

Office for Unity : Thursday, Oct 14th

Meditation

Reconciliation – in the midst of diversity, the path of love

For us human beings reconciliation does not mean being in agreement ; it means to have love for each other whilst disagreeing profoundly. That is what true reconciliation is. It is to be different. God is so marvellous, and we are so different. The miracle of the Church is not that we agree with each other and that we love each other ; it is rather that we do not agree and that, despite that, we love each other. This is the miracle which the Holy Spirit brings about. And what happens when we are reconciled, when in love we reveal our diversity ? Well then, we are taken straight back to the last seven or eight verses of John 17 : And the world will see that Jesus is the Son of God, and they will believe...

But reconciliation – and I can say this after a number of years of work on the subject both personally and professionally in war zones across the world – reconciliation is written with two « S »'s : service and sacrifice. If we are on the way towards reconciliation, if we are moving towards kindness and respect even in the thick of disagreement, then there will be sacrifices. It is always costly to be reconciled.

Extract from a talk given by Archbishop Justin Welby at the annual meeting of the leaders of Churches Together in England (the Council which links up the Churches in England), October 7th 2013

Intercessions

To be used as appropriate

1/ There is an Anglican presence in 80 places in France. As well as British expatriates, the Church welcomes believers from numerous countries and many Christians traditions. Members of the Chemin Neuf Community take part in gatherings in Paris, Lyon and Fontainebleau.

Lord, we pray for the Anglican Church in France as it begins to consider the consequences of Brexit for its mission and operation. We especially entrust to you the Chaplaincy Day run by St. George's church in Paris, which will introduce a time of discernment about its missionary commitment in the years to come. Lord, direct this day, and show the Anglican Church how to serve you with this new development.

2/ At Chartres, relations between the Chemin Neuf Community and the Roumanian Orthodox Church have been close for a long time. The growth of its parish assembly has recently obliged the church to find new premises. Moreover, despite being few in number, the faithful of the Syriac Orthodox Church want to set up a parish in the region.

Lord, we pray for these two Orthodox Churches in Chartres as they look for premises. May your Providence go ahead of them to where you are sending them and give them strength to increase your Church there.

3/ Last Tuesday, the Catholic Church in France was shocked to receive the report of Independent Commission on Sexual Abuse in the Church (CIASE). This report gives evidence of the immense extent of abuses committed by priests, religious and laity between 1950 and 2020.

Lord, we pray for all victims of sexual abuse, especially those whose suffering has been caused by members of the Catholic Church. Come heal their wounds and ease every physical, psychological and spiritual suffering.