



Has Christ been divided?

(1 Cor 1 : 1 – 17)

2014

**THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN
UNITY**

1 June to 8 June 2014

Resources available:

Part 1 A Prayer of the Faithful

Part 2 An Ecumenical Service

Part 3 Personal and Communal Prayers

**NZ CATHOLIC BISHOPS' COMMITTEE
FOR ECUMENISM**

Tēna ra kōutou e te whanau,

he mihi aroha tenei i te wāhanga nei o ngā karakia.

Kei a kōutou te mana karakia i roto i tou whanau whanui i te wiki ka eke mai.

Mau tonu kē wēnei karakia nō rātou i a mātou whanaunga i te whakapono i a Canada.

Kia tau te rangimarie, kia tau hoki te Wairua Tapu ā, kia pā ano te aroaro o Hēhu te Karaiti.

Tēna ra kōutou

A very warm acknowledgement of whanau in this week of prayer.

Feel free to pray in your reo as the Spirit guides in your families and communities in the week of prayer that approaches.

Feel free also to use the prayers given by our Canadian brothers and sisters in faith.

May peace be with you, may the Holy Spirit be with you, and indeed may you experience the presence of Jesus the Christ.

Go well whanau.

THE PREPARATION OF THE MATERIAL FOR THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2014

The initial work on the theme for this year's week of prayer material was prepared by a group of representatives from different parts of Canada, brought together at the invitation of the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism and the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism.

As Canadian Christians we are mindful that we have not always been ready to rejoice in the gifts of God present in other Christian communities. Reading Paul's text in an ecumenical spirit, we become more conscious of being invited to rejoice sincerely in how God has blessed other Christians and other peoples. Those who first brought the Christian faith to Canada were often dismissive of the gifts and insights of the indigenous peoples, and failed to see the blessings God bestowed through them.

We have much to be grateful for in the diversity of peoples and expressions of faith in our country. Although our history has many examples of how we have not lived in mutual respect for and support of each other, we know that our country was built upon co-operation and seeking ways for peace at home and in the world. Our enjoyment of the blessings of the natural world as God-given gifts are too often taken for granted and we struggle to balance prosperity and the stewardship of these physical blessings. We struggle too to enact the values we all say we hold as Canadians. As Christians and as churches, we feel called to a receptive gratitude towards the gifts of God in the other, and to embody thankfulness and caring for the whole country and the world.

Suggested ways that your parish can use this material

- 1 Print the suggested prayer in your parish bulletin and include it in the Prayers of the Faithful during the week and on Pentecost Sunday.
- 2 Hold a single one off service – ***preferably ecumenical*** – using some or all of the material given here.
- 3 Distribute Part 3 for private or communal prayer each day, for eight days, during this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.
- 4 Parish Priest to hand out to Ministers Association.

PART 1

SUGGESTED PRAYER

Most loving and gracious God, we give thanks for the gifts of your grace that we experience in our own tradition and in the traditions of other churches. By the grace of your Holy Spirit, may our gratitude continue to grow as we encounter one another and experience your gift of unity in new ways. This we pray through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

PART 2

Introduction to the Worship Service Has Christ been divided? (*cf. 1 Cor 1:1-17*)

As we gather for worship during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we respond to God's call to us and we seek to be renewed and to build up our mutual relationship in Christ through song, word and gesture. This celebration may also serve as an invitation to explore or recall the eight days of reflection, which are linked textually to 1 Corinthians 1:1-17. We recognise Paul's provocative question: "Has Christ been divided?" as a joyful challenge to prayer and to self-examination as persons and as Christian communities. This biblical text and worship outline is an opportunity to consider that challenge anew in your context.

The **Gathering of the community** includes an invitation to pray while turning to face different directions, in the tradition of some of the indigenous people of Canada. You will need to be aware of where the compass points lie for the worshipping congregation, so that they can turn clockwise as the prayer unfolds. They will need to return to the front of the worship space for the "upward" and "downward" directions, as noted. You may need to alter the prayers to reflect your own geographical context

Order of the Service

Has Christ been divided?

(cf. 1 Cor 1: 1-17)

1 We gather in Hope and Unity

Processional Hymn

The worship leaders and others may enter in procession.

Gathering of the Community

Leader : Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:13).

