

## **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, 2011**

*One in the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer* (cf. Acts 2:42)

### **Morning Announcements for our Catholic Schools**



These morning announcements are an adaptation from various resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. They are an attempt to bring the spirit of the day's Scripture readings, reflections and prayers into the context of Catholic school students, from grades K-12. Please feel free to use or adapt this resource as you see fit.

Canadian resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity are available from Novalis publishers. Resources also can be found at:

[www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va) and [www.ecumenism.net](http://www.ecumenism.net)

## **Monday January 17, 2011**

This week, we celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Each morning, we will reflect on the faith all Christians share as followers of Jesus. We will pray for greater unity and justice among Christians in our community and world. This year's theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is: *One in the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer* (cf. Acts 2:42)

Let us take a few moments to reflect on our call to unity in Christ under today's sub-theme:  
*The Church in Jerusalem*

### **Reading**

Let us listen to how the first Christian Community was born in Jerusalem in the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost:

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2, 1-4, 6-7,12)

And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like a rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. ... And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in our own native language? ...- in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power. All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

### **Reflection**

The gift of the Holy Spirit was foretold by the prophets and by Jesus. The Holy Spirit brought unity and courage to the apostles at Jerusalem. From there, they went out to spread the Gospel throughout the world. Today, Christians in many parts of the world live in fear, and in division from one another. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to give us the courage to work for unity among Christians and all people of good will in our school and world.

### **Prayer**

Almighty and merciful God, you poured out Your Holy Spirit on the followers of Jesus at Pentecost. United in the power of Your Spirit, they preached His Good News with great courage. Grant that we too might be united in Your Spirit to fearlessly spread His Good News of justice, reconciliation and peace. We make this prayer to You in the name of the risen Jesus, who has conquered all sin and division. Amen

## **Tuesday, January 18, 2011**

Today, we continue celebrating the Week of prayer for Christian Unity.

Today's sub-theme is: *Many Members in One Body*

### **Reading**

Let us listen to St. Paul's words about the richness of the Christian community, whose gifted members are united in the Holy Spirit:

A reading from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians (1Cor 12: 12-27)

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and we were all made to drink of the one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

### **Reflection**

Every member of Christ's body has been given a special gift to serve the body. Sometimes the weaker members of the body have a special gift of drawing out others' compassion and kindness. Each of us is God's gift to one another. Let us try make a point today of remembering that every person we meet has a special place in God's plan for building up the body of Christ and making the world a better place

### **Prayer**

Lord, You have poured out Your infinite beauty and gifts on us in Christ. Make us mindful of our oneness in Christ, that we might honour as brothers and sisters all who share a common love for His Gospel. We make this prayer to You through this same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### **Wednesday January 19, 2011**

We continue this morning, celebrating the Week of prayer for Christian Unity.

Today's sub-theme is: *Devotion to the Apostles' Teaching Unites Us*

#### **Reading**

Let us listen to the prayer of Jesus to the Father the night before He died, asking that His apostles may be one in His love and truth.

A reading from the Gospel of John (Jn 17: 6-9,11b, 17-18)

Jesus said, "Father, I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

#### **Reflection**

The night before he was crucified, Jesus asked the Father to protect his apostles and keep them united in the truth of His Gospel. After receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, they went out from Jerusalem and into the world. In this way, there could be followers of Jesus in every country, culture and language on earth – each devoted to the teaching of the apostles, who handed on the Gospel of Jesus the Lord. Devotion to the apostles' teaching is needed more than ever to overcome injustice and division – not only in Jerusalem, but in our own lives. Let us be witnesses to the apostles' faith in Jesus with words and actions that build peace with those around us, and in our world.

#### **Prayer**

Lord, we give You thanks for the truth of Your Son's Gospel which we have received through the apostles' teaching. May your Holy Spirit keep our hearts open and ready to work with all Christians to announce His message of unity, peace, justice and love. We make this prayer to You through this same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## **Thursday, January 20**

Today, our sub-theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is: *Sharing, an Expression of Our Unity.*

### **Reading**

Let us listen to how the first Christian community at Jerusalem shared everything between them so that no one was ever in need:

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 4, 32-35)

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

### **Reflection**

The first Christians shared a powerful experience of the Holy Spirit. They were now one body, joined in Christ – everyone was a brother or sister. Everyone shared what God had given them, and no one was hungry or in need. Today, God has filled each of our lives to overflowing with blessings that are meant to be shared. What are the blessings I can share today? Can I share my heart and say something kind to a classmate who feels alone? Can I share my knowledge by helping someone struggling with a lesson? Can I share someone's joy by being happy with them for their own blessings? Can I share my time, talent or goods with other followers of Jesus who are helping the poor? Sharing God's blessings is a clear sign of our unity as Christians.

### **Prayer**

Lord God, You blessings are rich beyond imagining, yet in our divisions, so many are in need. Help us to live with one heart and soul by working together for justice and sharing what You have given us. We make this prayer to You through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## **Friday January 21**

Today's theme during this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is *Breaking the Bread in Hope*.

### **Reading**

Let us listen to the words of Jesus, the *bread that came down from heaven*, to share with us His very life.

A reading from the Gospel of John (Jn 6, 53-58)

So Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

### **Reflection**

Breaking bread is a sign and instrument of unity among Christians. The gift of Jesus' body – the *bread of life* – helps us live as one body. Though we share a common Baptism, many Christian communities still do not break bread with one another. Still, we live and work in the sure hope *that all will be one*, as Jesus prayed. Jesus, the Bread of Life, gives us His strength to pray and work with Him for unity and justice. May our work for unity and justice start with one another – with acts of friendship, forgiveness and a readiness to share.

### **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, You are the source of our unity as members of Your body. May Your gift of the Eucharist strengthen us to live as brothers and sisters in faith: witnesses to the hope of abundant life we share in You. Amen.

