

WEEK OF PRAYER

FOR

CHRISTIAN UNITY

2023



**Do good;
seek justice**

(Isaiah 1:17)

A Vigil of Prayer

Organised by

**the Centro Pro Unione, the Methodist Ecumenical Office, Rome and
the Anglican Centre in Rome**



**St Augustine of Canterbury Chapel, ACR, ROME
Tuesday 17 January 2021 at 5.30 pm (ROME TIME)**

- *Words of welcome*
- *Music*
- **Call to Gather**

Sisters and brothers, as we gather in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we are invited to reflect on our actions and inactions and learn to do good and seek justice. We need God's grace to overcome our divisions and to uproot systems and structures that have contributed to the fracturing of our communities.

We gather to pray to reinforce the unity that we have as Christians to "open our hearts that we may be bold in finding the riches of inclusion and the treasures of diversity among us. We pray in faith.

- **Hymn "And Can It Be that I Should Gain"**

- *The Reading according to the Prophecy of Isaiah*

Isaiah 1.12-18

When you come to appear before me, who asked this from your hand? Trample my courts no more; bringing offerings is futile; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and sabbath and calling of convocation—I cannot endure solemn assemblies with iniquity. Your new moons and your appointed festivals my soul hates; they have become a burden to me, I am weary of bearing them. When you stretch out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow. Come now, let us argue it out, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.

New Revised Standard Version

- **Invitation to Confession and Forgiveness**

We are invited to confess our sins with the words of the prophet Isaiah.

When you come to appear before me, who asked this from your hand?
Trample my courts no more; bringing offerings is futile; incense is an abomination to me.

Forgive us Lord when we come to worship without walking humbly before you.

Silence

New moon and Sabbath and calling of convocation—I cannot endure solemn assemblies with iniquity. Your new moons and your appointed festivals my soul hates; they have become a burden to me, I am weary of bearing them.

We ask forgiveness for the complicity of churches in the evils of colonialism felt around the world.

Silence

When you stretch out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.

We ask forgiveness for our sins of injustice and oppression that suppress the diverse harmony of your creation.

Silence

Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.

As we have been washed clean in the living waters of baptism, forgive us anew and reconcile us to one another and to creation.

Silence

Come now, let us argue it out, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.

May God in his mercy, free you from your sins so that you can do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God.

Silence

Almighty God hears our prayers, has mercy on us and forgives our sins.
Thanks be to God.

- **Prayer**

God of all, our hearts and bodies are thankful for this opportunity to come before you to confess our sins of injustice and divisiveness. Together we come before you, a holy family, united in the beautiful diversity of your creation: some of us are Indigenous peoples, some of us are descendants of the enslaved, some of us are descendants of the enslavers, some of us are migrants, some of us are refugees, but all of us are part of the one Body of Christ. We praise you that through the living waters of baptism our sins, red as scarlet, were washed away and we were healed, as we became part of the beloved community, the family of God. We offer our thanksgiving and praise to you, Creator God. Together on this journey, we celebrate with our hearts and eyes open to understanding and growing in the sacred wisdom that is shared and passed amongst all people. Help us to embrace unity with each other, and remind us that we are of one family gathered by your Holy Spirit, in the midst of your creation. **Amen.**

- **Hymn** **“Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”**

 *Meditation:* **ARCHBISHOP IAN ERNEST**
“Learn to do good; seek justice, Defend the oppressed.”

Silence

THE READING FROM THE LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS 2.13-22

 *Meditation:* **FATHER JAMES PUGLISI**
“Reconciled through Christ.”

Silence

THE READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW 25.31-40

 *Meditation:* **REVEREND MATTHEW LAFFERTY**
“The coming of the Son of Man in his glory.”

Silence



- **Hymn “Lift Every Voice and Sing”**

- **The Apostle’s Creed**

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ,
his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived
by the Holy Spirit
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died,
and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day
he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand
of the Father,
and will come to
judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercessions

With faith and confidence, we come in prayer, before God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Creator God, today we live with the consequences of actions that have made life unsustainable for

some and overabundant for others. Teach us to know how to use responsibly the resources you have given to us for the benefit of all and the respect of your creation. The groaning creation cries out to you.

Teach us and show us the way.

Compassionate God, help us repair the harm that we have inflicted upon each other and the divisions we have created among your people. Just as Christ Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit onto the disciples to birth the community of the new creation, send your grace to heal our divisions and gift us with the unity for which Jesus prayed.

Teach us and show us the way.

Christ, the way, the truth and the life, you embodied justice in your ministry on earth by the good that you did, breaking down the walls that divide and the prejudices that imprison. Open our hearts and minds to recognize that though we are many, we are one in you.

Teach us and show us the way.

Holy Spirit, you create anew the face of the earth. The summit of the mountains, the thunder of the sky, the rhythm of the lakes speak to us –

Because we are connected.

The faintness of the stars, the freshness of the morning, the dewdrops on the flower speak to us –

Because we are connected.

The voices of the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized speak to us –

Because we are connected.

But above all, our hearts soar to you for we cry out 'Abba, Father' as we say:

Our Father... in different languages

An Act of Commitment to be instruments of Unity and Justice



- **Hymn** **“Lift Every Voice and Sing”**
- **Closing Prayer**
Everlasting God, look upon these faces gathered together in holy community and send them anywhere you would have them go. Encourage them by your Holy Spirit to continue to tell their stories, to do good, and to seek justice for the sake of your Creation through their actions. Sustain them that they may be one, so the world may believe that you sent your only Son Jesus for the life of the world. **Amen.**
- **Sending Forth**
The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you. And give you peace. **Amen.**





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