Leader: This worship service was prepared in Canada. the word “Canada” in the language of some of the country’s first people, the Iroquois, means “village”. As members of the household of God Christians around the world indeed inhabit one ‘village’. When Christians worship, they link themselves to this vast global village, so full of beauty, of struggle and of hope. Dear friends, we welcome you to join together in prayer through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

Leader: Loving God, you call all of us: from our homes and from our offices, from our mines and from our factories, from our fields and from our shops, from our fishing boats and from our herds, from our schools and from our hospitals, from our prisons and from our detention centres, to be one in fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ.

All: ***Make us one in Christ.***

Leader: The indigenous peoples of Canada honour an ancient ritual of praying while facing in different directions. With them, let us unite in prayer, facing each of the directions as indicated:

Facing East

Leader: From the East, the direction of the rising sun, we receive peace and light and wisdom and knowledge.

All: ***We are grateful for these gifts, O God.***

Facing North

Leader: From the North comes warmth, guidance, and the beginning and the end of life.

All: ***We are grateful for these gifts, O God.***

Facing West

Leader: From the West comes the rain, purifying waters, to sustain all living things.

All: ***We are grateful for these gifts, O God.***

Facing South

Leader: From the South comes the cold and mighty wind and the white snows, giving us strength and endurance.

All: ***We are grateful for these gifts, O God.***

Turning towards the front, and facing upward

Leader: From the heavens we receive darkness and light and the air of your breath.

All: ***We are grateful for these gifts, O God.***

Facing downward

Leader: From the earth we come and to the earth we will return.

All: ***We are grateful, O God, for your good creation, our earthly home.***

Leader: May we walk good paths, blessed God, living on this earth as brothers and sisters should; rejoicing in one another's blessing, sympathizing in one another's sorrows, and together with you, in the name of Jesus, and with the Spirit's awakening breath, renewing the face of the earth.

All: ***Amen.***

Hymn of Praise

Prayers of Repentance

Leader: Inspired by Paul's appeal to the community of Corinth, let us confess our sins.

Leader: Gracious God, through our union with Christ Jesus you have made us rich in speech and in knowledge of every kind. In our pride, we attribute these gifts to ourselves and do not recognize their true source. Forgive us, Lord.

All: *Lord, have mercy or Kyrie eleison (may be sung).*

Leader: Gracious God, in Christ we are not lacking in any spiritual gift. Yet, often we are too timid or too self-absorbed to share the marvels of this life-giving message with those around us. Forgive us, Lord.

All: *Lord, have mercy.*

Leader: Gracious God, you call us to fellowship in your Son, Jesus Christ. For our lack of enthusiasm to be united in one mind and one purpose; for too readily allowing divisions and quarrels to persist among us, forgive us, Lord.

All: *Lord, have mercy.*

Leader: Gracious God, you remain faithful even while seeing our weakness. Forgive our sins of mediocrity and our too easy acceptance of divisions among us. By the grace of your Holy Spirit, rekindle our zeal to take concrete steps to honour our covenant of unity with you, with one another, and with all of creation.

All: *Amen.*

2 We Listen for the Word of God

Scripture Readings

Isaiah 57:14-19;

1 Corinthians 1:1-17;

Psalms 36:5-10;

Mark 9:33-41

Homily

3 We Respond in Faith and Unity

Affirmation of Faith

(The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed or the Apostles' Creed.)

Hymn of Faith and Commitment

Ecumenical Exchange of Spiritual Gifts

Those preparing the service have gathered beforehand to reflect on the various gifts of the churches in the community. Either local gifts or gifts of their wider tradition may be selected. Representatives of the different churches bring objects representing the gifts that their tradition brings to the whole Christian community. The gifts are brought forward and then placed on a table. A leader may announce the gifts using this or a similar format:

Leader: From the church, we gratefully receive the gift of represented here by

All: *We are grateful for these gifts, O God.*

Collect

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles, "Peace I give to you; my own peace I leave with you". Regard not our sins, but the faith of your Church, and give to us the peace and unity of that heavenly city, where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, now and forever.

Amen.

Intercessory Prayers

Together, Canadian churches have embraced the United Nations' "Eight Millennium Goals." The following prayers lift up these goals.

Leader: We pray for all people who suffer day to day in *poverty and hunger*. Their precarious state often causes divisions; may Christ's love restore justice and peace. Gracious God, hear our prayer.

All: ***And in your love, answer.***

Leader: We pray for all those striving for *universal education*. May their thirst for knowledge build bridges between our churches and restore respect in our differences. Gracious God, hear our prayer.

