesial affiliation is of its nature distinct from ecumenical activity (UR §4). Nevertheless, the ecumenical documents acknowledge those situations in which Christians move from one Christian community to another. Certain pastoral provisions, such as those formulated by the Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum coetibus*, respond to this reality. Local communities should welcome with joy those who wish to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church, though as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults states, “any appearance of

15. Pastoral agreements have been reached with some Oriental Orthodox Churches for reciprocal admission of the faithful to the Eucharist in case of necessity (in 1984 with the Syrian Orthodox Church, and in 2001 between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East). Many episcopal conferences, synods, eparchies and dioceses have published directives or documents on this matter.

triumphalism should be carefully avoided” (§389).¹⁶ Always maintaining a profound respect for the conscience of the individuals concerned, those who make known their intention to leave the Catholic Church should be made aware of the consequences of their decision. Motivated by the desire to maintain strong relations with ecumenical partners, in some circumstances it is possible to agree a “Code of Conduct” with another Christian community,¹⁷ especially when addressing the challenging issues raised when clergy change affiliation.¹⁸

16. *Editio typica*, Appendix 3b.

17. The French Joint Committee for Catholic-Orthodox Theological Dialogue made such a proposal in its 2003 declaration *Éléments pour une éthique du dialogue catholique-orthodoxe*.

18. As an example, the Anglican-Roman Catholic Bishops’ Dialogue of Canada was able to agree a statement, “Pastoral Guidelines for Churches in the case of clergy moving from one communion to the other” (1991).

Practical Recommendations

- ▶ To identify common pastoral needs with other Christian leaders.
 - ▶ To listen to and learn from the pastoral initiatives of other communities.
 - ▶ To act with generosity to help the pastoral work of another Christian community.
 - ▶ To meet with and listen to the experiences of interchurch families in your diocese.
 - ▶ To present to the clergy of your diocese the guidelines given by the *Ecumenical Directory* concerning the sharing of sacraments (summarised above) and, if there are any, the guidelines of the Episcopal Conference or Synods of the Eastern Catholic Churches. Help your clergy to discern when those conditions are to apply and when such sharing in sacramental life might, in individual cases, be appropriate.
 - ▶ If your diocese or episcopal conference has no guidelines regarding the canonical provisions for exceptional sacramental sharing, and if you think such guidelines would be beneficial in your context, contact the ecumenical office of the episcopal conference and seek advice about proposing or preparing such a text.
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ii) Practical ecumenism

38. *Co-operation in service to the world*

The Second Vatican Council called on all Christians, united in their common efforts and bearing witness to a common hope, to set “in clearer relief the features of Christ the Servant” (UR §12). It noted that in many countries this co-operation was already taking place in defence of human dignity and to relieve the afflictions of famine, natural disasters, illiteracy, poverty, housing shortage, and the unequal distribution of wealth. Today we might add to this

list: co-ordinated Christian action to care for displaced and migrant peoples; the fight against modern day slavery and human trafficking; peace-building; advocacy for religious freedom; the fight against discrimination; defence of the sanctity of life and care for creation. Christians co-operating in this way is what is intended by “practical ecumenism”. Increasingly, and as new needs arise, Christian communities are pooling their resources and co-ordinating their efforts to respond in the most effective way possible to those in need. Saint John Paul II called Christians to “every possible form of practical co-operation at all levels” and described this kind of working together as “a true school of ecumenism, a dynamic road to unity” (UUS §40). The experience of bishops in many parts of the world is that co-operation between Christian communities in service of the poor is a driving force in promoting the desire for Christian unity.

39. Joint service as witness

Through such ecumenical co-operation Christians “bear witness to our common hope” (UR §12). As disciples of Christ, schooled by the Scriptures and Christian tradition, we are compelled to act to uphold the dignity of the human person and the sacredness of creation, in the sure hope that God is bringing the whole of creation into the fullness of his Kingdom. By working together in both social action and cultural projects such as those suggested in §41 Christians promote an integral Christian vision of the dignity of the person. Our common service manifests before the world, therefore, our shared faith, and our witness is more powerful for being united.

40. Interreligious dialogue

Increasingly, at both the national and local levels, Christians are finding the need to engage more closely with other religious traditions. Recent trends of migration have brought peoples of different cultures and religions

into what were previously predominantly Christian communities. Often the expertise at the disposal of an individual Christian community may be limited. Joint Christian co-operation in interreligious dialogue is therefore often beneficial, and indeed the *Ecumenical Directory* states that it “can deepen the level of communion among [Christians] themselves” (§210). The *Directory* particularly highlights the importance of Christians working together to combat “anti-Semitism, religious fanaticism and sectarianism”. Lastly, it is important not to lose sight of the essential difference between dialogue with different religious traditions which aims at establishing good relations and co-operation, and dialogue with other Christian communities which aims at restoring the unity Christ willed for his Church and is properly called ecumenical.

Practical Recommendations

- ▶ To identify in dialogue with other Christian leaders areas where Christian service is required.
- ▶ To talk to other Christian leaders and your own diocesan ecumenical officer about what Christians are currently doing separately that could be done together.
- ▶ To encourage priests to engage with ecumenical partners in service to the local community.
- ▶ To ask diocesan agencies and Catholics engaged in social action on behalf of the Church in your diocese about past and present co-operation with other Christian communities and how this might be extended.
- ▶ To talk to other Christian leaders about their relations with other religious traditions in your area. What are the difficulties and what can the Christian communities do together?

iii) Cultural ecumenism

41. Cultural factors have played a significant role in the estrangement of Christian communities. Very often theological disagreements stemmed from difficulties of mutual understanding arising from cultural differences. Once communities have separated and live in isolation from one another, cultural differences tend to widen and reinforce theological disagreements. More positively, Christianity has also contributed enormously to the development and enrichment of specific cultures around the world.

