

you, so that the world may believe that you have sent him. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

**DAY 7: Sat 24th Jan: Hospitality for prayer**

*The experience of praying together on each of the eight days of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has helped Christians in the small town of Madona to come together in friendship. A particular fruit of this has been the opening of an ecumenical prayer chapel in the centre of town, complete with elements from Lutheran, Catholic and Orthodox traditions. Here the Christians of Madona join in continuous round the clock prayer.*

As long as God's people are divided, and Christians are estranged from one another, we are like Jesus in Samaria, strangers in a foreign land, without safety, without refreshment and without a place of rest. The people of Israel longed for a place of safety where they could worship the Lord. Isaiah tells us of the Lord's mighty act: he posted sentinels on the walls of Jerusalem so that his people could worship him in safety day and night. In the Week of Prayer our churches and chapels become places of safety, rest and refreshment for people to join in prayer. The challenge from this week is to create more places and times of prayer, because as we pray together, we become one people.

**Prayer**

Lord Jesus, you asked your apostles to stay awake with you and to pray with you. May we offer the world protected times and spaces in which to find refreshment and peace, so that praying together with other Christians we may come to know you more deeply. Amen.

**DAY 8: Sun 25th Jan: Hearts burning for unity**

*Different churches in Latvia have been able to work together in evangelisation through the use of the Alpha Course, developed in the Anglican Church of Holy Trinity, Brompton, London. Latvians who have come to faith through this programme remain open to learning and being enriched by the gifts of other Christian communities. This experience inspired the following reflections.*

The disappointed disciples who leave Jerusalem for Emmaus have lost their hope that Jesus was the Messiah and walk away from their community. It is a journey of separation and isolation. By contrast, they return to Jerusalem full of hope with a Gospel message on their lips. It is this resurrection message that drives them back into the heart of the community and into a communion of fellowship. So often Christians try to evangelise with a competitive spirit, hoping to fill their own churches. Ambition overrides the desire for others to hear the life-giving message of the Gospel. True evangelism is a journey from Emmaus to Jerusalem, a journey from isolation into unity.

**Prayer**

Lord Jesus, you have made our hearts burn within us, and have sent us back upon the road towards our brothers and sisters, with the Gospel message on our lips. Help us to see that hope and obedience to your commands always lead to the greater unity of your people. Amen.

The night before his Passion and Death, Jesus said:

**“May they all be one,  
just as, Father,  
you are in me and I am in you” Jn 17:21**

Each year from 18-25th January, Christians of all denominations unite around the world to pray for this great desire of the heart of Jesus—that we may all be one. Here at Kilmacud Carmelite Monastery we dedicate our Evening Prayer at 4.30pm for this intention each day during the Week of Prayer.

All are welcome to join us.

**2016 PROGRAMME**

**Monday 18th:** Reflection by a Carmelite Sister

**Tuesday 19th:** *Guest speaker:* Rev. Stephen Taylor,  
Dundrum Methodist Church

**Wednesday 20th:** Reflection by a Carmelite Sister

**Thursday 21st:** *Guest speaker:* Rev. Gillian Wharton,  
Boosterstown and Carysfort with Mount Merrion,  
Church of Ireland

**Friday 22nd:** Reflection by a Carmelite Sister

**Saturday 23rd:** *Guest speaker:* Rev. Ian Gallagher,  
St. Brigid's Church of Ireland, Stillorgan

**Sunday 24th:** *Guest speaker:* Rev. Tony Coote Adm.  
Mount Merrion & Kilmacud parishes

**Monday 25th:** *Guest speaker:* Sr Mary O'Driscoll O.P.  
Dominican Sisters, Cabra

The prayers and reflections on this leaflet are taken from material prepared by the Christians of Latvia this year. Please use this leaflet at home, both this week and throughout the year in order to pray for Christian Unity.

Carmelite Monastery of St Joseph  
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Stillorgan, Blackrock  
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[www.kilmacudcarmel.ie](http://www.kilmacudcarmel.ie)

*Christians of all denominations are very welcome to join us for Evening Prayer just after 4.30pm all year round (usually approx. 4.35-4.40pm).*

## ***WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY***

***18-25 January 2016***



***“Called to proclaim the  
mighty acts of the Lord”  
(cf. 1 Pet 2:9)***

**Carmelite Monastery of St Joseph  
Upper Kilmacud Road**

**DAY 1: Mon 18th Jan: Let the stone be rolled away**

*Today's reflections are prepared by the Catholic Youth Centre of the Archdiocese of Riga, and spring from their experience of organising an Ecumenical Way of the Cross: a very influential annual ecumenical event in the life of Latvia.*

Latvia's Soviet history continues to cast a shadow over the people of this nation. There is still much grief and pain; wounds inflicted which are difficult to forgive. All of this is like the large stone which covered the mouth of Jesus' tomb. But if, in our suffering, our pain is united to his pain, then the story does not end here, locked in our graves. The earthquake of the Lord's resurrection is the earth-shaking event that opens our graves and frees us from the pain and bitterness that hold us in isolation from one another. This is the mighty act of the Lord: his love, which shakes the earth, which rolls away the stones, which frees us, and calls us out into the morning of a new day. Here, at this new dawn we are re-united with our brothers and sisters who have been imprisoned and hurting too.

**Prayer**

Lord Jesus, you have always loved us from the beginning, and you have shown the depth of your love in dying for us on the cross and thereby sharing our sufferings and wounds. At this moment, we lay all the obstacles that separate us from your love at the foot of your cross. Roll back the stones which imprison us. Awaken us to your resurrection morning. There may we meet the brothers and sisters from whom we are separated. Amen.

