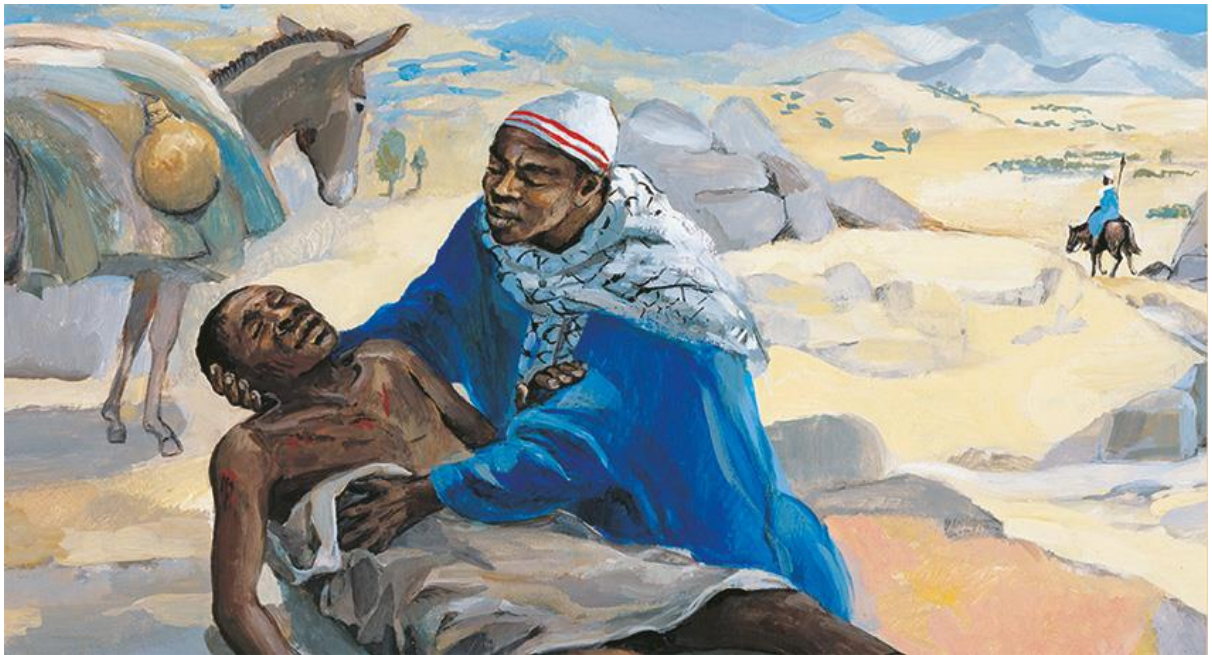

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2024

Go and do likewise



Dicastery
for Promoting
Christian Unity



18-25 January 2024

www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2024

Go and do likewise

18–25 January 2024

Welcome

The parable of the Good Samaritan is one of the best known passages of Scripture, yet one that never seems to lose its power to challenge indifference to suffering and to inspire solidarity. It is a story about crossing boundaries that calls our attention to the bonds that unite the whole human family.

In choosing this passage of Scripture for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the churches of Burkina Faso have invited us to join with them in a process of self-reflection as they consider what it means to love our neighbour in the midst of a security crisis. Communities in the British-Irish context may be less vulnerable to acts of mass violence than in Burkina Faso, but there are still many living with the memory and/or the threat of serious violence, centred on issues of identity and belonging. There are also groups within communities, including people from ethnic minority backgrounds and people seeking asylum, who feel particularly vulnerable to violence or being displaced by the threat of violence.

Our neighbours in Burkina Faso call us to reconnect to God's dream for us – a dream of a unity formed of ties of love and compassion. This challenges us not only to reflect on the learning from our ecumenical journey so far, but to widen our vision. What can we learn from people of other faiths, from those whose backgrounds are most different from our own, and what do we need from each other?

The reflections encourage us to consider the perspective not only of the one who showed mercy, but also of those who passed by. Many of us will have been unaware of the threat faced by communities in Burkina Faso before reading this material. It is a powerful reminder of the many neglected conflicts that continue to destroy lives and devastate communities around the world, when only a limited number can capture, and fewer still can hold, the attention of the world's media. The Church is called to be an advocate for those caught in these forgotten conflicts, and to amplify the voices of those who feel forsaken.