All: ***And in your love, answer.***

Leader: We pray for those striving for *equal dignity and rights of man and woman*. May the image of God be honoured in all women and men. We remember especially the need for equal access to jobs, goods and services. As we become one in Christ Jesus, may we fully receive the gifts of both men and women. Gracious God, hear our prayer.

All: ***And in your love, answer.***

Leader: We pray for the young who are sick and those who seek to improve *child health*. As we take care of children, may we welcome Jesus himself. Gracious God, hear our prayer

All: ***And in your love, answer.***

Leader: We pray for women who bear children, and for their *maternal health*. May we take care of these mothers who carry new life and whose love for their children reminds us of God's uniting love for us. Gracious God, hear our prayer.

All: ***And in your love, answer.***

Leader: We pray for those who "*combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases*". May we hear the voices of those denied a life of dignity, and work to create a world in which all people are respected and cared for, and where no one is excluded. Gracious God, hear our prayer

All: ***And in your love, answer.***

Leader: We pray for all who suffer the consequences of the poor stewardship of creation, and for all endangered species. Guide us to "*environmental sustainability*" so we can be reconciled with creation. Gracious God, hear our prayer

All: ***And in your love, answer.***

Leader: We pray for those who practice international solidarity and *global partnership*. As we favour a fair trade of goods and we cancel debt in the poorest countries, may we also strive for justice. Gracious God, hear our prayer

All: ***And in your love, answer.***

Leader: As we strive to realize these goals, may we discern your voice, O Lord, and journey together towards the Kingdom for which you prayed. And so we pray:

The Lord's Prayer (*said or sung*)

Sign of Peace

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Leader: When the French came to Canada in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they found a land rich

in resources, and were helped by its first Peoples. Their sense of gratitude led to the ship that brought the founder of Québec City being named "*Don de Dieu*", which means "Gift of God".

In many of the Eucharistic rites used in Canada, people are invited to Holy Communion with the words "The Gifts of God for the People of God." The unity for which we pray is restored ecclesial communion with one another, and will be marked by receiving the Eucharistic gifts together. Yet even on the journey to visible unity, we give and receive other gifts from one another, gifts of God for the people of God.

In the French-speaking Province of Québec today, the expression *don de Dieu* - "gift of God" - has a fresh vitality in the Christian community and in popular culture. It recalls a sense of gratitude for the gifts of God which comes from a time when their ancestors were able to share in thanksgiving with the First Nations of Canada. As a sign of our peace and a way to recognise the gifts we receive from one another, let us say to each other with French-Canadians, "*Don de Dieu*".

The worshippers greet one another with an embrace, bow, or handshake as they say:

All: "*Don de Dieu*"

Offering Hymn (*a collection may be taken during this hymn*)

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4 We Go Forth Into the World

Commitment to Unity

Leader: Paul challenged the Christians in Corinth to know in their hearts and to show in their actions that Christ has not been divided. He challenges us, too, to realise more fully the unity we already have in Christ.

With all those in every place who call on the Lord Jesus Christ

All: *Together, we are called to be saints.*

Leader: Graced by God in every way

All: *Together, we give thanks for one another.*

Leader: Rich in the many blessings God has given us through our union in Christ

All: *Together, we are not lacking in any spiritual gift.*

Leader: Sure in the God who strengthens us for love and service

All: *Together, we affirm that God is faithful.*

Leader: Embraced by Jesus Christ

All: *Together, we are called into fellowship.*

Leader: United in the same mind and the same purpose

C: *Together, we seek to be in agreement.*

Leader: Overcoming our quarrels about the one who was crucified for us

All: *Together, we belong to Christ.*

Leader: Has Christ, then, been divided?

All: ***No! Together, we go into the world to proclaim his good news!***

Sending Hymn

Blessing and Sending Forth

The blessing may be bestowed by several worship leaders in the form below or in another form.

Leader: The Lord be with you.

All: ***And also with you.***

Leader: May the love of the Lord Jesus draw you to himself,
may the power of the Lord Jesus strengthen you in his service,
may the joy of the Lord Jesus fill your spirit,
and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you forever.

All: ***Amen***

Leader: Go in peace,
to love and to be loved,
to welcome and to belong
to serve and to be nourished.

All: **Thanks be to God!**

Postlude

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