“Cultural ecumenism” includes all efforts to better understand the culture of other Christians and in so doing to realise that beyond cultural difference, to varying degrees, we share the same faith expressed in different ways. An important aspect of cultural ecumenism is the promotion of common cultural projects which are able to bring different communities together and to inculturate the gospel again in our own age.

The *Ecumenical Directory* (§§211–218) encourages joint projects of an academic, scientific or artistic nature, and provides criteria for the discernment of these projects (§212). The experience of many Catholic dioceses shows that ecumenical concerts, festivals of sacred art, exhibitions, and symposia, are important moments of rapprochement between Christians. Culture, in a broad sense, presents itself as a privileged place for the “exchange of gifts”.

Conclusion

42. The long history of Christian divisions and the complex nature of the theological and cultural factors that divide Christian communities are a great challenge to all those involved in the ecumenical endeavour. And indeed the obstacles to unity are beyond human strength; they

cannot be overcome by our efforts alone. But the death and resurrection of Christ is God's decisive victory over sin and division, just as it is His victory over injustice and every form of evil. For this reason Christians cannot despair in the face of Christian division, just as they cannot despair in the face of injustice or warfare. Christ has already defeated these evils.

The task of the Church is always to receive the grace of the victory of Christ. The practical recommendation and initiatives suggested in this *Vademecum* are ways in which the Church and, in particular, the bishop can strive to actualise Christ's victory over Christian division. Opening to God's grace renews the Church, and as *Unitatis redintegratio* taught, this renewal is always the first and indispensable step towards unity. An openness to God's grace demands an openness to our Christian brothers and sisters, and, as Pope Francis has written, a willingness to receive "what the Spirit has sown in them, which is also meant to be a gift for us" (EG §246). The two parts of this *Vademecum* have sought to address these two dimensions of ecumenism: the renewal of the Church in its own life and structures; and engagement with other Christian communities in spiritual ecumenism, and the dialogues of Love, Truth, and Life.

Father Paul Couturier (1881–1953), a Catholic pioneer in the ecumenical movement and particularly of spiritual ecumenism, called upon the grace of Christ's victory over division in his prayer for unity which continues to inspire Christians of many different traditions. With his prayer we conclude this *Vademecum*:

Lord Jesus, on the night before you died for us,
you prayed that all your disciples may be perfectly one,
as you are in your Father and your Father is in you.
Make us painfully aware of our lack of faith in not being
united.

Give us the faithfulness to acknowledge,
and the courage to reject, our hidden indifference,
distrust and even enmity towards one another.
Grant that we all may meet one another in you,
so that from our souls and our lips there may ever arise
your prayer for the unity of Christians
as you will it and by the means that you desire.
In you, who are perfect Love,
grant us to find the way that leads to unity,
in obedience to your love and your truth.
Amen.

*The Holy Father Pope Francis has given his approval for the
publication of this document.*

From the Vatican, 5 June 2020

Kurt Cardinal Koch
President

✠ Brian Farrell
Titular Bishop of Abitine
Secretary

Catholic Documents on Ecumenism

Second Vatican Council *Unitatis redintegratio* (1964), Decree on Ecumenism.

Saint John Paul II *Ut unum sint* (1995), Encyclical on Commitment to Ecumenism.

Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and United Bible Societies, *Guidelines for Interconfessional Cooperation in Translating the Bible* (1987).

Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism* (1993).

Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, *The Ecumenical Dimension in the Formation of those Engaged in Pastoral Work* (1997).

For these documents and for further documentation, information and resources see the website of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (www.christianunity.va).

Appendix

The international dialogue partners of the Catholic Church

Bilateral dialogue

The work of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity is both to foster ever-closer relations with our brothers and sisters in Christ (the Dialogue of Love) and to strive to overcome the doctrinal divisions which prevent us from being able to share full, visible communion (the Dialogue of Truth). It conducts bilateral dialogues or conversations with the following Christian communities.¹⁹

Orthodox Churches of the Byzantine Tradition

Churches of the Byzantine tradition are united by the recognition of the seven ecumenical councils of the first millennium and the same spiritual and canonical tradition inherited from Byzantium. These Churches, which form the Orthodox Church as a whole, are organized according to the principle of autocephaly, each with its own primate and the Ecumenical Patriarch having, among them, the primacy of honour. The unanimously recognised autocephalous Churches are: the Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Moscow, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, and the Autocephalous Churches of Cyprus, Greece, Poland, Albania, and the Czech Lands and Slovakia. Some of the patriarchates also include so-called “autonomous” churches within them. In 2019 the Ecumenical Patriarch granted a tomos of autocephaly to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. This Church is still in the process

19. Before entering into ecumenical relations locally and nationally it is helpful first of all to establish that a particular Christian community is in a full communion relationship with one of the worldwide communions listed in this appendix. There are, for example, non-canonical Orthodox Churches, Anglican provinces or dioceses which are not in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury, and many Baptist communities are not members of the Baptist World Alliance. Furthermore, there are also communities that do not have a representative global structure. Discernment is required when entering into ecumenical relations with such groups. It may be helpful to seek advice from the ecumenical commission of the bishops' conference or synod, or from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

of being recognised by other Churches. The International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church as a whole, founded in 1979, has adopted six texts. The first three documents concerned the sacramental structure of the Church (Munich, 1982; Bari, 1987; and Valamo, 1988) and the fourth addressed the question of uniatism (Balamand, 1993). After a period of crisis, a new phase of dialogue began in 2006 focussing on the relationship between primacy and synodality and to date has adopted two documents (Ravenna 2007, and Chieti 2016).

