

Office for Unity

Thursday, May 12, 2022

Meditation text

Belonging to the Spirit of the Church
by Eberhard Arnold

What is the real life we should lead? Finally, what is it to live? A body is alive when its organs and functions exist with an awareness of their unity: for each other, at the service of the whole body. There is life when this unity expresses its cohesion and dynamism. Life comes only from what is alive. New life will only appear where life already exists. But life is inseparable from unity: unity in movement, unity in diversity, unity of consciousness, unity of will, of feeling, of thought. Life is organic unity, unity of consciousness, bodily unity. And man can only live within a united humanity. Humanity is united insofar as it is guided and commanded by a single collective soul, by the same community spirit, thanks to which each is committed to the service of all, each works for all.

To want a community, you have to want the spirit of the community. [...] I only believe in a community that believes in the Spirit: the community whose collective soul is the Holy Spirit. In the Spirit, the Church finds unanimity and unity. In him, the Church is rich, very rich in gifts, in strength, in many accomplishments.

[...] We must keep our hands available, open, free, to put ourselves to work in the Church. It is only on this condition that we can form a community and belong to the Spirit of the Church.

When we enter into this mystery, we understand how much this message says yes to life. It is not a question of dying to oneself in order to die to oneself. It is a renunciation in view of a new birth. It is about leaving illusions to reach reality, to turn away from what does not matter to reach what is essential.

It is a fire that will come on this world; a network of holy lights, living organic cells.

*Extrait de : Sel et Lumière par Eberhard Arnold (1883 - 1935, Théologien protestant allemand),
2017, Plough Publishing House, pp. 108-110*

Intercessions

Prepared by our brothers and sisters from Germany

(To be adapted according to location)

In union with our brothers and sisters in Germany and in the deep desire for Unity between our Churches, we turn to You, Lord, and we pray to You.

1/ The war in Ukraine reveals the tearing of your body through the divisions between the Patriarchates of the Orthodox Church, in particular between the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Patriarchate of Moscow. Christians in Ukraine and Russia suffer from this situation.

Lord, in this time of Easter, when the liturgy helps us to meditate on the power of your Holy Spirit at work in your Church, we ask your forgiveness for our complicity with the forces of division and hatred and we ask you to inspire us with gestures and words that hasten reconciliation and peace among Christians.

2/ From August 31 to September 8, 2022, the 11th Assembly of the Ecumenical Council of Churches will take place in Karlsruhe, Germany. The theme chosen for this event is: "The love of Christ leads the world to reconciliation and unity". It is the largest and most diverse gathering of churches in the world.

Lord, may this assembly constitute a significant and prophetic step in our journey towards the visible Unity of your body thanks to the contributions of the different Churches and the personal experiences that the participants from all over the world will have on this occasion.

3/ Following the publication of the "report on the sexual abuse of minors by priests, deacons and religious", the Episcopal Conference of Germany committed itself in March 2019 along with the Assembly of Catholics in Germany (Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken) to a "synodal journey" intended to elaborate responses to the crisis situation that the Church is going through and to strengthen Christian witness. A very strong polarization appeared in the Church on this occasion. Some speak of a situation of informal schism with Rome.

Lord, we pray for the Catholic Church in Germany in all its components. Protect her from the temptation of pride and division. May the discussions undertaken serve Unity and not division, nourish hope and not frustration. Give your Spirit of moderation, unity and reconciliation.