In this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity the Church is being challenged to stop and tend to the wounded and, in so doing, to recognise our own wounds as churches and as communities. Facing the reality of our own brokenness helps

to connect us to the suffering of others from a place of humility and deep empathy, creating a sacred space of encounter inspired by Christ's healing love.

Dr Nicola Brady, General Secretary, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

Introduction to the theme

The materials for the 2024 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity were prepared by an ecumenical team from Burkina Faso facilitated by the local Chemin Neuf Community (CCN)¹. The chosen theme is “You shall love the Lord your God ... and your neighbour as yourself” (Lk 10:27). Brothers and sisters from the Catholic Archdiocese of Ouagadougou, Protestant Churches, ecumenical bodies and the CCN in Burkina Faso collaborated generously in drafting the prayers and reflections. They experienced their work together as a real path of ecumenical conversion.

Loving God and neighbour in the midst of a security crisis

Burkina Faso is in the Sahel region of West Africa, which extends into the neighbouring countries of Mali and Niger. It covers 174,000 km² and has 21 million inhabitants, of about 60 ethnicities. Approximately 64% of the population is Muslim, 9% adheres to traditional African religions and 26% is Christian (20% Catholic, 6% Protestant). These three religious groups are represented in every region of the country, and in virtually every family.

Burkina Faso is currently experiencing a serious security crisis, which affects all faith communities. After a major jihadist attack was mounted from outside the country in 2016, the security situation in Burkina Faso, and consequently its social cohesion, deteriorated dramatically. The country has endured a proliferation of terrorist attacks, lawlessness and human trafficking. This has left over 3,000 people dead and almost two million internally displaced. Thousands of schools, health centres and town halls have been closed, and much of the socio-economic and transport infrastructure has been destroyed. Attacks targeting specific ethnic groups exacerbate the risk of inter-communal conflicts. In the context of this dire threat to security, social cohesion, peace and national unity are being undermined.

Christian churches have been specifically targeted by armed attacks. Priests, pastors and catechists have been killed during worship and the fate of others who were kidnapped remains unknown. At the time of writing, more than 22% of the national territory is outside the control of the state and Christians can no longer openly practise their faith in these areas. Because of terrorism, the majority of Christian churches in the north, east and north-west of the country have been closed. There is no longer any public Christian worship in many of these areas, but where worship is still possible, with police protection, usually in large cities, services have to be shortened owing to security concerns.

Despite the efforts of both the state and religious communities, the country is becoming increasingly unstable as extremist groups become more widespread. Nevertheless, a degree of solidarity is emerging between the Christian, Muslim and traditional religions. Their leaders are working to find lasting solutions for peace, social cohesion and reconciliation. To this end, for instance, the Christian-Muslim Dialogue Commission of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Burkina-Niger is making a major effort to support inter-religious and inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation.

Following the Government's calls for prayers for peace, social cohesion and reconciliation, individual churches continue to organise daily prayers and fasting. Action by the various Catholic and Protestant churches has intensified to assist displaced persons. Reflection and awareness-raising meetings have been organized to promote better understanding of the situation and of the value of fraternity, and to develop strategies for a return to lasting peace. This hope is also reflected in the traditional Mossi ² proverb: "Regardless of the nature or duration of the fight, the moment of reconciliation will come."

The invitation to work together on the texts for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2024 challenged the different churches in Burkina Faso to walk, pray and work together in mutual love during this difficult period for their country. The love of Christ that unites all Christians is stronger than their divisions and the Christians of Burkina Faso commit themselves to walking the path of love of God and love of neighbour. They are confident that God's love will overcome the violence that currently afflicts their country.

For footnotes ¹ and ² please see Appendix at the end.

Order of Worship

L Leader
R Reader
A Assembly

Gathering and Sharing God's Love

R In Burkina Faso, a calabash (dried and hollowed-out fruit of the calabash tree used as a vessel for food and drink) is used to share water with guests who arrive tired from their journey. It expresses welcome, hospitality and fellowship. After the visitor has been refreshed, conversation can begin, and the purpose of the visit can be expressed. As we gather and enter into prayer, we welcome you in the same way as Abraham welcomed the three visitors and provided water for their refreshment. We invite you to be refreshed by sharing the water from this calabash.

Water from the calabash is shared by a member of the host community with representatives of the other churches present. As the calabash is being returned to the front of the sanctuary, worship leaders join in the procession while a hymn is sung or music is played.

Invitation to Pray

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

A **Amen.**

L We are gathered as brothers and sisters to pray for the visible unity of Christians. At the heart of our worship is the story of the Good Samaritan where we hear the divine call to love God and to love our neighbour as ourselves.

