

EXTRAORDINARY PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR RECONCILIATION, UNITY AND PEACE

SOLEMN TRIDUUM CYCLE OF PRAYER THURSDAY PRAYER

(AT 5 P.M. IN THE HOLY LAND OR AT 4 P.M. LOCAL TIME,
THROUGHOUT THE REST OF THE WORLD)



The first day of the triduum cycle of prayer comes within the prayer of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. The prayer of the Church, as the body of Christ, is always united to the prayer of her Pastor; it includes the prayer request for the realisation of all promises referring to the new Israel and to the Holy City, Jerusalem:

²⁰*For in him every one of God's promises is a 'Yes.' For this reason it is through him that we say the 'Amen', to the glory of God.*

2 Cor 1: 20



Sequence of readings

First reading (from the Letter to the Hebrews):

The first reading reminds us of the new economy of sacrifice, as opposed to the old economy: Christ offers himself to the Father and *completely submits his own will*. Let us also raise our prayer, in the same Spirit as Christ, in submission to the Father's Will, offering Him our life; in this Spirit, we present our prayer for Reconciliation, Unity and Peace:

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual* worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world,* but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.**

Rom 12 : 1-2

Reading

⁵Consequently, when Christ* came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; ⁶in burnt-offerings and sin-offerings you have taken no pleasure. ⁷Then I said, "See, God, I have come to do your will, O God" (in the scroll of the book* it is written of me).' ⁸When he said above, 'You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt-offerings and sin-offerings' (these are offered according to the law), ⁹then he added, 'See, I have come to do your will.' He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰And it is by God's will* that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Heb 10 : 5-10

Let us pray, that God might give us a spirit of submission and of total trust in the Father's Will and Christ's promises regarding the intentions of the prayer for Reconciliation, Unity and Peace.

Second reading (from the Letter to the Hebrews):

In the second reading, the accent lies on the intensity of Jesus' prayer and on His full *obedience and faithfulness to the Father*. The example of Christ calls us to perseverance and to intense prayer, to submission to the trials that life presents in a spirit of obedience to God's Will and of faith in the accomplishment of His plan, announced by the prophets. In this spirit of obedience and faithfulness, and in union with Christ, we present our prayer for Reconciliation, Unity and Peace:

¹⁸Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets,* ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.

²³ May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound* and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

1 Thes 5 : 18-24

Reading

⁵ So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you'; ⁶as he says also in another place, 'You are a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchizedek.' ⁷In the days of his flesh, Jesus* offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; ⁹and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, ¹⁰having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Heb 5 : 5-10

Let us pray, that God might grant the Church an intense and perseverant prayer for Reconciliation, Unity and Peace.

Third reading (from the Gospel according to Luke):

In the short passage of Luke, Jesus, knowing that His death is close at hand, *resolutely* makes for Jerusalem, the place where *His passion and redemptive death must be accomplished*. Let us too keep our eyes steady on Jerusalem, for whom we await the accomplishment of Christ's promises.

Reading

⁵¹ When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. ⁵²And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him;

Luke 9: 51-52

Lets us pray, that God might grant us to keep our eyes steady on Jerusalem, for whom we intercede with *deep faith*, asking that the prophetic promises might be accomplished in her. Let us ask the Lord to realize Unity and Peace in Jerusalem.

Fourth reading (from the Gospel according to John):

With this reading, we join in the great priestly prayer of Jesus. In this prayer is expressed the greatest image of *unity in the Church, founded on the presence of the Love of God in her members* (v. 26), the *mutual love of the Father and Son in the unity of their common Spirit* (v. 23). Let us invoke the Holy Spirit, which only can unite the community of believers with the tie of the Trinitarian Love:

⁴I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Eph 4: 1-6

Reading

¹⁷After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, ²since you have given him authority over all people,* to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. ⁵So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

⁶ 'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; ⁸for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. ¹²While I was with them, I protected them in your name that* you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost,* so that the scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves.* ¹⁴I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁵I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one.* ¹⁶They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁷Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth. ²⁰ 'I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us,* so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²²The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, ²³I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. ²⁴Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵ 'Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. ²⁶I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.'

John 17

Let us pray for the conversion of our hearts, that God might inspire humility and the Love of God in us, through which man is integrated into the Divine Trinity, in order to make us capable of loving our brothers; humility and Love are, in fact, the presuppositions for realizing Unity.

Fifth reading (from the Gospel according to Luke):

In the Gospel of Luke, more than in the other Gospels, the accent lies on *the strength of Christ's prayer on Gethsemane, sustaining him throughout his anguish and deep suffering*; it is the decisive moment in the history of salvation when Jesus pronounces His unconditioned "yes" to the Father. In contrast, the disciples fall asleep because of the weight of their sadness and despair, in spite of Jesus' invitation to pray with Him. God asks us too to stay awake and to pray with Him; he asks us *not to surrender to despair and sadness but to persevere in an incessant prayer*:

¹⁸Then Jesus^{*} told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. ²He said, 'In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. ³In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, "Grant me justice against my opponent." ⁴For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, "Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, ⁵yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming." ' ⁶And the Lord said, 'Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? ⁸I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?'

Luke 18: 1-8

Reading

³⁹He came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him. ⁴⁰When he reached the place, he said to them, 'Pray that you may not come into the time of trial.'^{*} ⁴¹Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, ⁴²'Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.'^{*} ⁴³Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. ⁴⁴In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground.* ⁴⁵When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, ⁴⁶and he said to them, 'Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial.'^{*}

Luke 22: 39-46

Let us pray, that the Lord might grant that we not fall into the temptation of sadness and despair, but that we might persevere in an incessant prayer for Reconciliation, Unity and Peace.



Celebration of the Eucharist or of Holy Communion

The first day of the triduum, dedicated to the prayer for Reconciliation, Unity and Peace terminates with the celebration of the Eucharist or of Holy Communion, which was instituted on the evening of Holy Thursday. In the meal of the Lord, we are integrated into the

eschatological time¹, in hopeful expectation of the realization of the messianic promises and of the Christ's return in glory:

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, ²⁴and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' ²⁵In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' ²⁶For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

1 Cor 11 : 23-26

The celebrant is invited to invoke the intentions of the extraordinary prayer for Reconciliation, Unity and Peace at some point of the celebration of the Eucharist or of Holy Communion.

¹ Which concerns the last things, i.e. the eschaton.