

Office for Unity, Thursday 8th of April 2021

Meditation text

Hospitality

by Henri Nouwen (1932-96), Dutch priest and spiritual writer, who taught at Harvard and Yale Universities before joining the L'Arche Community and living in a community house with handicapped people in Canada.

Hospitality means primarily the creation of a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines. . . . The paradox of hospitality is that it wants to create emptiness, not a fearful emptiness, but a friendly emptiness where strangers can enter and discover themselves as created free; free to sing their own songs, speak their own languages, dance their own dances; free also to leave and follow their own vocations. Hospitality is not a subtle invitation to adore the lifestyle of the host, but the gift of a chance for the guest to find his own.

Intercessions

Prepared by the brothers and sisters of the Foyer Henri Planchat, Puteaux, France.

To be adapted locally as required.

1) In Puteaux, the Chemin Neuf Community runs a residence for young professionals who come from a wide variety of social and cultural backgrounds. Members of the Community's 18-30 Mission Team live alongside the residents and offer them pastoral care.

Lord, we pray for all those who live alongside us, sharing in our daily life and our missions. May they grow in the boldness of their desire to find you and know you. We entrust to you all those who work in our youth missions throughout the world, and we pray for the preparation of our summer sessions.

2) Lord, we pray for the working conditions of many people today. The Foyer Henri Planchat is situated near La Défense, which is the largest business neighbourhood in Europe. At a time when "working from home" has changed the working practices, relationships, and experience of so many people, Lord, we pray for young people who are losing motivation and a sense of meaning. May they discover people and places which can give them support, encouragement and hope.

3) This year, the Christian youth centre called Le Navire (entrusted to the Chemin Neuf Community since 2010) is celebrating its 150th anniversary. We can celebrate its history and its impact on the neighbourhood, especially on the many children from Puteaux who come to pray and play here every Wednesday.

Lord, we pray for this pastoral mission and all those who work with children and teenagers. May they find places in the Church which help them to flourish and to discover and welcome the love of God for them.

4) Because of our different liturgical calendars, this year most Orthodox Churches will be celebrating Easter on 2 May.

Lord, thank you for the presence and the friendship of our Orthodox sisters and brothers who are waiting faithfully for the light of the Resurrection. Bless their patriarchs, the leaders of their communities, and all Orthodox Christians around the world.