

Office for unity

Thursday, October 13, 2022

Meditation text

Authentic reconciliation

Homily of Pope Francis at the closing Vespers of the Week of Prayer for Unity 21 Jan 2019.

For the Apostle of the Gentiles, the reconciliation of man with God, of whom he became an ambassador (cf. 2 Cor 5:20), is a gift that comes from Christ (...). Before being a human effort of believers who seek to overcome their divisions, it is a free gift of God. How can we proclaim this Gospel of reconciliation after centuries of division? (...) Reconciliation in Christ cannot be achieved without sacrifice. (...) This is the revolution that Paul experienced, but it has been the Christian revolution since the beginning. (...)

For the Church, for every Christian confession, it is an invitation to seek life by always looking at the cross of the Lord: this is our life's mission. Authentic reconciliation among Christians can be achieved when we know how to recognise each other's gifts, and when we are able, with humility and docility, to learn from each other (...).

If we die to ourselves for Jesus, our old way of life is relegated to the past (...), we enter into a new form of existence and communion. (...) Looking back helps, and is all the more necessary to purify the memory; but being stuck in the past, dwelling on the wrongs suffered and done and judging with only human parameters, can paralyse and prevent us from living the present. The Word of God encourages us and asks us to leave the past behind in order to follow Jesus in the present and to live a new life in him.

Intercessions

(To be adapted according to the location)

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

Sung refrain of intercession

1. In this Chapter year for the Chemin Neuf Community, brothers and sisters of the Community committed to reflecting on the question of ecumenism in Martinique were able to meet with brothers and sisters of other Christian confessions; evangelicals, adventists... despite the difficulty of addressing the question of Christian unity in the Church of Martinique.

Lord, we thank you for all these initiatives. May the Holy Spirit make us creative and give us the audacity to be bold in choosing to meet together, despite the difficulties.

2. "So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith (...) there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3: 26-28)

Lord, we pray for unity within the Catholic Church in Martinique between the different members of the population: in particular, we ask you to guide the members of the recently formed group "Memory, Identity and Mixed Race" towards an ever-greater unity of the person, towards the unity of the people who experience creolisation.

3. In 2014 the Chemin Neuf Community was called by Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, to live and pray at Lambeth Palace. Recently, on 8 September 2022, the Community was welcomed into the Episcopalian Cathedral of St John the Divine in New York (USA).

Lord, we thank you for all these steps towards Christian unity and we pray for our Anglican and Episcopalian brothers and sisters. "Father, make us one" (John 17:21)