Let us prepare to meet the God of Love in thanksgiving and joy, remembering his command to love.

A **Glory to you, Father, for you reveal yourself in your creation and call all people to live in your presence.**

Glory to you, Christ Jesus,

for you give yourself entirely to each one of us and invite us to do the same.

Glory to you, Holy Spirit,

for you gather us together in love and unity.

Glory to you, God of Love,

in whom we are created, redeemed and made one.

Amen.

Hymn

Litany of Praise and Thanksgiving

R Let us turn our hearts to God in praise:
Praise to you Lord for you have poured out your love into our hearts so that we never lose hope. You free our lives from fear because of your love, and dress our wounded and injured hearts. Praise to you for all the women and men who sow seeds of love and hope for their neighbours around the world.

A **Lord, we praise you.**

R Eternal God, we thank you for the gift of Jesus your Son, the Redeemer of all people. Thanks be to you for the grace of conversion and all the seeds of faith, hope and charity among your people and everywhere. Thanks be to you for the faith we received from the apostles, for Jesus' prayer for unity, and for the gift of the Good News of salvation.

A **Lord, we thank you.**

L God of love, we adore you for the generosity of your love for all people – a love so perfect, it is beyond our understanding; a love in which there is no distinction on grounds of race, gender or social status. We adore you, who out of love sent your Son, Jesus Christ, into the world and continue to fill our lives with your love through the Holy Spirit.

A **Lord, we adore you.**

Prayers of Confession

L We come before you now, O God, to confess our sins:

R By seeking happiness without God and ignoring the command to love, we have turned away from God and from our neighbour. Our selfishness and our desire to possess and control separate us from God.

Silence

R Merciful God:

A **forgive and heal us.**

R When we accept ideologies that demean the humanity of others, we build walls of division, sow the seeds of hatred and violence and abandon the Lord's command to love one another.

Silence

R Merciful God:

A **forgive and heal us.**

R We have hardened our hearts and deceived ourselves. In our lack of compassion, we no longer see Jesus in those who are different from ourselves.

Silence

R Merciful God:

A **forgive and heal us.**

R We fail to open our hearts and minds to the infinite and unconditional nature of God's love for all. By being closed to this love, the world is darkened by selfishness, violence, indifference and absence of meaning.

Silence

R Merciful God:

A **forgive and heal us.**

L God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ whom you sent in the fullness of time to redeem all creation, we ask you to have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and transform us by your Holy Spirit.

A **Glory to God, whom we praise with one voice.**

A **Holy God!**

Holy Strong!

Holy Immortal, have mercy on us!

Old Testament Reading

Genesis 18:1-8

R The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. He said, "My lord, if I find favour with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on –since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes." Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 138

R I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart;
before the gods I sing your praise;
I bow down towards your holy temple
and give thanks to your name for
your steadfast love and your faithfulness;
for you have exalted your name and your word above everything.

A **On the day I called, you answered me**

.

R On the day I called, you answered me;
you increased my strength of soul.
All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord,
for they have heard the words of your mouth.

A **On the day I called, you answered me.**

R They shall sing of the ways of the Lord,
for great is the glory of the Lord.
For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly;
but the haughty he perceives from far away.

A **On the day I called, you answered me.**

R Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
 you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies;
 you stretch out your hand,
 and your right hand delivers me.
 The Lord will fulfil his purpose for me;
 your steadfast love, O Lord, endures for ever.
 Do not forsake the work of your hands.

A **On the day I called, you answered me.**

R Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

A **As it was in the beginning, is now,
 and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

Gospel Reading

Luke 10:25

R A lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher”, he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.” And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live”. But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbour?” Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend’. Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” He said, “The one who showed him mercy”. Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise”.

Hymn

Sermon / Homily

Followed by a moment of silence or a hymn.

Affirmation of Love

inspired by 1 Cor 13

Read antiphonally, with one half of the congregation reading the first part of each stanza and the other half reading the second.

- I I may speak in the languages of people and angels,
but if I lack love, I am simply a resonant metal, a loud cymbal.
- II I may have the gift of prophecy, understanding of all mystery and all
knowledge;
I may have the fullest faith, that moves mountains; but if I lack love, I am
nothing.
- I I may distribute all my goods to hungry people,
I may even deliver my body to the flames, but if I lack love, I gain
nothing.
- II Love demands patience. Love serves. It does not walk away. It is not
jealous. It does not brag. It does not seek its own interest.
It is not irritable. It does not hold a grudge.
- I Love does not celebrate injustice, but finds its joy in the truth.
It excuses all. It believes all. It hopes for all. It endures all.
- II Love has no end. Prophecies? They will finish. Tongues? They will come
to an end.
Knowledge? It will pass.
- A Faith, hope and love continue.
The greatest of these is love.**

Hymn

This moment can also be used as an opportunity to gather the offering.

