

DAY 7: Wed 24th Jan: Lord, show us how to respond to our neighbour

At the end of the parable, Jesus asked the lawyer: who was the neighbour to the man victimized? The lawyer replied “the one who showed him mercy”. He does not say “the Samaritan” and we might imagine that the hostility between Samaritans and Jews made that answer hard to admit. We often discover neighbours in the most unexpected people, even those whose very name or origins we find difficult to utter. In today’s world, where polarized politics often set those of different religious identities against one another, Jesus challenges us through this parable to see the importance of our vocation to cross borders and walls of separation.

As with the lawyer, we are challenged to reflect upon how we live our lives, not merely in terms of whether we do good or not, but whether, like the priest and the Levite, we are neglecting to act mercifully.

Prayer

Holy God,
your Son Jesus Christ came among us to show us the way of compassion. Help us by your Spirit to follow his example, to serve the needs of all your children, and so give united Christian witness to your ways of love and mercy. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

DAY 8: Thur 25th Jan: Lord, may our fellowship be a sign of your Kingdom

Jesus tells the parable of the widow and the unjust judge in order to teach the people “about their need to pray always and not to lose heart” (Lk 18:1). Jesus has won a decisive victory over injustice, sin and division, and as Christians our task is to receive this victory firstly in our own hearts through prayer and secondly in our lives through action. May we never lose heart, but rather continue to ask in prayer for God’s gift of unity and may we manifest this unity in our lives.

How are our churches called to engage in justice that unites us in our actions to love and serve all of God’s family?

Prayer

God, Creator and Redeemer of all things, teach us to look inward to be grounded in your loving Spirit, so that we may go outward in wisdom and courage to always choose the path of love and justice. This we pray in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit. 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.

2024 PROGRAMME

Thur 18th: Rev. Suzanne Harris, Rector of the Parishes of Castlemacadam and Ballinaclesh with Aughrim

Fri 19th: Rev. Stephen Taylor,
Dundrum Methodist Church

Sat 20th: Reflection by a Carmelite Sister

Sun 21st: Rev. Kevin Conroy,
St. Brigid’s Church of Ireland, Stillorgan

Mon 22nd: Reflection by a Carmelite Sister

Tues 23rd: Rev. Jim Caffrey,
PP Ballaly Parish

Wed 24th: Dr. Paul Manook,
Armenian Apostolic Church in Ireland

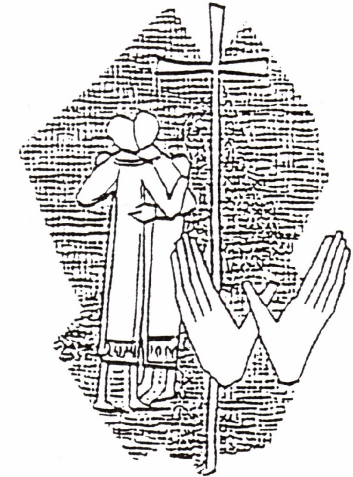
Thur 25th: Reflection by a Carmelite Sister

The prayers and reflections on this leaflet are taken from material prepared by Christians in Burkina Faso. Please use this leaflet at home 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

**WEEK OF PRAYER
FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY**

18-25 January 2024



***You shall love the
Lord your God ... and your
neighbour as yourself***

(Luke 10:27)

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

**All are welcome to join us
at 4.30pm each day
either in-person or via live-link
YouTube: @KilmacudCarmel**

DAY 1: Thur 18th Jan:

Help us, Lord, to have a life turned towards you

“What must I do to inherit eternal life?” This crucial question asked of Jesus by a lawyer challenges every believer in God. It affects the meaning of our life on earth and for eternity. The existential realities of life, with divisions, selfishness and suffering, often distance us from the quest for God. Jesus is “the Way” that leads us to the Father, our ultimate destiny. Thus, our quest for eternal life brings us closer to Jesus, and in so doing brings us nearer to each other, strengthening our closeness on the path toward Christian unity. Let us be open to friendship and collaboration with Christians of all churches.

Prayer

God of life, You have created us to have life, and life in all its fullness. May we recognise in our brothers and sisters their desire for eternal life.

As we follow Jesus’ way with determination, may we lead others to you. We pray in his name. Amen.

