

Title: Christian Unity



Prayer to St Julie Billiart

Saint Julie, through your great devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, you were miraculously cured and favoured by many graces.

By your powerful intercession, obtain for us above all, a great trust in God in all the difficulties of life, the strength to accomplish in all things the adorable will of God, and the special grace we now ardently ask of you.

"We must have courage in the times we live in. Great souls are needed, souls having the interest of God at heart"

St Julie Billiart

Prayer

Matthew 3:13-17

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness." Then John consented.

As soon as Jesus was baptised, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Reflect: Yesterday in church we celebrated the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, the last official day of Christmastide. Today the time known as 'Ordinary Time' begins in the church calendar.

Friday marks the start of an 8 day period where Christians are encouraged to pray for Christian Unity. Perhaps this week it is useful to remind ourselves that Christianity is the umbrella under which sit all the different 'spokes' of Christian communities. If I am a Catholic, I am a Christian Catholic; if I am a Methodist, I am a Christian Methodist; if I am an Anglican, I am a Christian Anglican. As Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists etc we are not outside of the main 'label' we all have as Christians, nor are one group of Christians superior to any other. We have so much more in common than things we differ on!

Often in life it is easier to focus on what is different about things, places, people, communities but we usually find that there is far more we hold in common. St Paul reminded us that we are all parts of the one body, whatever we look like, sound like, however we pray.

□ What is UNITY?

□ How can we practice unity on a daily basis?

Pray For:

Christians the world over - for the ability to focus on our similarities.

□ for Christians, and all people of faith persecuted for their beliefs.

□ those who have been victims of extreme weather at home and abroad.

□ those who are living with division, in families, communities, countries.



Focus on one each day

The prayer that unites all Christians is the one that Jesus taught us:

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

(For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever)

Amen

Prayer in action this week:

Show togetherness.

- Bring harmony not division.
- Try to ignore differences.
- Remember that you are no more important than anyone else - equal to, NEVER more than!
- Cooperate with others.

Lord,

I am sorry for the times when I have treated another person badly because they didn't agree with me, share my interests or friends, or have the same background as me.

As I mature as a person I come to understand that people don't have to be the same to get along or respect each other.

Help me to listen to others and to understand different perspectives and points of view.

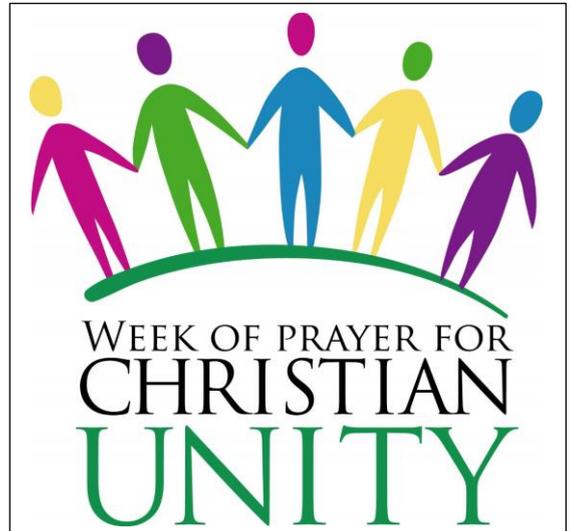
By being open to the ideas and opinions, cultures and beliefs of others I can come to a better understanding of my own and I could really use your help with that.

Thank you Lord.

Amen

We pray for Christians the world over. Help us all to see and celebrate the things we share in common, remembering our shared roots as members of the family of Christ. **Amen**

We pray for people of faith the world over. Help us all to see and celebrate the things we share in common, remembering our shared roots as members of the human family; God's family. **Amen**



Dear Lord, we are all members of one family, YOUR family.

We pray today for your help to remember that although no one person is the same, we have many similarities.

Help us to treat everyone with dignity and respect today, the respect that people from the same family should give one another, so that by showing respect we are given it in return. Amen

Lord,

When I stop and think, really think, I realise that there is no reason for anyone to feel excluded, left out, alone!

There are so many opportunities each day to show 'togetherness' with others, and sadly Lord, I often let them pass me by.

Help me to consider what it does to others if I welcome them into my group at lunch time—in the canteen or out on the yard.

Help me to see what a difference I can make if I invite another to work in my group in class.

Help me to know, because I remember the feeling, what it does when I smile at someone I don't know.

Lord, help me always to be on the look out for ways to INCLUDE people, whoever they are! And, let me begin TODAY!

Amen

Prayer of Intercession:

Merciful God, may your Spirit move in every human heart, so that the barriers that divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear and hatreds cease, and that, with divisions healed, your people might live in justice and peace.

Lord, in your mercy

All respond: **Hear our**

Prayer