Oriental Orthodox Churches

The Oriental Orthodox Churches, also known as “non-Chalcedonian” because they do not recognize the fourth Ecumenical Council, are distinguished between three main traditions: Coptic, Syriac and Armenian. An international joint commission was established in 2003 bringing together all the seven Churches that recognise the first three ecumenical councils: the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Syrian Orthodox Church, the Armenian Apostolic Church (Catholicosate of Etchmiadzin and Catholicosate of Cilicia), the Malankar Orthodox-Syrian Church, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church and the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church. A first phase of the dialogue culminated in 2009 with a document on the nature and mission of the Church. A new phase resulted in the adoption in 2015 of a document on the exercise of communion in the life of the early Church. The current dialogue is about the sacraments.

Parallel to this commission there is also a special dialogue with the Malankara Churches of South India. In 1989 and 1990, two parallel bilateral dialogues were established respectively with the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church and with the Malankara (Jacobite) Syrian Orthodox Church, and these were maintained despite the foundation of the commission mentioned above. These dialogues focus on three main themes: Church history, common witness and ecclesiology.

Assyrian Church of the East

The dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East has produced many fruitful results. As a result of a first phase of dialogue on christological issues Pope

John Paul II and Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV signed a *Joint Christological Declaration* in 1994, which opened new horizons for both theological dialogue and pastoral collaboration. Subsequently, the Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East planned two further phases of work: one on sacramental theology and the other on the constitution of the Church. The second phase of dialogue concluded with a wide consensus on sacramental issues allowing the publication by the PCPCU of the “Guidelines For Admission To The Eucharist Between The Chaldean Church and The Assyrian Church Of The East”, and an agreement on the final document entitled *Common Statement on Sacramental Life*, adopted in 2017. The third phase of the dialogue on the nature and constitution of the Church started in 2018.

Old Catholic Church of the Union of Utrecht

The Union of Utrecht comprises six national churches that belong to the International Old Catholic Bishops’ Conference. Listed in the order of entry into the Union (1889 onwards) they are the Old Catholic Churches in the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, the Czech Republic, and Poland. The International Roman Catholic–Old Catholic Dialogue Commission was established in 2004. Its recent publication *The Church and Ecclesial Communion* incorporates the two reports of 2009 and 2016. It concludes that the shared understanding of the Church as a multilayered communion of local churches may open up common vistas and enable a common vision of the primacy of the Bishop of Rome within a universal synodal perspective.

Anglican Communion

The Anglican Communion has 39 Provinces and more than 85 million members. Although others claim the name Anglican, the communion is defined as being those dioceses whose bishop is in communion with the ancient See of Canterbury. Ecumenical dialogue between the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church began after the historic meeting between Saint Paul VI and Archbishop Michael Ramsey in 1966. The first Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC I) met between 1970 and 1981. It produced a high level of agreement

on the topics of Eucharist and Ministry. ARCIC II took up the work of its predecessor on authority in an important document entitled *The Gift of Authority* (1999). It also produced agreed statements on salvation, Mary, ecclesiology, ethics and grace. Most recently ARCIC III has published an agreed statement on ecclesiology entitled *Walking Together on the Way*. The International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM) is a commission of paired Anglican and Catholic bishops who seek to further the reception of ARCIC’s documents and to give greater witness to our common faith in service of those in need.

Lutheran World Federation (LWF)

The Lutheran World Federation is a global communion of 148 Lutheran churches which live in pulpit and altar fellowship. LWF member churches can be found in 99 countries and together they have over 75.5 million members. The LWF was founded in 1947 in Lund. The Lutheran–Catholic Commission on Unity began its work in 1967. The dialogue between Catholics and Lutherans has continued uninterrupted since then. In the five phases of the dialogue, the Commission has published study documents on the gospel and the Church, ministry, Eucharist, justification and the apostolicity of the Church. Its current working theme is Baptism and growth in communion. An important historical milestone in Lutheran–Catholic relations was achieved by *The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (1999). The theology of justification was the central theological dispute between Martin Luther and the church authorities which led to the Reformation. The *Joint Declaration* proposes 44 common affirmations relating to the doctrine of justification. On the basis of the high degree of consensus reached it was agreed that the condemnations in Lutheran Confessions and in the Council of Trent no longer apply. The document *From Conflict to Communion* (2013) marked the Lutheran–Catholic Common Commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017.

World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)

The World Communion of Reformed Churches and its member churches trace their roots to the 16th century Reformation led by John Calvin, John Knox, and Ulrich Zwingli, and to the earlier reforming movements of Jan Hus and Peter Valdes. WCRC

member churches are Congregational, Presbyterian, Reformed, United/Uniting and Waldensian. In 2010, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) united to create the World Communion of Reformed Churches. The Reformed–Roman Catholic Commission officially began its work in Rome in 1970. A total of four phases of dialogue have been held by the Commission producing the following four dialogue reports: *The Presence of Christ in Church and World* (1970–1977); *Towards a Common Understanding of the Church* (1984–1990); *The Church as Community of Common Witness to the Kingdom of God* (1998–2005); and *Justification and Sacramentality: The Christian Community as an Agent for Justice* (2011–2015).