DAY 2: Fri 19th Jan: Help me Lord to love you, my neighbour and myself with all that I am

God’s commandment to love him requires deep commitment and means abandoning ourselves entirely, offering our hearts and minds to serve God’s will. We do not get to choose our neighbours. Loving them means being attentive to their needs, accepting their imperfections and encouraging their hopes and aspirations. The same attitude is needed on the path of Christian unity, with regard to one another’s different traditions. The call to love your neighbour “as yourself” reminds us of the need to accept ourselves as we are, conscious of God’s compassionate gaze upon us, always ready to forgive.

Prayer

Lord, give us the grace to know you more deeply, in order to love you with all of our being. Grant us a pure heart, to love our neighbour as ourselves. May the gift of your Holy Spirit enable us to see your presence in our sisters and brothers, that we may love each other with the same unconditional love with which you love us. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

DAY 3: Sat 20th Jan: Lord, open our hearts to those we do not see

The Gospel teaches that loving those who are like ourselves is not extraordinary. Jesus steers us towards a radical vision of what it means to be human. The parable illustrates in a very visible way what Christ expects from us – to open wide our hearts and walk in his way, loving others as he loves us. In fact, Jesus answers the lawyer with another question: it is not “who is my neighbour”, but, “who proved to be a neighbour to the man in need?” Our times of insecurity and fear confront us with a reality where distrust and uncertainty come to the forefront of relationships. This is the challenge of the parable today: to whom am I a neighbour?

Prayer

God of love, who write love in our hearts, instil in us the courage to look beyond ourselves and see the neighbour in those different from ourselves, that we may truly follow Jesus Christ, our brother and our friend, who is Lord, for ever and ever. Amen.

DAY 4: Sun 21st Jan: May we never turn away from those in need

The priest and Levite who walk by on the other side may have had good religious reasons for not helping. Yet on many occasions, Jesus is critical of religious leadership for placing the rules of religion ahead of the obligation to always do good. As Christians, how far are we prepared to go beyond convention? Sometimes our ecclesial and culturally conditioned short-sightedness can prevent us from seeing what is being revealed by the life and witness of sisters and brothers of other Christian traditions. This parable of Jesus not only challenges us to do good, but also to widen our vision. The Good Samaritan is often the one we do not expect.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
As we journey with you towards unity,
may our eyes not look away,
but be wide open to the world.
As we travel through life,
may we stop and reach out, bind up the wounded
and in so doing experience your presence in them:
you who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

DAY 5: Mon 22nd Jan: Lord, help us see the wounds and find hope

The Good Samaritan did what he could out of his own resources: he poured wine and oil and bandaged the man’s wounds. The example of the Good Samaritan motivates us to ask ourselves how to respond to our neighbour. He gave wine and oil, restoring the man and giving him hope. What can we give, so that we can be a part of God’s work of healing a broken world? This brokenness shows itself in our world in insecurity, fear, distrust and division. These divisions also exist between Christians. Though we celebrate sacraments of healing, reconciliation and consolation, often using oil and wine, we persist in divisions that wound the Body of Christ.

Prayer

Gracious God, you who are the source of all love and goodness: enable us to see the needs of our neighbour. Show us what we can do to bring about healing. Change us, so that we can love all our brothers and sisters. Help us to overcome the obstacles of division, that we might build a world of peace for the common good. Thank you for renewing your Creation and leading us to a future which is full of hope: you who are Lord of all, yesterday, today and forever. Amen.

DAY 6: Tues 23rd Jan : Lord, turn our churches into ‘inns’, to welcome those in need

The Samaritan saw beyond prejudice or bias. He saw someone in need and brought him to an inn. In any human society, hospitality and solidarity are essential. However, when faced with insecurity, suspicion and violence, we tend to mistrust our neighbours. Welcoming ‘the other’, and being welcomed in turn, is at the heart of ecumenical dialogue. Such hospitality is a sign of the love that our churches have for one another and for all. When we as followers of Christ move beyond our traditions and choose to practice ecumenical hospitality, we move from being strangers to being neighbours.

Prayer

Father of love, in Jesus, you showed us the meaning of hospitality, by caring for our fragile humanity. Help us to become a community that welcomes those who feel abandoned and lost, building a house where all are welcome. May we come closer to one another as we offer the world your unconditional love. This we pray in the unity of the Holy Spirit. Amen.