

The week of

# Christian Unity

January 18 - 25

This year's theme is  
from John 15:1-17

Abide in my love  
and you will bear much fruit

# 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 Taizé (2000) p. 134*

### Prayer

Holy Spirit,  
May we receive in our hearts the presence of Christ,  
and cherish it as a secret of love.  
Nourish our prayer,  
enlighten our reading of Scripture,  
act through us,  
so that the fruits of your gifts can patiently grow in us.

# DAY 3

## Forming one body “Love one another as I have loved you”

(Jn 15:12b)

Col 3:12-17		Clothe yourself with compassion
Jn 13:1-15; 34-35		Love one another

### Meditation

On the eve of his death, Jesus knelt to wash the feet of his disciples. He knew the difficulty of living together and the importance of forgiveness and mutual service. “Unless I wash you,” he said to Peter, “you have no share with me.”

Peter received Jesus at his feet; he was washed and was touched by the humility and gentleness of Christ. Later he would follow Jesus’ example and serve the fellowship of the faithful in the early church.

Jesus wishes that life and love circulate through us as the sap through the vine, so that Christian communities be one body. But today as in the past, it is not easy to live together. We are often faced with our own limitations. At times we fail to love those who are close to us in a community, parish or family. There are times when our relationships break down completely.

In Christ we are invited to be clothed in compassion, through countless new beginnings. The recognition that we are loved by God moves us to welcome each other with our strengths and weaknesses. It is then that Christ is in our midst.

*With almost nothing, are you a creator of reconciliation in that communion of love, which is the Body of Christ, his Church? Sustained by a shared momentum, rejoice! You are no longer alone, in all things you are advancing together with your brothers and sisters. With them, you are called to live the parable of community.*

*The Sources of Taizé (2000) pp. 48-49*

### Prayer

God our Father,  
you reveal to us your love through Christ  
and through our brothers and sisters.  
Open our hearts so that we can welcome each other  
with our differences and live in forgiveness.  
Grant us to live united in one body,  
so that the gift that is each person comes to light.  
May all of us together be a reflection of the living Christ.

# 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  
Jn 17:20-23

Is Christ divided?  
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.

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.<sup>6</sup>*

For more information visit: [www.grandchamp.org](http://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.