World Methodist Council (WMC)

The World Methodist Council is an association of 80 churches from across the world. Most of these have their roots in the teaching of the 18th century Anglican preacher, John Wesley. Methodists have a long history of ecumenical covenants and so in many countries such as Canada, Australia and India, Methodists have become part of United or Uniting Churches. The Methodist–Roman Catholic International Commission began work in 1967. The Commission produces reports every five years to coincide with the meetings of the World Methodist Council. These reports have focussed on topics such as: the Holy Spirit, the Church, the sacraments, the apostolic tradition, revelation and faith, teaching authority in the Church, and holiness. The 2017–2021 phase of dialogue focusses on the theme of the Church as a reconciled and reconciling community.

Mennonite World Conference (MWC)

The Mennonite World Conference represents the majority of the global family of Christian churches that have their origins in the 16th century Radical Reformation in Europe, and particularly in the Anabaptist movement. MWC membership includes 107 Mennonite and Brethren in Christ national churches from 58 countries, with around 1.5 million baptized believers. International conversations between the Roman Catholic Church and the MWC started in 1998 and produced one dialogue report, *Called Together to Be Peacemakers* (1998–2003).

More recently (2012–2017) the PCPCU has participated in a tripartite dialogue called the International Trilateral Dialogue Commission with the MWC and the LWF which finalised a report in 2017 entitled “Baptism and Incorporation into the Body of Christ, the Church”.

Baptist World Alliance (BWA)

The Alliance is a worldwide fellowship of Baptist believers formed in London in 1905. Currently there are about 240 member churches totalling approximately 46 million members. The Baptist movement began in 17th century England as a separatist movement breaking from the Puritans and advocating the radical separation of church and state. Early leaders of the movement (John Smyth and Thomas Helwys) became convinced that infant baptism was contrary to Scripture. Along with the Mennonites (Anabaptists), who influenced Baptist theology in Holland and beyond, Baptists do not practise infant baptism but advocate what they term “believers’ baptism”. The Baptist–Roman Catholic international conversations began in 1984. Two phases of international dialogues have produced two reports: *Summons to Witness to Christ in Today’s World* (1984–1988) and *The Word of God in the Life of the Church* (2006–2010). Currently, a third phase of dialogue is reflecting on the theme of common Christian witness in the contemporary world.

Disciples of Christ

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was born in the early 19th century in the USA, out of a search for both catholicity and unity. Christian unity is foremost in the Disciples’ doctrine of the church and in their witness to the kingdom of God. They refer to themselves as a “Protestant Eucharistic community” and frequently repeat that “our reconciling journey begins, and ends, at the [Eucharistic] Table”. The dialogue with the Catholic Church started in 1977 and has published four documents: *Apostolicity and Catholicity* (1982); *The Church as Communion in Christ* (1992); *Handing on the Faith* (2002); and *The Presence of Christ in the Church with particular reference to the Eucharist* (2009).

Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements

The Los Angeles Azusa Street Revival Movement in 1906 is usually considered as the beginning of the Pentecostal Movement. Classical Pentecostalism has its origins in this Revival that soon formed into denominations in the protestant sense and have since become international networks such as the Assemblies of God, Four Square Gospel, and the Church of God. The Denominational Pentecostals which sprang from revivals in the 1950s within different Christian traditions while remaining within these confessional boundaries are normally called Charismatics (the Catholic Charismatic Renewal born in 1968 is part of this movement while remaining an ecclesial movement within the Catholic Church). Lastly Non-Denominational Pentecostals or New Charismatic Churches appeared in late 1980s and 1990s. At present Pentecostals and Charismatics are estimated to number about 500 million globally. The Pentecostal–Catholic dialogue began in 1972 and has produced six reports the most recent of which, *Do Not Quench the Spirit*, addresses charisms in the life and mission of the Church.

A series of preliminary conversations between a group of leaders of the New Charismatic Churches (NCC) and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity took place in the Vatican (2008–12). At the end of this preliminary phase, it was agreed to have a round of conversations to explore their identity and self-understanding (2014–18). A document entitled “The Characteristics of the New Charismatic Churches” resulted from the NCC’s reflections on these conversations. It is not an ecumenical document, but represents the NCC’s attempt to describe themselves in a dialogical context and is intended to help and encourage relations between Catholics and New-Charismatic leaders around the world.

World Evangelical Alliance (WEA)

Evangelicals are one of the first ecumenical movements in modern church history. Originally, the Evangelical Alliance, founded in 1846 in London, brought together Christians of Lutheran, Reformed, and Anabaptist traditions. In the founding of the Evangelical Alliance (now World Evangelical Alliance), a personal relationship to Christ was considered the fundamental uniting value, that is the sense of conversion (repentance) and spiritual rebirth (born-again Christians). Even though the

Evangelicals agree on the four so-called exclusive articles of the Reformation (“*solas*”), at present issues around mission and evangelism are the core concern for Evangelicals, who belong to very many different ecclesial traditions from Anglicanism to Pentecostalism. The World Evangelical Alliance, an association of National Evangelical Alliances with a visible infrastructure, and the Lausanne Movement, which for the most part is an association of individual Evangelicals, represent the concerns of Evangelicalism today. Three rounds of international consultations have been undertaken between representatives of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the WEA and have produced three reports: *Evangelicals and Catholics on Mission* (ERCDOM, 1976–1984); *Church, Evangelisation and the Bonds of Koinonia* (1997–2002); ‘*Scripture and Tradition*’ and ‘*The Church in Salvation*’ – *Catholics and Evangelicals Explore Challenges and Opportunities* (2009–2016).