Prayers of Intercession

- L We have been invited to live the divine call to love God and our
neighbour as ourselves. As we renew our commitment to this call, may
this love strengthen our unity as Christians.
- R With all our hearts, we desire to dwell in God's love and to have the grace
to love our neighbours as ourselves.
- God of boundless love, we pray that all people may come to know your
unlimited mercy and believe in your desire to fill us with your infinite love.

A Fill us with your love! Make us one in you.

R We join our prayers to that of Jesus, who prayed for the unity of all who follow him. God of communion, we pray that we may work together for your greater glory and spread the Good News of salvation for all.

A Fill us with your love! Make us one in you.

R Our hearts are broken because of the confusion and division in our world. God, our healer, we who are scattered like sheep without a shepherd, ask you to gather us into one fold. Enliven us by your Spirit and send us again, two by two, to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

A Fill us with your love! Make us one in you.

R Our world is scarred by terror and violence. Millions are forced to leave their homes in search of refuge and safety. God of welcome, grant us the grace to risk embracing the stranger, tending their wounds and standing in solidarity with them. Strengthen our resolve to be kind and merciful and to act towards our sisters and brothers at all times as you do towards us.

A Fill us with your love! Make us one in you.

R In our weakness and fear we know that we often pass by on the other side, turning away from those who need our help. God of power, despite our lack of charity, open our hearts to experience the length, width, height and depth of your love, so that we may love you more and love our neighbour as ourselves.

A Fill us with your love! Make us one in you.

The Lord's Prayer

L As children of the one God, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**A Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Hymn

Closing Prayer

A Lord Jesus, who prayed that all might be one,
we pray to you for the unity of all Christians,
according to your will, according to your means.
May your Spirit enable us to experience the suffering caused by division,
to see our sin and to hope beyond all hope. Amen.

Sending

The calabash or container of water is brought forward and held up before the congregation, as the leader says:

L Refreshed by the water of life,
let us go forth to love God, and to love our neighbour as ourselves,
united in Christ and enlivened by the Holy Spirit.

A **Everything we can do together, let's do it! Amen!**

Hymn

BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS AND PRAYERS FOR THE EIGHT DAYS

DAY 1

A lawyer stood up to test Jesus.

“Teacher”, he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

(Lk 10:25)

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

Additional scripture passages

Romans 14:8-9

Psalm 103:13-18

Reflection

“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. Elsewhere in the Bible, Jesus gives us the ultimate definition of eternal life: “... that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (Jn 17:3). Knowing God means discovering and doing his will in our lives. Every person wants a life of fullness and truth, and God desires this for us too (cf. Jn 10:10). Saint Irenaeus said, “The glory of God is a human being fully alive”.

The existential realities of life, with divisions, selfishness and suffering, often distance us from the quest for God. Jesus lived the mystery of intimate communion with the Father, who desires to fill all his children with the fullness of his eternal life. 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, praying for the day when we can all stand together at the Table of the Lord.

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.

Questions

- **Personal:** How do you see God's dream for you unfolding in your life?
- **Local:** What might be weakening our witness as churches to God's promise of abundant life?
- **Global:** What more could faith communities be doing to build on their pastoral experience and global reach to further the work of peace and reconciliation?

Go and Do

(see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

- **Personal:** Think of an example from the news that illustrates a society wounded by conflict. Research how Christian churches are responding. How can this be applied in your context?
- **Local:** Consider sharing the theme from this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity with members of other faith communities in your local area, reflecting on the connections between the local and global contexts. What more can your communities do to bring issues of global justice into our local inter-faith dialogue?
- **Global:** Christians gathering to worship and witness in parts of Burkina Faso have been attacked and murdered, and the threat of violence continues to oppress and scatter that community. As we gather in this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, pray for all those facing religious persecution in Burkina Faso and other parts of the world.

DAY 2

*Jesus answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind;
and your neighbour as yourself"
(Lk 10:27)*

**Help me Lord to love you, my neighbour and myself
with all that I am**

Additional scripture passages

Deuteronomy 10:12-13

Psalm 133

Reflection

The lawyer's answer may seem simple, drawn from the well-known commandments of God. However, to love God in this way and our neighbour as ourselves can often be difficult.