**DAY 2: Tues 19th Jan: Called to be messengers of joy**

*In the Soviet era a Christian presence through public media was impossible in Latvia. After independence, Latvian State Radio began broadcasting Christian programmes with a focus on unity and mission, providing a forum for leaders from diverse churches to encounter one another. This public witness of mutual respect, love and joy contributed to the spirit of Latvian ecumenical life and inspired this reflection.*

The joy of the Gospel calls Christians to live the prophecy of Isaiah: "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has appointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed". When we are saddened by our own suffering, we may lack the vigour to proclaim the joy that comes from Jesus. Nevertheless, by bearing witness to the little that we have, Jesus multiplies it in us and in the people around us. This mutual love and mutual joy is at the heart of our prayer for unity. As the psalmist says, "How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!"

**Prayer**

God of love, look upon our willingness to serve you despite our spiritual poverty and limited abilities. Fulfil the deepest longings of our hearts with your presence. Fill our broken hearts with your healing love so that we may love as you have loved us. Grant us the gift of unity so that we may serve you with joy and share your love with all. This we ask in the name of your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**DAY 3: Wed 20th Jan: The witness of fellowship**

*For over a decade Chemin Neuf, an international Catholic community with an ecumenical vocation, has been present in Latvia, with both Catholic and Lutheran members. Together they experience the joy that comes from fellowship in Christ, as well as the pain of disunity. As a sign of this division, they place an empty paten and chalice on the altar during evening prayer. Their experience inspired this reflection.*

Division amongst Christians is an obstacle to evangelisation. We feel the pain of this division when we cannot receive together the body and blood of Christ at the Eucharist, the sacrament of unity. The source of our joy is our common life in Christ. To live our life of fellowship every day is to welcome, love, serve, pray and witness with Christians from diverse traditions. It is the pearl of great value given to us by the Holy Spirit. The night before his death, Jesus prayed for unity and love amongst us. Today we pray with Jesus for Christian unity. We pray for the bishops, ministers and members of all churches. We pray that the Holy Spirit will lead us all on this path of unity.

**Prayer**

Lord Jesus, who prayed that we might all be one, we pray to you for the unity of Christians according to your will, according to your means. May your Spirit enable us to experience the suffering caused by division, to see our sin and to hope beyond all hope. Amen.

**DAY 4: Thurs 21st Jan:**

**A priestly people called to proclaim the Gospel**

*These reflections were inspired by the producers of the Sunday morning Christian programme Vertikale. The challenge of maintaining this Christian voice on Latvian national television has taught them that it is only when we learn to recognise other Christians as brothers and sisters that we can dare take God's Word into the public space.*

In today's world more than ever, words flood into our homes: no longer just from our conversations, but from television, radio and now from social media. These words have the power to build up and to knock down. Much of this ocean of words seems meaningless: diversion rather than nourishment. But we have heard a saving Word; it has been thrown to us as a lifeline. It calls us into communion, and draws us into unity with others who have heard it too. Once we were not a people, but now we are God's people. More than this, we are a priestly people. United with others who have received his Word, our words are no longer mere drops lost in the ocean. Now we have a powerful Word to speak. United we can speak it powerfully: *Yeshua* – God saves.

**Prayer**

Lord Jesus, you said that everyone will know that we are your disciples if there is love among us. Strengthened by your grace, may we work tirelessly for the visible unity of your Church, so that the Good News that we are called to proclaim will be seen in all our words and deeds. Amen.

**DAY 5: Thur 22nd Jan:**

**The fellowship of the Apostles**

*The fellowship of Christian leaders shapes the visible expression of ecumenical life in Latvia. They gather regularly at Gaizins, Latvia's highest hill, and other locations, for a 40-hour period of prayer and simple fellowship around shared meals. For the duration of these meetings they are supported in non-stop prayer and worship by the faithful. The experience of the founder of the Latvia House of Prayer for All Peoples inspired this reflection.*

Jesus' commandment to love one another is not theoretical. Our communion of love with one another becomes concrete when we gather as Christ's disciples, to share fellowship and prayer in the power of the Spirit. The more that Christians encounter Christ together in humility and patience, the more prejudice diminishes, and we become authentic witnesses to the kingdom of God. Joyful fellowship, a shared meal and common prayer and praise are ways of apostolic simplicity. In these we obey the commandment to love one another, and proclaim our *Amen* to Christ's prayer for unity.

**Prayer**

God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may you give to all Christians, and especially to those entrusted with leadership in your Church, the spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that with the eyes of our hearts we may see the hope to which you have called us: one body and one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above and through all and in all. Amen.

**DAY 6: Fri 23rd Jan: Listen to this dream**

*Christian disunity hurts. Churches suffer from their inability to be united as one family at the Lord's Table; they suffer from rivalry and from histories of combativeness. One individual response to disunity emerged in 2005 in the form of an ecumenical journal: Kas Mus Vieno? ("What unites us?"). The experience of producing the journal inspired this reflection.*

Joseph has a dream, but when he shares his dream with his brothers they react with anger and violence. Ultimately famine drives them to Egypt and they do bow before Joseph, but rather than abasement, it is a moment of reconciliation and grace. Jesus unfolds to us a vision about the life of his Father's kingdom. It is a vision of unity. But we are often upset, angered and fearful of what it seems to imply. But the vision is not about loss. Rather, it is about regaining brothers and sisters we had lost, the reuniting of a family. The vision must take flesh in our lives. Most of all it is realised in the love we show for one another.

**Prayer**

Heavenly Father, grant us humility to hear your voice, to receive your call, and to share your dream for the unity of the Church. Help us to be awake to the pain of disunity. Where division has left us with hearts of stone, may the fire of your Holy Spirit inflame our hearts and inspire us with the vision of being one in Christ, as he is one with