Salvation Army

The Salvation Army has its roots in mid-19th century England, as a mission movement for the poor and marginalized. The founder, William Booth, was a Methodist minister. The Salvation Army operates in 124 countries. Its membership includes more than 17,000 active and more than 8,700 retired officers, over 1 million soldiers, around 100,000 other employees and more than 4.5 million volunteers. Salvationists can be classified as Evangelical Christians who do not practise any sacraments. A series of informal ecumenical conversations between Salvationists and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity began in 2007 in Middlesex, United Kingdom. There were a total of five meetings ending in 2012. A summary of the international dialogue was published by the Salvation Army in 2014 under the title *Conversations with the Catholic Church*.

Multilateral dialogues

Through the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity the Catholic Church also engages in multilateral dialogues.

World Council of Churches (WCC)

Founded in 1948, the World Council of Churches is “a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit” (*The Basis* adopted by the Third Assembly in New Delhi in 1961). The WCC is today the broadest and most inclusive organized expression of the ecumenical movement. It brings together 350 member churches including Orthodox, Lutherans, Reformed, Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists as well as Evangelicals, Pentecostals and United and Independent churches. All together they represent over 500 million Christians from all continents and more than 110 countries.

Although the Catholic Church is not a member of the WCC, there has been growing collaboration on issues of common concern since the Second Vatican Council. The most important collaboration for the pursuit of the goal of full visible unity is undertaken through the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU). This includes the Joint Working Group (established in 1965), collaboration in the field of ecumenical formation and education, and the common preparation of the material for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Catholic experts are also members of various commissions of the WCC such as the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, the Commission on Ecumenical Education and Formation, as well as various *ad hoc* working groups related to specific projects. Particularly important for resolving doctrinal, moral and structural divergences among the Churches is the Commission on Faith and Order, 10% of whose membership is Catholic. Since its establishment in 1948, the Commission has undertaken many studies on important ecumenical topics including Holy Scripture and Tradition, apostolic faith, anthropology, hermeneutics, reconciliation, violence and peace, preservation of creation, and visible unity. In 1982 it published *Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry (BEM)*, also known as *The Lima Statement*, the first multilateral convergence statement on the issues at the heart of the ecumenical debate. The official Catholic response (1987) expressed the conviction that the study of ecclesiology should take a central place in ecumenical dialogue in order to resolve

remaining issues. In 2013, the Commission published a second convergence statement *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (TCTCV). A result of three decades of intense theological dialogue involving hundreds of theologians and church leaders, TCTCV demonstrates “how far Christian communities have come in their common understanding of the church, showing the progress that has been made and indicating work that still needs to be done” (Introduction). The official Catholic response (2019) makes it clear that without pretending to having achieved full agreement, TCTCV shows growing consensus on controversial issues regarding the Church’s nature, mission and unity.

Global Christian Forum (GCF)

The Global Christian Forum is a recent ecumenical initiative that emerged at the end of the last century within the context of the WCC. It intends to create an open space – a forum – where representatives of the so-called “historic churches” (Catholic, Orthodox and post-Reformation Protestant churches) and those identified as “recent churches” (Pentecostal, Evangelical and Independent) could join together on an equal basis to foster mutual respect, to share faith stories, and to address together common challenges. The aim of the GCF is to gather around one table representatives of almost all Christian traditions, including African Instituted Churches, mega churches, migrant churches, and new ecumenical movements and communities. Represented in the GCF are many Christian world communions and world Christian organisations, including the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the Pentecostal World Fellowship, the World Evangelical Alliance and the World Council of Churches. Without formal membership, the GCF provides space for networking and for church leaders to explore issues of common interest in the fast changing context of global Christianity today.

Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE)

The Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) is a fellowship of over 90 Protestant churches which have signed the Leuenberg Agreement. Its aim is to implement church fellowship through common witness and service. Membership consists of most of the Lutheran and Reformed churches in Europe, the United churches originating from mergers of those churches, the Waldensian Church, and the European Methodist

churches. Some European churches have remained outside the fellowship, such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Church of Sweden. In a worship service in Basel on 16 September 2018, the CPCE and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity committed to begin an official dialogue on the theme of church and church communion.

Annexure -3

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BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
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SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 201219a

Saturday 19.12.2020

Note of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments on the Sunday of the Word of God

NOTE ON THE SUNDAY OF THE WORD OF GOD

The Sunday of the Word of God, instituted by Pope Francis and to be held every year on the third Sunday of Ordinary Time,[1]reminds us, pastors and faithful alike, of the importance and value of Sacred Scripture for the Christian life, as well as the relationship between the word of God and the liturgy: "As Christians, we are one people, making our pilgrim way through history, sustained by the Lord, present in our midst, who speaks to us and nourishes us. A day devoted to the Bible should not be seen as a yearly event but rather a year-long event, for we urgently need to grow in our knowledge and love of the Scriptures and of the Risen Lord, who continues to speak his word and to break bread in the community of believers. For this reason, we need to develop a closer relationship with Sacred Scripture; otherwise, our hearts will remain cold and our eyes shut, inflicted as we are by so many forms of blindness".[2]

This Sunday, therefore, presents an ideal opportunity to reread some of the Church's documents[3]and especially the *Praenotanda* of the *Ordo Lectionum Missae*, which present a synthesis of the theological, ritual and pastoral principles surrounding the word of God proclaimed at Mass, but which is also valid in every other liturgical celebration (Sacraments, Sacramentals, Liturgy of the Hours).

