

Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit
(cf. Jn 15:5-9)

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2021 was prepared by the Monastic Community of Grandchamp.1 The theme that was chosen, “Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit”, is based on John 15:1-17 and expresses Grandchamp Community’s vocation to prayer, reconciliation and unity in the church and the human family.

Introduction

This celebration reflects the ways in which the sisters of Grandchamp pray. In this tradition three of the monastic prayer services – sometimes called ‘vigils’ or ‘nocturns’ in the Benedictine tradition– traditionally said during the night are combined into one evening service. In the same way, our service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is shaped by three sections, called ‘vigils’, which follow a pattern used by the community of Grandchamp.

Order of the Celebration

L: Leader

C: Congregation

R: Reader

Invitation to prayer

Entrance Hymn: Come Down, O Love Divine

Come down, O Love divine,
seek thou this soul of mine,
and visit it with thine own ardour glowing;
O Comforter, draw near,
within my hear appear,
and kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.

O let it freely burn, till earthly passions turn
to dust and ashes in its heat consuming;
and let thy glorious light
shine ever on my sight,
and clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

Let holy charity
mine outward vesture be,
and lowliness become mine inner clothing;
true lowliness of heart,
which takes the humbler part,
and o’er its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.

And so the yearning strong,
with which the soul will long,
shall far outpost the power of human telling;
for none can guess its grace,
till they become the place
wherein the Holy Spirit finds a dwelling.

Word of Welcome

L May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you always!

C And also with you.

R1 Brothers and sisters in Christ, this year the theme of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, chosen by the sisters of the Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland, is: “Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit”.

R2 It is the great desire of God, expressed by Jesus, that we might come to him and abide in him. He waits for us tirelessly, hoping that, united to him in love, we will bear fruit that will bring life to all. Faced with the difference of ‘the other’, we risk withdrawing into ourselves and seeing only that which separates us. But let us listen to how Christ calls us to abide in his love, and so bear much fruit.

R1 In the three moments of prayer that follow, we remember the call of Christ, we turn to his love, to him who is the centre of our life. For the path of unity begins in our intimate relationship with God. Abiding in his love strengthens the desire to seek unity and reconciliation with others. God opens us up to those who are different from us. This is an important fruit, a gift of healing for the divisions within us, between us, and in the world.

L. In peace let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, you are the vinedresser who cares for us with love. You call on us to see the beauty of each branch united to the vine, the beauty of each person.

And yet, too often the differences in others make us afraid.

We withdraw into ourselves. Our trust in you is forsaken. Enmity develops between us.

Come and direct our hearts toward you once again. Grant us to live from your forgiveness so that we may be together and praise your name.

Litany of praise

C You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to you!

R1 We sing your praise in the midst of the world and among all peoples,

R2 We sing your praise in the midst of creation and among all creatures.

C You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to you!

R1 We sing your praise among suffering and tears,

R2 We sing your praise among promises and achievements.

C You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to you!

R1 We sing your praise in the places of conflict and misunderstanding;

R2 We sing your praise in the places of encounter and reconciliation.

C You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to you!

R1 We sing your praise in the midst of rifts and divisions,

R2 We sing your praise in the midst of life and death,
the birth of a new heaven and a new earth.

C You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to you!

First Vigil *Abiding in Christ: The unity of the whole person*

Psalm: 103

Bless the Lord, O my soul, * and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, * and forget not all his benefits.

He forgives all your sins * and heals all your infirmities;

He redeems your life from the grave *

and crowns you with mercy and loving-kindness;

He satisfies you with good things, * and your youth is renewed like an eagle's.

The Lord executes righteousness * and judgement for all who are oppressed.

He made his ways known to Moses * and his works to the children of Israel.

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, * slow to anger and of great kindness.

He will not always accuse us, *. nor will he keep his anger for ever.

He has not dealt with us according to our sins, *

nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.

For as the heavens are high above the earth, *

so is his mercy great upon those who fear him.

As far as the east is from the west, * so far has he removed our sins from us.

As a father cares for his children, * so does the Lord care for those who fear him.

For he himself knows whereof we are made; * he remembers that we are but dust.

Our days are like the grass; * we flourish like a flower of the field;

When the wind goes over it, it is gone, * and its place shall know it no more.

But the merciful goodness of the Lord endures for ever on those who fear him, *

and his righteousness on children's children;

On those who keep his covenant * and remember his commandments and do them.

The Lord has set his throne in heaven, * and his kingship has dominion over all.

Bless the Lord, you angels of his, you mighty ones who do his bidding, *

and hearken to the voice of his word.

Bless the Lord, all you his hosts, * you ministers of his who do his will.

Bless the Lord, all you works of his, in all places of his dominion; *

bless the Lord, O my soul.

Reading: Jn 15:1-17

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

Response: Ubi caritas

Ubi caritas et amor,

Ubi caritas, Deus ibi est

Where there is charity, selfless love

Where there is charity, God is there.

Short silence (approximately 1 minute)

Intercessions

R God of love, through Christ you said to us: “You did not choose me but I chose you”. You seek us, you invite us to receive your friendship and abide in it. Teach us to respond more deeply to this invitation, and grow in a life that is ever more complete.

