

Office for Unity,

Thursday 17th June 2021

Meditation

Proclamation of reconciliation between Czech Catholics and Protestants in November 2020 on the anniversary of a painful campaign of forced “recatholization” by the Kingdom of Bohemia which had begun in 1620.

“Our Heavenly Father, we come to you on the eve of the anniversary of the Battle of White Mountain. This is where the battle that has affected our nation for four centuries took place. In this place troops fought who claimed to be of the Catholic or Protestant faith. We recognize our guilt that we, your children, were drawn into violence contrary to the gospel of peace. We confess that our ancestors sinned against each other with serious sins: pride, sense of superiority, judgment and violence. We killed each other and did not turn to you who created us for your glory. We ask your forgiveness now. We confess to you our sin of superiority where we have seen others as of lesser value who are not worthy of your favor. Forgive us for judging one another as heretics, unbelievers, and apostates of the Christian faith. We beg you, forgive us the hardness of our hearts. Forgive us for not showing the true image of God as a loving Father with this harsh attitude. Forgive us for giving unbelievers a false image of God and leading them into doubt and confusion.

We now renounce all the violence that persists in our attitudes. We give up the hardness of our hearts. We renounce pride and superior attitudes. We renounce judgment and slander. We renounce the negative heritage of our ancestors who carried these attitudes in their hearts. We renounce attempts to manipulate others in the name of God and political or social pressures. We will no longer view others as enemies or rivals, but as children of the same Heavenly Father who, like us, are loved by God. We renounce violent attempts to bring brothers and sisters of another Christian denomination into our own Church. We renounce any future abuse of power in families, politics, education, science, culture or the media against our brothers and sisters.

In Jesus Christ we who were once far off have now come close by the blood of Christ. In him is our peace, he united two into one when he broke down the wall that divides and causes conflict. By his sacrifice, he removed the obstacles to transform the two - the Catholic and the Protestant - into one new humanity, thus establishing peace. He reconciles the two into one body, killing their enmity on the cross. He came and preached peace, peace for all of us. And so in him we can together - Catholics and Protestants - stand before the Father in the unity of the Spirit. ”

Intercessions

Prepared by our brothers and sisters in Czech Republic

To adapt according to the place of worship.

1. The battle of the White Mountain took place November 8, 1620 and marked the beginning of the forced "recatholization" by the Kingdom of Bohemia. On the occasion of the 400th anniversary of this painful event, a reconciliation initiative hoped to bring together 60 Catholic priests and 60 Protestant pastors on the very scene of the battle for a process of asking for mutual forgiveness and healing of collective memory. Because of the pandemic, the meeting could only take place on May 8.

Lord, we pray that your Spirit of peace and unity will do its work in hearts for the healing of memories and for reconciliation within the Czech people.

2. The Old Town Square in the center of Prague is a place steeped in history and conflict. It is on this square that 27 notable Protestants were executed on June 21, 1621. It is also on this square that a Marian column was destroyed in 1918 because it was considered a symbol of Austrian and Catholic domination and restored in 2020, causing much controversy and complicating ecumenical relations.

Lord, we pray to you for all Christian denominations present in the Czech Republic. Give them the power to testify to your love despite many obstacles. We pray in particular for the new Archbishop of Prague whom the Pope is to appoint in the coming months.

3. In recent years an ecumenical movement has been born in Czech Republic called „Česko, je nový den“ (“Czech Republic, it's a new day”) which seeks to bring together Christians of all faiths through encounter, friendship and prayer.

Lord, we pray to you for new growth in the ecumenical movement. May the work and commitment of each person hasten the day of the visible unity of your Church.