1. Through the proclaimed biblical readings in the liturgy, God speaks to his people and Christ himself proclaims his Gospel;[4]Christ is the centre and fullness of all Scripture, both the Old and New Testaments.[5] Listening to the Gospel, the high point of the Liturgy of the Word,[6] is characterised by a special veneration,[7] expressed not only by gestures and acclamations, but by the Book of the Gospels itself.[8] One of the ritual possibilities suitable for this Sunday could be the entrance procession with the Book of the Gospels[9] or simply placing the Book of the Gospels on the altar.[10]

2. The arrangement of the biblical readings laid down by the Church in the Lectionary opens the way to understanding the entirety of God's word.[11] It is therefore necessary to respect the readings indicated, without replacing or removing them, and using only versions of the Bible approved for liturgical use.[12] The proclamation of the texts of the Lectionary constitutes a bond of unity between all the faithful who hear them. An

understanding of the structure and purpose of the Liturgy of the Word helps the assembly to receive God's saving word.[13]

3. The singing of the Responsorial Psalm, which is the response of the Church at prayer, is recommended:[14] the psalmist's function in every community, therefore, should be enhanced.[15]

4. In the homily, beginning with the biblical readings, the mysteries of faith and the norms of the Christian life are explained throughout the liturgical year.[16] "Pastors are primarily responsible for explaining Sacred Scripture and helping everyone to understand it. Since it is the people's book, those called to be ministers of the word must feel an urgent need to make it accessible to their community".[17] Bishops, priests and deacons must develop a commitment to carry out this ministry with special dedication, making use of the means proposed by the Church.[18]

5. Particular importance is attached to silence which, by favouring meditation, allows the word of God to be received inwardly by the listener.[19]

6. The Church has always paid particular attention to those who proclaim the word of God in the assembly: priests, deacons and readers. This ministry requires specific interior and exterior preparation, familiarity with the text to be proclaimed and the necessary practice in the way of proclaiming it clearly, avoiding all improvisation.[20] It is possible to preface the readings with appropriate and short introductions.[21]

7. Because of the importance of the word of God, the Church invites us to pay special attention to the ambo from which it is proclaimed.[22] It is not a functional piece of furniture, but a place that is in keeping with the dignity of the word of God, in correspondence with the altar: in fact, we speak of the table of God's word and the table of the Body of Christ, referring both to the ambo and especially to the altar.[23] The ambo is reserved for the readings, the singing of the Responsorial Psalm and the Easter Proclamation (*Exsultet*); the homily and the intentions of the universal prayer can be delivered from it, while it is less appropriate to use it for commentaries, announcements or for directing singing.[24]

8. The books containing the readings from Sacred Scripture stir up in those who hear a veneration for the mystery of God speaking to his people.[25] For this reason, we ask that care be taken to ensure that these books are of a high quality and used properly. It is never appropriate to resort to leaflets, photocopies and other pastoral aids as a substitute for liturgical books.[26]

9. In the run up to or in the days following the Sunday of the Word of God it is fitting to promote formation meetings in order to highlight the importance of Sacred Scripture in liturgical celebrations; it can be an opportunity to learn more about how the Church at prayer reads the Sacred Scriptures with continuous, semi-continuous and typological readings and to explain the criteria for the liturgical distribution of the various biblical books in the course of the year and its seasons, as well as what the structure is of the Sunday and weekday cycles of the readings for Mass.[27]

10. The Sunday of the Word of God is also a fitting occasion to deepen the link between Sacred Scripture and the Liturgy of the Hours, the praying of the Psalms and Canticles of the Office, as well as the biblical readings. This can be done by promoting the community celebration of Lauds and Vespers. [28]

Among the many Saints, all of whom witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Saint Jerome can be proposed as an example because of the great love he had for the word of God. As Pope Francis has recalled, he was a "tireless [...] scholar, translator and exegete. [He had a] profound knowledge of the Scriptures, [and] zeal for making their teaching known. [...] In his attentive listening to the Scriptures, Jerome came to know himself and to find the face of God and of his brothers and sisters. He was also confirmed in his attraction to community life" [29]

The purpose of this Note is to help reawaken, in the light of the Sunday of the Word of God, an awareness of the

importance of Sacred Scripture for our lives as believers, beginning with its resonance in the liturgy which places us in living and permanent dialogue with God. "God's word, listened to and celebrated, above all in the Eucharist, nourishes and inwardly strengthens Christians, enabling them to offer an authentic witness to the Gospel in daily life".[30]

From the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 17 December 2020.

Robert Card. Sarah
Prefect

+ Arthur Roche
Archbishop Secretary

[1] Cf. Francis, Apostolic Letter *Motu proprio Aperuit illis*, 30 November 2019.

[2] Francis, *Aperuit illis*, n. 8; Vatican Council II, Constitution *Dei Verbum*, n. 25: "Therefore, all the clergy must hold fast to the Sacred Scriptures through diligent sacred reading and careful study, especially the priests of Christ and others, such as deacons and catechists who are legitimately active in the ministry of the word. This is to be done so that none of them will become 'an empty preacher of the word of God outwardly, who is not a listener to it inwardly' since they must share the abundant wealth of the divine word with the faithful committed to them, especially in the sacred liturgy. The sacred synod also earnestly and especially urges all the Christian faithful, especially Religious, to learn by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures the 'excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ' (Phil. 3:8). 'For ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ'".

[3] Vatican Council II, Constitution *Dei Verbum*; Benedict XVI, Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini*.

[4] Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nn. 7, 33; *Institutio generalis Missalis Romani* (IGMR), n. 29; *Ordo lectionum Missae* (OLM), n. 12.

[5] Cf. OLM, n. 5.

[6] Cf. IGMR, n. 60; OLM, n. 13.

[7] Cf. OLM, n. 17; *Caeremoniale Episcoporum*, n. 74.

[8] Cf. OLM, nn. 36, 113.

