

**DAY 7: Wed 24th Jan: Building family in household and church.** *In the Caribbean the family continues to be adversely affected by the legacy of enslavement and by new factors such as the migration of parents, financial problems and domestic violence. Facing this reality, the churches of the Caribbean are working to give support to families.*

Families are of central importance for the protection and nurture of children. The Bible accounts of the infancies of both Moses and Jesus, who were in mortal danger from the moment they were born. These stories also show how action can be taken to protect such little ones. Matthew presents us with a model of fatherhood that is in loving fidelity to the Lord's command, especially in turbulent times. The Scriptures view children as a blessing and as hope for the future. For the Psalmist, they are 'like arrows in the hand of a warrior'. As Christians, we share a common calling to live as supportive family networks, relying on the strength of the Lord for the task of building strong communities in which children are protected and can flourish.

#### **Prayer**

Gracious God, you sent your son to be born in an ordinary family with ancestors who were both faithful and sinful. We ask your blessing upon all families and communities. We pray especially for the unity of the Christian family so that the world may believe. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

**DAY 8: Thurs 25th Jan: He will gather the dispersed... from the four corners of the earth.** *The Caribbean churches work together to heal the wounds in the Body of Christ in the region: a legacy left by colonization. Reconciliation often demands repentance, reparation and the healing of memories. One example is the acts of apology and reparation between Baptists in Britain and the Caribbean. Like Israel, the Church in its unity is called to be both a sign and an active agent of reconciliation.*

The formation of God's chosen people – united in a sacred covenant with God – is integral to the Lord's plan of salvation and to the glorification and hallowing of God's Name. The prophets repeatedly remind Israel that the covenant demanded that relationships among its various social groups should be characterized by justice, compassion and mercy. As Jesus prepared to seal the new covenant in his own blood, his earnest prayer was that those given to him by the Father would be one, just as he and the Father were one. God's covenanted people must always strive to be a reconciled community - one which itself is an effective sign to all the peoples of the earth of how to live in justice and in peace.

#### **Prayer**

Lord, we humbly ask that, by your grace, the churches throughout the world may become instruments of your peace. Through their joint action as ambassadors and agents of your healing, reconciling love among divided peoples, may your Name be hallowed and glorified. 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.

#### **2018 PROGRAMME**

**Thursday 18th:** *Guest speaker:* Rev. Vanessa Wyse Jackson, Rathgar Methodist Church

**Friday 19th:** *Guest speaker:* Dr Paul Manook, (Dishchekonian) The Armenian Apostolic Church in Ireland

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

**Sunday 21st:** Reflection by a Carmelite Sister

**Monday 22nd:** *Guest speaker:* Rev. Ian Gallagher, St. Brigid's Church of Ireland, Stillorgan

**Tuesday 23rd:** Reflection by a Carmelite Sister

**Wednesday 24th:** Reflection by a Carmelite Sister

**Thursday 25th:** *Guest speaker:* Rev. Martin Kilmurray, O.Carm, Prior, Gort Muire Carmelite Community.

The prayers and reflections on this leaflet are taken from material prepared by the Christians of the Caribbean 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  
Upper Kilmacud Road  
Stillorgan, Blackrock  
Co. Dublin  
[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 2018**



**“Your right hand, O Lord,  
glorious in power”  
(Ex 15:6)**

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

**4.30pm daily**

**DAY 1: Thur 18th Jan: You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt**

*After becoming the first independent black republic, Haiti extended hospitality to other enslaved peoples in search of freedom. Recent times have brought economic hardship to Haitians, many of whom have left home, making perilous journeys in hope of a better life. In many instances they have been met with inhospitality and legal barriers. The Caribbean Council of Churches has been involved in advocacy to challenge those nations that are restricting or stripping Haitians of citizenship rights. Like Israel, our common Christian experience of God's saving action goes together with remembering both alienation and estrangement: from God and from his kingdom. Christian love is to love like the Father, that is to recognize dignity and to give dignity, and thereby to help bring healing to the broken human family.*

**Prayer**

Eternal God,  
You belong to no culture and land but are Lord of all, you call us to welcome the stranger in our midst.  
Help us by your Spirit, to live as brothers and sisters, welcoming all in your name, and living in the justice of your kingdom. This we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

**DAY 2: Fri 19th Jan: No longer as a slave but a beloved brother.**

*Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery in which victims are forced or tricked into sex work, child labour and the harvesting of organs for the profit of the exploiters. It is a global, multimillion-dollar industry. It is also a growing problem across the Caribbean. Reformed Churches in the Caribbean have joined with the Council for World Mission and the Caribbean and North American Council for Mission to educate Christian communities to end trafficking. Jesus challenged the social norms that devalued the human dignity of Samaritans, describing the Samaritan as the 'neighbour' of the man who had been attacked on the road. Paul describes the once-enslaved Onesimus as 'a beloved brother', transgressing the norms of his society and affirming Onesimus's humanity. Christians must be 'bold enough in Christ' to raise a united voice in clearly recognising trafficked persons as their neighbours and their beloved brothers and sisters, and so work together to end modern-day slavery.*

**Prayer**

Gracious God,  
draw near to those who are victims of human trafficking, assuring them that you see their plight and hear their cry.  
May your Church be united in compassion and courage to work for that day when no one will be exploited and all will be free to live lives of dignity and peace.  
This we pray in the name of the Triune God who can do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine. Amen.

