

Visible Pray PEACE

Full visible unity
May they all be one
Reconciliation

Full
Forgive us

Unity

UNITY

Why does praying for unity matter?

- † Unity is God's gift, so we must pray for it because prayer shapes and forms what we believe and think and how we act.
- † Only God in Christ can reconcile us but praying for unity shows we desire to be used by God in his work of reconciliation.
- † Ephesians 1: 10 tells us that God's purpose is 'to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth'. Praying for unity shows we want the same.
- † Disunity weakens our witness in the world. Praying opens us to God's healing touch.
- † Jesus prayed that 'all may be one'. This will only happen when Christians pray for unity and work for it in their own local context.
- † The Church is called to be a sign, instrument and foretaste of God's Kingdom so we must strive to make unity real here and now.

What do the Churches say?

During the visit of Pope Benedict XVI in 2010 both the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury showed their commitment to unity.

Perhaps we shall not quickly overcome the remaining obstacles to full, restored communion; but no obstacles stand in the way of our seeking, as a matter of joyful obedience to the Lord, more ways to build up one another in holiness by prayer and public celebration together...

Archbishop Rowan Williams, at Lambeth Palace, when Pope Benedict visited England, 17 Sept 2010

May the Risen Lord strengthen our efforts to mend the ruptures of the past and to meet the challenges of the present with hope in the future which, in his providence, he holds out to us and to our world.

Pope Benedict XVI, Evening Prayer, Westminster Abbey, 17 Sept 2010

What can we do?

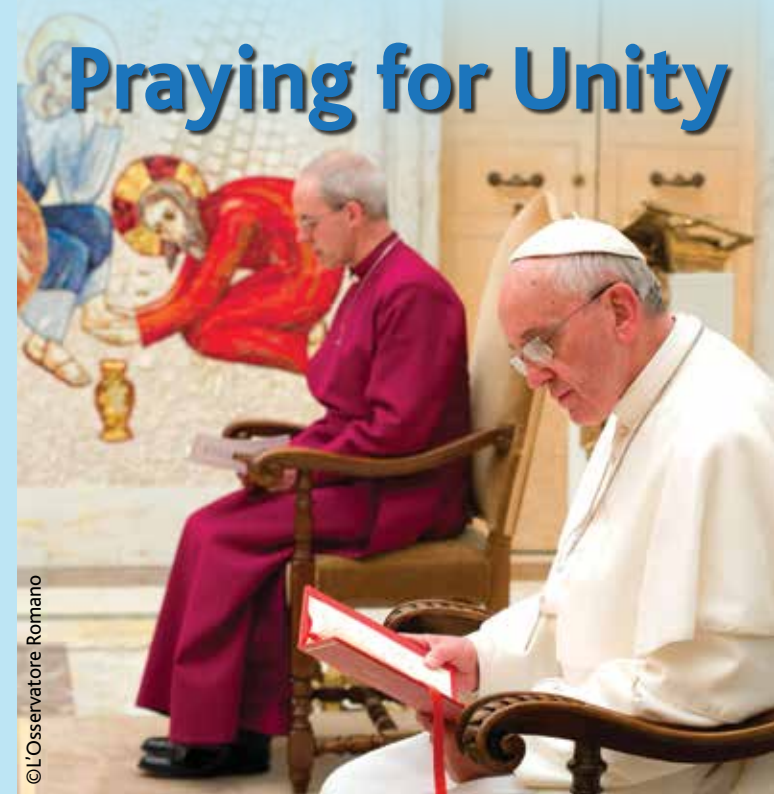
1. Include some of these prayers for unity in our own personal prayers each week.
2. As a church community consider including some of these prayers in regular worship.
3. Get to know something of the needs of a neighbouring Roman Catholic or Church of England parish and pray regularly for them.
4. Identify and plan one activity that could develop fellowship between our local Church of England and Roman Catholic communities such as shared Bible study, community action or prayer for local need.

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Praying for Unity



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Jesus said...

May they all be one. Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you, so that the world may believe that it was you who sent me.
John 17: 20 – 21

The call to pray for the unity of the Church goes back to Jesus. His words:

- † show us the unity and love between Jesus and his Father
- † help us to share Jesus' life with his Father
- † tell us that without unity we cannot fully share the Gospel in the world.



We give thanks

Much has been achieved especially in the last 50 years. We celebrate the unity we already share in Christ, give thanks for it and pray that it will be continually deepened.

On our lips and in our hearts

Just before his arrest, Jesus pleaded to God for the unity of his disciples. Does Jesus' prayer for unity have a real impact on our daily lives as disciples?

Both the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England have prayers for unity in their liturgy.

If unity matters to us we must pray for it - in our personal prayer and in our worship.

A Roman Catholic Prayer

This prayer shows us that:

- † Unity can only be achieved by the Holy Spirit
- † Unity requires humility and mutual love
- † Our baptism, the foundation of our faith, is also the foundation for our unity.

*Lord Jesus Christ, at your Last Supper you prayed to the Father that all should be one. Send your Holy Spirit upon all who bear your name and seek to serve you. Strengthen our faith in you, and lead us to love one another in humility. May we who have been reborn in one baptism be united in one faith under one Shepherd. **Amen***

J. Lindsey, Catholic Prayer Book (Our Sunday Visitor, 2003)

A Church of England Prayer

This prayer emphasizes that:

- † Unity leaves no place for hatred or prejudice
- † God himself - three persons in perfect unity - is the source and inspiration for our unity
- † God seeks unity for *all people* - not just Christians - as all are made in God's image.

*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 whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord: that, as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and 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 truth and peace, of faith and charity, and with one mind and one mouth glorify thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen***

The Book of Common Prayer



Both Roman Catholic and Church of England

A prayer from both the Roman Missal and from Common Worship which emphasises that peace and unity go together: if we pray for peace we must also pray for unity.

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 graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Amen

More prayers to use

A Roman Catholic Prayer

*Attend with favour to the prayers of your people, we ask, O Lord, and grant that the hearts of believers may be united in your praise and in repentance together, so that, with division among Christians overcome, we may hasten with joy to your eternal kingdom in the perfect communion of the Church. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen***

The Roman Missal

A Church of England Prayer

*Heavenly Father, you have called us in the Body of your Son Jesus Christ to continue his work of reconciliation and reveal you to the world: forgive us the sins which tear us apart; give us the courage to overcome our fears and to seek that unity which is your gift and your will; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. **Amen***

Common Worship: for the Unity of the Church