

# Prayers for the Unity of the Church 2016



Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu's words calling and challenging us "to be one" echo the older "Testament" of Cardinal Désiré-Joseph Mercier. For us these words are the inspiration for the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity -

*In order to unite with one another, we must love one another;  
in order to love one another, we must know one another;  
in order to know one another, we must go and meet one another.*

And that's just what we gathered here are doing today. By praying with one another and sharing food and drink together, may we be blest with a renewed sense of our unity in Christ.

Christians seem united in their yearning for unity, even if they cannot agree on just what unity means. Perhaps meeting and talking is the best we can do, and perhaps that is enough.

An exact definition of Christian unity may well be too difficult. Nonetheless we gather to offer prayer on this Feast of Pentecost in the spirit of Archbishop Tutu and Cardinal Mercier. With them, may we also become pilgrims of unity.

**The Anglican Parish of St James the Great, East St Kilda**

## Prayers for the Unity of the Church

*The faithful gather around the Paschal candle for these prayers for the unity of the Church.  
The service is led by priests and people.*

*Following the Angelus, the priest of St James's welcomes all present after which he calls the people to prayer, saying:*

Jesus prayed that his followers may all be one. In the power of the Spirit, we join our prayers with his.

Let us pray:

*The people remain standing as they join with him saying:*

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace:  
give us grace seriously to lay to heart  
the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions.  
Take away all hatred and prejudice,  
and whatever else may hinder us  
from godly union and concord;  
that, as there is but one body and one Spirit,  
one hope of our calling,  
one Lord, one faith, one baptism,  
one God and Father of us all,  
so we may henceforth be all of one heart and of one soul,  
united in one holy bond of peace, of faith and charity,  
and may with one mind and one mouth glorify you;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
All        **Amen.**

*The people sit for the readings.*

### **Sacred Scripture:**

#### **First Reading - I Corinthians 1: 10 -12**

I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarrelling among *you, my brothers. What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ."*

#### **Second Reading - John 17: 20-21**

<sup>20</sup>“I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word,<sup>21</sup> that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

## A Homily

### The Hymn

(see back page)

### The Prayers:

*The people stand for the prayers.*

Leader: I am the vine and you are the branches.

All: Abide in me as I abide in you.

Leader: As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.

All: Abide in me as I abide in you.

Leader: No one has greater love than this,  
to lay down one's life for one's friends.

All: Abide in me as I abide in you.

Leader: You are my friends if you do what I command you;  
love one another as I have loved you.

All: Abide in me as I abide in you.

*Intercessions are offered for the unity of the Church.*

*This response will be used -*

Leader: Lord of the Church

All: hear your people's prayer.

*Following the prayers, a silence will be kept.*

*This Collect is said by a priest from St Mary's:*

Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your apostles,  
'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you':  
look not on our sins but on the faith of your Church  
and grant it the peace and unity of your kingdom;  
where you are alive and reign with the Father  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

*The priest then says -*

Let us pray. As our Saviour Christ has taught us we are bold to say,

**Our Father .... But deliver us from evil. Amen**

*Following the Lord's Prayer, a lay leader says:*

The peace of the Lord be always with you

All: **and also with you.**

Leader: Let us offer one another a sign of peace, God's seal on our prayers.

*In the spirit of the sharing of God's peace among us the people disperse to take that same peace into the world.*



## Hymn

Lord Christ, at your first Eucharist you prayed,  
That all your church might be forever one,  
Grant us at every Eucharist to say  
With longing heart and soul, "Your will be done."  
Oh, may we all one bread, one body be,  
Through this blest sacrament of unity.

For all your church, O Lord, we intercede;  
Make all our sad divisions soon to cease;  
Draw us the nearer each to each, we plead,  
By drawing all to you, O prince of peace;  
Thus may we all one bread, one body be,  
Through this blest Sacrament of Unity.

We also pray for wanderers from your fold,  
Oh, bring them back, good shepherd of the sheep,  
Back to the faith which saints believed of old,  
Back to your church which still one faith must keep;  
Soon may we all one bread, one body be,  
Through this blest sacrament of unity.

So, Lord, at length when sacraments shall cease,  
May we be one with all your church above,  
One with your saints in one unbroken peace,  
One with your saints in one unbounded love;  
More blessed still, in peace and love to be  
One with the Trinity in Unity.