[9] Cf. IGMR, nn. 120, 133.

[10] Cf. IGMR, n. 117.

[11] Cf. IGMR, n. 57; OLM, n. 60.

[12] Cf. OLM, nn. 12, 14, 37, 111.

[13] Cf. OLM, n. 45.

[14] Cf. IGMR, n. 61; OLM, n. 19-20.

[15] Cf. OLM, n. 56.

[16] Cf. OLM, n. 24; Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Homiletic Directory*, n. 16.

[17] Francis, *Aperuit illis*, n. 5; *Homiletic Directory*, n. 26.

[18] Cf. Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, nn. 135-144; *Homiletic Directory*.

[19] Cf. IGMR, n. 56; OLM, n. 28.

[20] Cf. OLM, nn. 14, 49.

[21] Cf. OLM, nn. 15, 42.

[22] Cf. IGMR, n. 309; OLM, n. 16.

[23] Cf. OLM, n. 32.

[24] Cf. OLM, n. 33.

[25] Cf. OLM, n. 35; *Caeremoniale Episcoporum*, n. 115.

[26] Cf. OLM, n. 37.

[27] Cf. OLM, nn. 58-110; *Homiletic Directory*, nn. 37-156.

[28] *Institutio generalis de Liturgia Horarum*, n. 140: "Following ancient tradition, Sacred Scripture is read publicly in the liturgy not only in the celebration of the Eucharist but also in the Divine Office. The liturgical reading of scripture is of the greatest importance for all Christians because it is offered by the Church herself and not by the decision or whim of a single individual. Within the cycle of a year the mystery of Christ is unfolded by his Bride [...]. In liturgical celebrations prayer always accompanies the reading of Sacred Scripture".

[29] Cf. Francis, Apostolic Letter *Scripturae sacrae affectus*, on the Sixteenth-hundredth Anniversary of the Death of Saint Jerome, 30 September 2020.

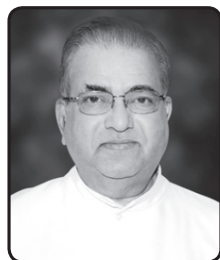
[30] Cf. Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 174.

Annexure -4

OBITUARY

REV. MSGR. J.B. XAVIER

Rev. Msgr. J.B. Xavier, a senior priest of the Diocese of Mysore, passed away at 5:00 p.m. on December 29, 2020 due to cardiac arrest. He was 82 years old.



The mortal remains of Msgr. J.B. Xavier was kept at St. Mary's Minor Seminary, Bannimantap, Mysuru for public homage. A solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated at St. Joseph's Cathedral, Mysuru at 10:00 a.m by Most. Rev. Dr. Peter Machado, Archbishop of Bangalore, Most. Rev. Dr. K.A. William, and Most. Rev. Dr. Thomas Anthony Vazhapilly in which the priests concelebrated, and the religious, laity etc., participated. The mortal remains was taken to his birth place, Our Lady of Rosary Church, Shettihalli, Hassan District where his body was interred by the side of his parents' grave at 3:30 p.m. on the same day.

Msgr. J.B. Xavier was born in Shettihalli in Hassan District to Mr. S. Johannes, a teacher and Mrs. Amruthamma on November 14, 1938. Msgr. J.B. Xavier was the second in a large family of 11 children. Two of his sisters were religious in the congregation of Salesian Sisters of Mary Immaculate (SMMI). He is survived by five sisters and three brothers. After his school studies he joined St. Mary's Minor Seminary, Mysore and completing his Philosophy and Theology studies in St. Peter's Seminary, Bangalore, was ordained priest at St. Joseph's Cathedral, Mysore on April 4th, 1962, by the then Bishop of Mysore, Rt. Rev. Dr. Rene Feuga. After serving for a brief period as Assistant at St. Joseph's Cathedral, Mysore, he was sent for higher studies to Paris, France, in 1965. There at the Catholic Institute, he completed his master's degree in Liturgy and Church History.

He was a Professor of Liturgy and Church History from 1967 till 1993 at St. Peter's Pontifical Seminary, Bangalore. He also served there as Rector for three years and the first Registrar of St. Peter's Pontifical Institute.

He has served as Parish Priest at Immaculate conception Church, Ganjam; St. Francis of Assisi Church, Kollegal and Sacred Heart Church Yadavagiri. He was also the Director of the Organization for Development of People, Mysore. He was the Dean of Kollegal Deanery and also the Vicar General of the Diocese of Mysore between 2003 and 2009.

As the Secretary for Karnataka Regional Commission for Liturgy for a number of years, and being fluent and erudite in Kannada, he has done extensive work in translating liturgical books to Kannada. He was a member of the Ecumenical Bible Translation Committee. He has translated the New Roman Missal, The Book of blessings and also prepared the Kannada Lectionary. He was working on the project of translating the Book of Gospels and Sacramental Rituals in Kannada.

As a priest, Msgr J.B. Xavier was very devout and known for making liturgy lively and meaningful. He always respected authority and was very cordial with all priests and his parishioners. He had great devotion to Blessed Virgin Mary, especially, Our Lady of the Rosary. He was always joining online Marian devotion in Lourdes, France. He loved the Church and was a happy priest. He wished to be alive for another two years to celebrate his Sacerdotal Diamond Jubilee.

I, on behalf of Most Rev. Thomas A. Vazhapilly, Bishop Emeritus, all the clergy, religious and laity of Mysore diocese, condole the death of Msgr. J.B. Xavier and convey our sympathies to his bereaving near and dear ones.

