

Office for unity

Thursday, December 15, 2022

## **Meditation text**

### **Hope for eternal life (continued)**

Eternal life is not, therefore, a way of escaping, of seeking refuge from evil and the finiteness of our universe in imaginary afterworlds or in a supernatural universe - this would be neglecting the present life, which Christianity has been accused of. On the contrary, eternal life allows us to take our world seriously by looking at it for what it is, by giving each person his or her rightful place and importance. [...]

To hope is not to lie or to hide, but to believe that love is more solid than the rest, because, unlike our ambitions, our riches, our conflicts, everything that too often distracts us from the essential, love has the promise of eternity. It will never pass away, St Paul tells us. When the world around us frightens us, Christian hope does not tell us to sit around and whine because everything is going badly, nor does it tell us to smile foolishly because all will be well; it does not invite us to wait for God to demolish this world in order to build another; it asks us a very simple question: how can we turn all this into an opportunity to love more? This is the question we should be asking ourselves in the face of all the news, both good and bad, the news on the television and the news on the personal cell phone. How can I make it an opportunity to love?

*Veilleur, où en est la nuit ? Petit traité de l'espérance*, Adrien CANDIARD,

*(Watchman, where is the night? A short treatise on hope)*

Editions du Cerf, Paris, 2016, pp. 75 & 78

## **Intercessions**

### ***Prepared by the brothers and sisters in Israel***

*To be adapted according to the location*

1. From 18th-19th October 2022, the thirteenth meeting of the Coptic, Syriac and Armenian Patriarchs, representing the three Eastern Orthodox Churches of the Middle East, took place in Wadi-el Natroun, Egypt. In their final declaration they stressed the importance of the Christian presence in the Middle East and the need to strengthen it. They also highlighted their theological conversations with other churches, in particular the Byzantine Orthodox family, the Catholic Church and the Anglican Church.

*Lord, with them we thank you for the testimony of faith and the strength of Christians in the Middle East. Increase the unity of the various Orthodox Churches and the bonds of friendship with other Churches.*

2. On January 22, Sally Azar will be ordained as a pastor of Word and Sacrament in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

This is a historic event, as Sally will be the first Palestinian woman pastor to be ordained in the Holy Land.

*We pray for her, for her community. Lord, fill her with your Holy Spirit, give her the grace to be always close to your heart, dedicated to the service of those you send her to. With her, we pray for the ministry of women in Churches. Lord, may all things be done according to your word.*

4. The lights of Christmas trees and the festival of Hanukkah (known as the Festival of Lights) are occasions for joyful and fraternal encounters and sharing between believers in the Holy Land, whether they are Christians, Jews or Muslims.

*We pray to you, Lord, that in this often tense context of the Holy Land, we may be beacons of hope and fraternity around us, and that we may welcome the tradition of our brothers and sisters who belong to a religion other than our own.*

5. Father René Beaupère has died in Lyon at the age of 97. A Dominican priest, he met Abbé Paul Couturier during his studies and from the early 1950s onwards he was committed to the development of ecumenism. He was a member of the Dombes group from 1952 to 2005, and created the Saint Irénée Centre in Lyon.

*Lord, we thank you for the life witness of your servant. May he now rejoice in the light of your presence.*