**DAY 3: Sat 20th Jan: Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit**

*Many Christian churches in the Caribbean share a concern about the issue of pornography, especially via the internet. Pornography has destructive consequences for human dignity, particularly for children and young people. Like slavery, it commodifies human beings, ensnares those addicted to it and damages wholesome loving relationships.*

God still hears the cry of those who are subject to enslavement today, and wills to deliver them. While sexuality is a gift of God for human relationships and the expression of intimacy, the misuse of this gift through pornography enslaves and devalues both those caught up in producing it and those who consume it. St Paul writes that we are called to give glory to God in our own bodies, which means that every part of our lives, including our relationships, can and should be an offering pleasing to God. Christians must work together for the kind of society that upholds human dignity and does not put a stumbling block before any of God's little ones, but, rather, enables them to live in the freedom which is God's will for them.

**Prayer**

By your heavenly grace, O God,  
restore us in mind and body, create in us a clean heart and a pure mind that we may give glory to your Name. May the churches attain unity of purpose for the sanctification of your people, through Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

**DAY 4: Sun 21st Jan: Hope and Healing**

*Within the Caribbean, violence is a problem to which the churches are called to respond. There is an alarmingly high rate of murder, much of which stems from domestic abuse, gang warfare and other forms of criminality. There is also a rising rate of self-harm and suicide in some parts of the region.*

How can Christians bring the light of Jesus to those living in the darkness of domestic and gang violence? What sense of hope can Christians offer? It is a sad reality that division among Christians is a counter-sign, which hampers the communication of hope. However, when Christians strive for unity in a world of conflict, they offer the world a sign of reconciliation. Christians who refuse to enter a logic of privilege and status, who refuse to demean others and their communities, give witness to the peace of God's kingdom, where the Lamb guides the saints to springs of the water of life. This is a peace the world needs, and one which brings healing and comfort to those afflicted by violence.

**Prayer**

God of all comfort and hope,  
your resurrection defeated the violence of the cross.  
As your people, may we be a visible sign that the violence of the world will be overcome.  
This we pray in the name of our risen Lord.  
Amen.

**DAY 5: Mon 22nd Jan: Hark, the cry of my poor people from far and wide in the land!**

*Caribbean economies are based on the production of raw materials for the European market and so have never been self-sustaining. As a consequence, borrowing on the international market became important for development. The requirements of such borrowing reduces spending on transport, education, health and other public services, which impacts most severely on the poor. The Caribbean Conference of Churches has launched an initiative to address the current debt crisis in the region.*

As Jesus enters Jericho, many voices shout down the cry of the blind beggar. He is an embarrassment. But Jesus hears the blind man's voice, just as God always hears the cries of the poor in the Hebrew Scriptures. The Lord not only hears, he responds and the beggar's life is radically transformed. The disunity of Christians can become part of the world's tumult and chaos. Our divisions can drown out the cry of the poor. When we are united we are better able to hear, listen and respond.

**Prayer**

Loving God, you lift up the poor and distressed and restore their dignity. Hear now our cries for the poor of our world, restore their hope and lift them up, that all your people may be one. This we pray in Jesus name. Amen.

**DAY 6: Tues 23rd Jan: Let us look to the interests of others.**

*Changing international banking regulations continue to have a negative impact on the trade and commerce of the Caribbean and threaten the economic survival of many families. It has become increasingly difficult for Caribbean people working abroad to send money back to their families. The Churches in the Caribbean introduced the Credit Union movement in order for the poor to have access to finance for economic activity.*

In the Scriptures, God always makes a preferential option for the poor. Jesus consistently warns against the dangers of greed. However, the sin of greed often infects our Christian communities. Insofar as we fail to differentiate ourselves from the world, but conform to its divisive competing spirit, we fail to offer 'a refuge for the needy in distress, a shelter from the storm'. For our various churches and confessions, to be rich in the sight of God is to recognise that as Christians we have countless brothers and sisters right across the world. Conscious of this fraternity in Christ, Christians can join hands in promoting economic justice for all.

**Prayer**

Almighty God, give courage and strength to your church to continually proclaim justice and righteousness in situations of domination and oppression. As we celebrate our unity in Christ, may your Holy Spirit help us to look to the needs of others. Amen.