All the priests of the diocese are requested to offer three *Holy Masses* for the repose of soul of late Rev. Msgr. J.B. Xavier. May his soul rest in peace. Amen.

Annexure -5

EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED FROM 01.12.2020 TO 31.12.2020

PARISHES	Christmas Collection	Second Sunday Collection	Holy Childhood Collection	Communio Sunday	Hunger & Disease	St. Peter the Apostle Collection	St. Peter's Pence Collection	Holy Thursday Collection
St. Joseph's Church, Mandya	3,443.00	4,585.00	4,950.00			4,930.00	4,250.00	
St. Sebastian's Church, Kushalnagar	5,600.00	16,300.00		1,086.00	2,366.00	1,216.00	1,123.00	1,023.00
Nirmala Mathe Church, Kutta		6,340.00	700.00			700.00	700.00	
Holy Rosary Church, Madapura								
Divine Mercy Church, Sathagalli		7,183.00						
Sacred Heart Church, Nagavalli		4,900.00						
St. Anne's Church, Virajpet		10,600.00						
Immaculate Conception Church, Ganjam		6,155.00						
Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Martalli		15,000.00						
Our Lady of Velankanni Church, J. P. Nagar		7,290.00						
St. Mary's Church, H. D. Kote		11,479.00					1,213.00	

RELIGIOUS	Hunger & Disease	Holy Child Hood	St. Peter's Pence
Nirmala Convent, Mysore	3,000.00	3,000.00	
St. Joseph's Convent, Mandya	3,000.00	3,000.00	2,000.00
Christ the King Convent, Mysore			

N.B.: There are a few bank remittances without details. We are not able to trace and issue necessary receipts. We request them to contact the diocesan office with the details of transfer and obtain necessary receipts for the remittances made.

Sad Demise

Rev. Msgr. J. B. Xavier

Born in Shettihalli: 14th November 1938

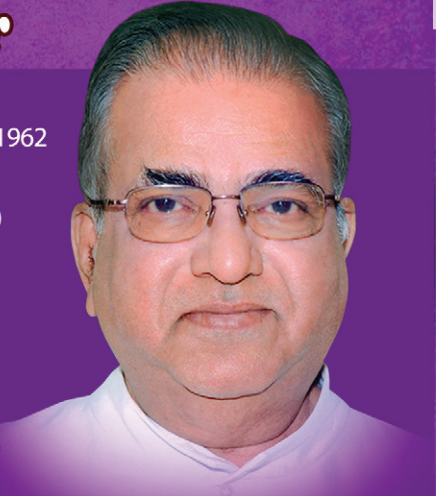
Ordained at St. Joseph's Cathedral on: 4th April 1962

Expired at Mysuru on: 29th December 2020

Laid to rest at Shettihalli on: 30th December 2020



*May his soul
Rest In Peace.*

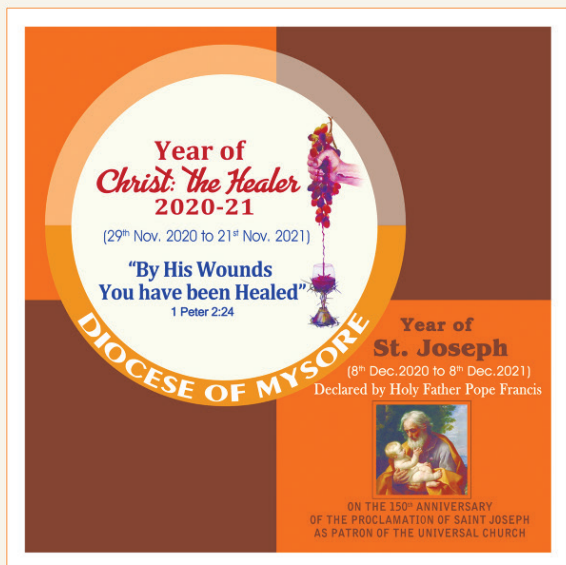


Served at St. Peter's Seminary/ Institute, Bangalore as Professor & Rector;
Regional Secretary for Liturgical Commission;
Vicar General, Dean,
Parish Priest of Ganjam, Kollegal & Yadavagiri; Director of ODP.



Mr. Chandra Kumar

He was our Diocesan Auditor for more than three decades since 1985, after the service of his father Mr. Nayar, who served our diocese as auditor from before 1960 for more than three decades. *May his soul rest in peace.*



The Year of Christ - The Healer & St. Joseph: 2020-21

Almighty God, the Diocese of Mysore and the Universal Church dedicates this year as the Year of Christ– the Healer and St. Joseph. We thank you for Sacrificing your Son on the Cross, so that we may be Healed from the clutches of Sin, Sickness and Evil. We feel the need of the Inner Healing which can only happen by your Gracious Touch, Our Reparation for the Sins and Reconciliation with one another. You said, “I am the Lord, your Healer” (Exodus 15:26). Graciously Listen to us O Lord, we pray.....(*mention your personal intentions in silence*).

We also pray for protection from the present Pandemic. Heal our Body, Mind and Soul. We Consecrate our bishop, priests, religious, lay faithful, our Diocese, as well as the whole humanity to your merciful Healing Heart, so that we may be Healed by the Wounds of your Son Jesus, and be revived in the Spirit. Lord, make us the Angels of healing others by our Words of Compassion and Deeds of Charity. We pray for all the Sick who are rejected by everyone. As St. Joseph, make us responsible towards others by being Kind and Just to all. Let the Precious Blood of Jesus Cleanse and Heal us.

O Mary, Health of the Sick and St. Joseph, the Patron of the Universal Church

We entrust Ourselves to your Protection – Amen.

(Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be)