C **The joy of our heart is in God.**

R God of life, you call us to be praise in the midst of the world and to welcome one another as a gift of your grace. May your loving gaze, which rests upon each person, open us to receive each other just as we are.

C The joy of our heart is in God.

R God who gathers, you knit us together as one vine in your Son Jesus. May your loving Spirit abide in us at parish meetings and local ecumenical gatherings. Grant that together we might celebrate you with joy.

C The joy of our heart is in God.

R God of the one vineyard, you call us to abide in your love in all we do and say. Touched by your goodness, grant us to be a reflection of that love in our homes and workplaces. May we pave the way for bridging rivalries and overcoming tensions.

C The joy of our heart is in God.

Action: A time of silence

R Very often we think of prayer as something we do, an activity of our own. In this short time we are invited to an interior silence, and to turn aside from all the noise and concerns of our lives and thoughts. In this silence the action belongs to God. We are simply called to abide in God's love, to rest in him.

Silence (approximately 5 minutes)

Hymn: Light of God

Come light, light of God
give light to creation
enlighten our hearts
and remain with your world.

Second Vigil *The visible unity of Christians*

Reading: 1 Cor 1:10-13a

Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Has Christ been divided?

Response: There is One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism

There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism
There is one God, who is God of all

Short silence (approximately 1 minute)

Intercessions

R Holy Spirit, you create and re-create the church in all places. Come and whisper in our hearts the prayer which Jesus addressed to his Father on the eve of his passion: “that they may all be one ... so that the world may believe”.

C Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy)

R Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace, light the fire of your love in us so that suspicions, contempt and misunderstanding cease in the church. May the walls that separate us fall.

C Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy)

R Holy Spirit, Consoler of all, open our hearts to forgiveness and reconciliation and bring us back from our wanderings.

C Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy)

R Lord Jesus, gentle and humble of heart, give us poverty of spirit so that we may welcome the unexpectedness of your grace.

C Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy)

R Holy Spirit, you never abandon the men, women and children who are persecuted for their fidelity to the gospel. Give them strength and courage, and support those who help them.

C Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy)

Action: Sharing a Sign of Peace

R The Lord calls us to be united among ourselves. He gives us his peace and invites us to share it. Let us exchange a sign of his peace with our neighbours.

Everyone turns to those near them and offers a sign of peace, in keeping with their local context.

Response Hymn: Light of God

Come light, light of God
give light to creation
enlighten our hearts
and remain with your world.

Third Vigil *The unity of all peoples and all creation*

Reading: Rev. 7: 9-12

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying,

“Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, singing,

“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom

and thanksgiving and honor
and power and might
be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

Homily: The Rev Dr Scott Sharman

Short silence (approximately 1 minute)

Intercessions

R God of life, you have created every human being in your image and likeness. We sing your praise for the gift of our many cultures, expressions of faith, traditions and ethnicities. Grant us the courage always to stand against injustice and hatred based on race, class, gender, religion, and fear of those not like ourselves.

C God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!

R Merciful God, you have shown us in Christ that we are one in you. Teach us to use this gift in the world so that believers of all faiths in every country may be able to listen to each other and live in peace.

C God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!

R. O Jesus, you came into the world and shared fully in our humanity. You know the hardships of life for people who suffer in so many different ways. May the Spirit of compassion move us to share our time, life and goods with all those in need.

C. God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!

R Holy Spirit, you hear the fury of your wounded creation and the cries of those already suffering from climate change. Guide us toward new behaviours. May we learn to live in harmony as part of your creation.

C God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!

Action: Moving to the centre... and out to the world

R We are called to be ministers of God’s healing and reconciling love. This work can only be fruitful when we abide in God, as branches of the true vine which is Jesus Christ. As we come closer to God we draw closer to one another.

Imagine a circle drawn on the ground. Imagine that this circle is the world.

The designated persons stand up and form a circle around a central candle.

R The centre represents God, and the paths to the centre are different ways people live. When people living in this world, desiring to draw closer to God, walk toward the centre of the circle...

The persons take several steps toward the centre.

R ... to the extent that they move closer to the centre, to God, they move closer to one another. And the closer they come to one another...

The persons move to the centre together.

R ... the closer they come to God.

*When the candle-bearers reach the centre they each light their candle.
As they stand together at the centre all keep a time of prayer in silence.*

Short Silence (approximately 1 minute)

The Lord's Prayer

L With the words that Jesus taught us, in the language of your heart, let us now pray together:

**C Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

R Spirituality and solidarity are inseparably linked. Prayer and action belong together. When we abide in Christ, we receive the Spirit of courage and wisdom to act against all injustice and oppression. We say together:

**C Pray and work that God may reign.
Throughout your day, let the Word of God breathe life into work and rest.
Maintain inner silence in all things
so as to dwell in Christ.
Be filled with the spirit of the Beatitudes:
joy, simplicity, mercy.**

These words are recited daily by the Sisters of the Grandchamp Community.

Closing Hymn: Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Love divine, all loves excelling; joy of heaven to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling; all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus thou art all compassion; pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation, enter every trembling heart.

Come almighty to deliver; let us all thy grace receive;
suddenly return, and never, nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then, thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee,

changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Blessing

L Be one, so that the world may believe!

Abide in his love, go into the world and bear the fruits of this love.

***C* May the God of hope fill us with all joy and all peace in faith, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.**