

Texts of Suggested Closing Prayers

PSALM 23

The Divine Shepherd (A Psalm of David) NRSV

- 1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters;
- 3 he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.
- 4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil; for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
- 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

(Ecumenical version: text: ELLC – English Language Liturgical Consultation)

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive
those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,

now and forever.
Amen.

THE NICENE CREED

(Ecumenical version: text: ELLC – English Language Liturgical Commission)

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, light from light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the
Virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius
Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the
living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the
giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father [and the Son],
who with the Father and the Son is
worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and
apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the
forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Copyright
Our Father and Nicene Creed ELLC ©1988
Bible extracts NRSV © 1989 NCC of Christ. USA

On the evening of his suffering and death, Jesus prayed “*that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I in you, may they also be one in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me*” (Jn 17:21)

It is significant that Jesus did not primarily express his desire for unity in a teaching or in a commandment to his disciples, but in a prayer to his Father.

Unity is a gift from above, stemming from and growing toward loving communion with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Christian prayer for unity is a humble but faithful sharing in the prayer of Jesus, who promised that any prayer in His name would be heard by the Father. (cf Jn 15:7)

[*A Handbook of Spiritual Ecumenism, Para 4*]

Reflection Materials developed from A Handbook of Spiritual Ecumenism Cardinal Walter Kasper

ISBN

13 978 1 56548 263 0

These materials have been developed by the Glasgow Archdiocesan Ecumenical Commission in partnership with Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI). They are suitable for use at any time of year. They will be distributed throughout Glasgow Archdiocese during Christian Unity Week 08 and will be available on-line at: www.rcag.org.uk

WE OFFER these three reflections primarily for use in groups – ecumenical groups where possible; they may also be helpful for personal reflection.

WE HOPE these shared reflections will ENCOURAGE many people to READ the whole book.

WE ENCOURAGE special interest groups to produce further questions based on particular sections of the book, eg: Parishes, Communities of Religious Life, Monastic Communities, Ecclesial Communities or Movements, Young People, Pastoral Ministers.

Special thanks to Cardinal Walter Kasper for permission to use this material.

Action of Churches Together in Scotland
Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
Glasgow Churches Together

www.acts-scotland.org
www.ctbi.org.uk
www.glasgowchurches.org.uk



ARCHDIOCESE OF GLASGOW ECUMENICAL COMMISSION
Committed to Christian Unity

Reflection 1: Sacred Scripture and Church Unity

OPENING PRAYER:

Take time for a suitable opening prayer of your own choice.

READING from 'A HANDBOOK OF SPIRITUAL ECUMENISM', [Para 18]
Coming together to read and to study sacred Scripture, attention can be paid to the mystery of unity and division as it unfolds in the history of salvation. Many passages of different literary genres (historic texts, psalms and prayers, prophetic sayings, teachings, parables) in both the Old and New Testaments are particularly relevant from that point of view.

Common reading of sacred Scripture can usefully focus on:
the painful reality of division: its origin in human fragility and sinfulness, its profound and lasting effects, its crying out to God and searching for words in prayer, its longing for forgiveness and reconciliation (cf Gen 4:1-16; Gen 37-50; Is 42-53; Ps 44; Mk 9:33-40; Lk 12:51-53; Lk 15)

Mark 9:33 -34:

Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, 'What were you arguing about on the way?' But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest.

QUESTIONS

1. What jumps off the page at you from this reading? What strikes you in some special way?
2. How do you experience the 'mystery of unity and division' in our churches?
3. What personal experience have you had of the 'painful reality of division'?
4. In the light of our sharing, What gives you hope?

And, is there any simple action you could make, in this next week, for healing or reconciliation at some level?

SUGGESTED CLOSING PRAYER

Psalms 23

Reflection 2: Prayer in Common

OPENING PRAYER:

Take time for a suitable opening prayer of your own choice.

READING from 'A HANDBOOK OF SPIRITUAL ECUMENISM', [Para 31]
"No one can say 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3).

Whenever Christians gather to pray, it is the Holy Spirit who moves them and teaches them to pray. The Holy Spirit is also the source of Christian unity, since it is the Holy Spirit, dwelling in those who believe and pervading and ruling over the entire Church, who brings about that wonderful communion of the faithful and joins them together so intimately in Christ that he is the principle of the Church's unity.

Many Christians of various traditions today have testified to a profound experience of the presence of the Holy Spirit. As a result, prayer in the Holy Spirit is for them a source of personal renewal and of deeper belonging to the Body of Christ. Calling upon the Holy Spirit, they grow close to Jesus Christ and to one another. ... living a life of discipleship and prayer receptive to the Holy Spirit can become a true means of mutual edification and can deepen the bonds of communion among Christians.

1 Cor 12:3

Therefore I want you to understand that

no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says 'Let Jesus be cursed!' and no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit.

QUESTIONS

1. What jumps off the page at you from this reading? What strikes you in some special way?
2. Share what you can appropriately share some personal experiences of when prayer has been supportive and when challenging for you. Say something about different prayer styles that you have experienced.
3. In the light of our sharing, select some intention to hold in prayer over this next week.

SUGGESTED CLOSING PRAYER

The Lord's Prayer

Reflection 3: Baptism

OPENING PRAYER:

Take time for a suitable opening prayer of your own choice.

READING from 'A HANDBOOK OF SPIRITUAL ECUMENISM', [Para 33 & 34]

Baptism is the primary sacrament of salvation, through which people become Christians, incorporated into Christ and into his Church (cf 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:28).

In terms of Christian unity, it is the sacrament which constitutes the foundation of communion among all Christians. That is why there are important possibilities for spiritual ecumenism in connection with this sacrament.

When Christians rediscover together the mystery and the spiritual riches of their baptism, they grow closer to Jesus Christ and to one another; they become more aware of their belonging to the one Body of Christ and of

their common vocation.

The recognition of each other's baptism allows the possibility of gathering in celebrations which affirm or commemorate the grace of baptism.

Unity in Christ is, first of all, unity in the faith of the Church and in the confession of faith, made during baptism. Christians profess "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph 4:5).

1 Cor 12:13

For in the one Spirit we were all baptized or into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Gal 3:28

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

Eph 4:5

'one Lord, one faith, one baptism'

QUESTIONS

1. What jumps off the page at you from this reading? What strikes you in some special way?
2. This text talks of being 'incorporated into Christ and into his Church'. What rights and responsibilities might this imply for both the individual and the church community?
3. This text reminds us that we profess 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism'. What challenges might this offer to how we are church today?
4. Over the next week, share with at least one other person something of the joys you experience by being a baptised Christian, belonging to the wide Christian family.

SUGGESTED CLOSING PRAYER

The Nicene Creed