



Ecumenical/Interfaith Committee Walking Together

by Anne Mulqueen, OFS

Did you know that the prayer themes for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity were first formulated in 1968 and were jointly prepared by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the World Council of Churches? I did not. However, in the process of doing a little research for this article, I happened upon the Vatican website entitled *Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity*. This is what I found.

Every January, we participate in a Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This coming year's theme is *Called to Proclaim the Mighty Acts of the Lord* (1 Peter 2:9). So I decided to read further, whereupon I discovered a list of all the themes from 1968 to 2015. I became intrigued and decided to look for a pattern. Bear in mind, we are dealing with 48 years of prayer!



At the end of this article I will tell you what spoke to my heart, and I challenge you to take all 48 themes and Scripture passages and meditate on them to see what the Lord may be saying to you about Christian unity. Look up each Scripture passage in your Bible. Although it is time-consuming, it is worth it!

The themes and scripture passages for each year were as follows:

1968: To the praise of his glory (Eph 1:14)

1969: Called to freedom (Gal 5:13)

1970: We are fellow workers for God
(1 Cor 3:9)

1971: ...and the communion of the Holy
Spirit (2 Cor 13:13)

1972: I give you a new commandment
(Jn 13:34)

1973: Lord, teach us to pray (Lk 11:1)

1974: That every tongue confess: Jesus
Christ is Lord (Phil 2:1-13)

1975: God's purpose: all things in Christ
(Eph 1:3-10)

1976: We shall be like him (1 Jn 3:2) or,
Called to become what we are

1977: Enduring together in hope (Rom 5:1-5)

1978: No longer strangers (Eph 2:13-22)

1979: Serve one another to the glory of
God (1 Pet 4:7-11)

1980: Your kingdom come (Mt 6:20)

1981: One Spirit – many gifts – one body
(1 Cor 12:3b-13)

1982: May all find their home in you, O Lord
(Psalm 84)

1983: Jesus Christ – the Life of the World
(1 Jn 1:1-4)

1984: Called to be one through the cross of
our Lord (1 Cor 2:2 + Col 1:20)

1985: From death to life with Christ
(Eph 2:4-7)

1986: You shall be my witnesses
(Acts 1:6-8)

1987: United in Christ – a New Creation
(2 Cor 5:17 + 6:4a)

1988: The love of God casts out fear
(1 Jn 4:18)

1989: Building community: one body in
Christ (Rom 12:5-6a)

1990: That they all may be one... That the
world may believe (John 17)

1991: Praise the Lord, all you nations!
(Psalm 117 + Rom 15:5-13)

1992: I am with you always ... Go,
therefore (Mt 28:16-20)

1993: Bearing the fruit of the Spirit for
Christian unity (Gal 5:22-23)

1994: The household of God: called to be
one in heart and mind (Acts 4:23-37)

1995: Koinonia: communion in God and with
one another (John 15:1-17)

1996: Behold, I stand at the door and knock
(Rev 3:14-22)

1997: We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be
reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:20)

1998: The Spirit helps us in our weakness
(Rom 8:14-27)

1999: He will dwell with them as their God,
they will be his peoples (Rev 21:1-7)

2000: Blessed be God who has blessed us in
Christ (Eph 1:3-14)

2001: I am the Way, and the Truth, and the
Life (Jn 14:1-6)

2002: For with you is the fountain of life
(Psalm 36:5-9)

2003: We have this treasure in clay jars
(2 Cor 4:4-18)

2004: My peace I give to you
(Jn 14:23-31; John 14:27)

2005: Christ, the one foundation of the
church (1 Cor 3:1-23)

2006: Where two or three are gathered in my
name, there I am among them (Mt 18:18-20)

2007: He even makes the deaf to hear and the
mute to speak (Mk 7:31-37)

2008: Pray without ceasing
(1Thes 5:12a-13b-18)

2009: That they may become one in your hand
(Ez 37:15-28)

2010: You are witnesses of these things
(Lk 24:48)

2011: One in the apostles' teaching,
fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer
(Acts 2:42)

2012: We will all be Changed by the Victory
of our Lord Jesus Christ
(1Cor 15:51-58)

2013: What does God require of us? (Mi 6:6-8)

2014: Has Christ been divided? (1 Cor 1:1-17)

2015: Jesus said to her: Give me a drink
(Jn 4:7)

This is what stayed with me after I set aside my
"thinking" faculty and simply opened my heart to
listen to God.

- It is the plan of the Triune God, that we 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. (John 17:21).
- Prayer, love, and understanding are essential
elements if we are to honor the prayer of Jesus in
John 17:21.
- Christ always leads us back to prayer for
direction, commitment and strength to persevere.
- It is in Christ that we find unity.
- Christian unity is God's will and God's work; it
transcends human ability.
- In the world there may be division, but in Christ
there is no division, because there is only one
faith, one Lord and one baptism.
- We need to discover and celebrate the areas of
unity that already exist among us.
- We can and should walk together in our
ministries, sharing our common Gospel values.
- [I believe] entering into dialogue with those not in
full communion with the Catholic Church is an
opportunity to practice respect, understanding,
and love.
- And so much more. However, I want to know
what the Spirit of God was saying to you in these
passages, so write to me at
amulqueensfo@gmail.com.

St. John Paul II stated in *Ut Unum Sint*, "At the
Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church
committed itself irrevocably to following the path of
the ecumenical venture" (UUS 3), and that the
impetus is *fostered by the grace of the Holy Spirit*
(UUS 7). So won't you walk with me on the journey
toward unity? We may not see it in our lifetime, but
that does not excuse us from participation in God's
plan for His Church.