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 can ask for the grace to follow Christ's example, he who offered himself up completely and said, "Not my will but yours be done" (Lk 22:42). He also manifested his great love to all, including his enemies. 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. Consider that we are God's beloved creation. Respect yourself. Seek peace with yourself. Similarly, we can each ask for the grace to love and accept our own church or community, with its failings, entrusting all things to the Father, who restores us through the Holy Spirit.

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.

Questions

- **Personal:** How do you see yourself? How do you think God sees you?
- **Local:** Does God's view of you change your view of those around you?
- **Global:** How does God's view of you change how you respond to the news?

Go and Do

(see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

- **Personal:** Resolve to get to know a new person in your road and find a loving way to engage with them.
- **Local:** Explore where you live and what opportunities there are to cross barriers to serve.
- **Global:** Explore an issue regarding the displaced and dispossessed. How could you meaningfully contribute to the situation?

DAY 3

“Who is my neighbour?”

(Lk 10: 29)

Lord, open our hearts to those we do not see

Additional scripture passages

Romans 13:8-10

Psalm 119:57-63

Reflection

The teacher of the law wanted to justify himself, hoping that the neighbour he is called to love is one of his own faith and people. This is a natural human instinct. When we invite people to our homes, they are quite often people who share our social status, our outlook on life and our values. There is a human instinct to prefer places of familiarity. This is also true of our ecclesial communities. But Jesus takes the lawyer, and his wider audience, deeper into their own tradition by reminding them of the obligation to welcome and to love all, regardless of religion, culture or social status.

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.

Questions

- **Personal:** Why do you think the lawyer asked his first question?
- **Local:** Who are the people who are excluded within your community and why?
- **Global:** How can you, and your church or group of churches, be neighbours to people in other parts of the world with whom you have little or no contact?

Go and Do

(see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

- **Personal:** Think of a person you have never really thought of as your neighbour. How can you be a neighbour to them in a practical way?
- **Local:** Think of the church/congregation geographically nearest to your own with which you have little or no contact, and make contact!
- **Global:** Take practical steps as a church or group of churches to be neighbours to the people of Burkina Faso.

DAY 4

*When he saw him, he passed by on the other side
(Lk 10:31)*

May we never turn away from those in need

Additional scripture passages

Isaiah 58:6-9a

Psalm 34:15-22

Reflection

The priest and Levite who walk by on the other side may have had good religious reasons for not helping: they may have been ready to perform certain religious rituals and might have risked ritual defilement if the man had been dead. Yet on many occasions, Jesus is critical of religious leadership for placing the rules of religion ahead of the obligation to always do good.

The beginning of the text for the Week of Prayer tells us how the teacher of the law wanted to justify himself. The priest and the Levite in the parable would have felt justified in what they had done. 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. When we open our eyes to see how God's love is revealed by our fellow Christians, we are drawn closer to them and so are drawn into deeper union with them.

This parable of Jesus not only challenges us to do good, but also to widen our vision. We do not only learn what is good and holy from those who share our confessional or religious worldview, but often from those different from ourselves. 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.

Questions

- **Personal:** What gets in the way of you doing good?
- **Local:** Who are the people who behave like the Good Samaritan in your community?
- **Global:** How can you widen your vision of being a good neighbour globally?

Go and Do

(see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

- **Personal:** Reflect on your own circle of relationships and their geography. Choose today to walk through another part of town. What do you see and who do you notice?
- **Local:** Seek out a project in a local community near you that supports people often not seen. Look for ways in which you can support and encourage their work.
- **Global:** Take some time to research the conflict in Burkina Faso and the challenges facing the Church there.

DAY 5

*He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them
(Lk 10:34)*

Lord, help us see the wounds and find hope

Additional scripture passages

Joel 2:23-27

Psalm 104:14-15, 27-30

Reflection

The Good Samaritan did what he could out of his own resources: he poured wine and oil and bandaged the man's wounds and put him on his own animal. He went further still by promising to pay for his care. When we see the world through the Samaritan's eyes, every situation can be an opportunity to help those in need. This is where love manifests itself. 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. Shamefully, these divisions also exist between Christians. Though we celebrate sacraments or other rituals of healing, reconciliation and consolation, often using oil and wine, we persist in divisions that wound the Body of Christ. The healing of our Christian divisions promotes the healing of the nations.

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.

Questions

- **Personal:** What wounds do you see?
- **Local:** Where are you recognising signs of hope in your community?
- **Global:** What can we give, so that we can be part of God's work of healing a broken world?

Go and Do

(see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

- **Personal:** What areas of difference or tension in your communities might you meaningfully seek deeper understanding around? Begin a compassionate and generous conversation with some others about this.
- **Local:** What groups already exist in your area that are actively involved in healing in some way? Explore meaningful ways of engaging with them.
- **Global:** Take time as a church group to tend to the earth and be part of healing a broken world ("renew the face of the ground" Ps: 104). As you do this consider the impact of your lifestyle on other parts of the world.

DAY 6

*Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn,
and took care of him (Lk 10:34)*

Lord, turn our churches into ‘inns’, to welcome those in need

Additional scripture passages

Genesis 18:4-5

Psalm 5:11-12

Reflection

The man who fell into the hands of robbers was cared for by a Samaritan. The Samaritan saw beyond prejudice or bias. He saw someone in need and brought him to an inn. “The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, “Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend”” (Lk 10:35).

In any human society, hospitality and solidarity are essential. They require the welcoming of strangers, foreigners, migrants and homeless people. However, when faced with insecurity, suspicion and violence, we tend to mistrust our neighbours. Hospitality is an important witness to the Gospel, particularly in contexts of religious and cultural pluralism. Welcoming ‘the other’, and being welcomed in turn, is at the heart of ecumenical dialogue. Christians are challenged to turn our churches into inns where our neighbours can find Christ. 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 confessional 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.

Questions

- **Personal:** When have you seen Christ in someone who was not like you?
- **Local:** Are there churches or spaces that act as an 'inn' near you?
- **Global:** Is your country welcoming of those in need, or not?

Go and Do

(see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

- **Personal:** Find out about the life of a Christian from another tradition who has been a 'good neighbour'. What did they do and what can you learn from this experience?
- **Local:** What ecumenical 'treasure' can be found in your area? Find out what Christians are doing together and get involved.
- **Global:** Consider your neighbours in a different part of the world. Join the World Council of Churches Prayer Cycle and commit to praying regularly for your neighbours and understanding them better.

DAY 7

*Jesus said: "Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour?"
(Lk 10:36)*

Lord, show us how to respond to our neighbour

Additional scripture passages

Philippians 2:1-5

Psalm 10:17-18

Reflection

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.

Questions

- **Personal:** How can you 'do mercy' today?
- **Local:** What borders and walls of separation need to be transgressed in your locality?
- **Global:** How should the Church share the gift of mercy with the world?

Go and Do

(see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

- **Personal:** Learn some basic phrases in the language of a group of people new to your area, and use them.
- **Local:** Think of ways in which your church or group of churches can receive from the people they help.
- **Global:** Discover the ways Christians, churches and people of other faiths have been merciful to those who would have least expected it.

DAY 8

*Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise"
(Lk 10:37)*

Lord, may our fellowship be a sign of your Kingdom

Additional scripture passages

Romans 12:9-13

Psalm 41:1-2

Reflection

Through these words –“Go and do likewise” –Jesus sends each of us, and each of our churches, to live out his commandment to love. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, we are sent out to be “other Christs”, reaching out to suffering humanity in compassion and mercy. Like the Good Samaritan towards the injured man, we can choose not to reject those who are different, but instead cultivate a culture of proximity and goodwill.

How does Jesus’ invitation to “Go and do likewise” speak to my life? What does this call of Christ imply for my relationships with members of other churches? How can we charitably bear witness together to God’s love? As ambassadors for Christ (cf. 2 Cor 5:20), we are called to be reconciled to God and to one another, for fellowship to take root and grow in our churches and in areas affected by inter-communal conflict, such as the Sahel region.

As mutual trust and confidence increase, we will become more willing to reveal our wounds, including ecclesial wounds, that Christ’s love may visit and heal us through each other’s love and care. Striving together for Christian unity helps rebuild relationships, so that violence can give way to solidarity and peace.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,
we thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit, the giver of life,
who makes us more open to each other, resolves conflict,
and strengthens our bonds of communion.
May we grow in mutual affection
and in the desire to announce the Gospel message more faithfully,
that the world may come together in unity
and welcome the Prince of Peace.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Questions

- **Personal:** What does this call of Christ imply for your relationships with members of other churches?
- **Local:** What is it that people recognise in the flavour of what we do (together) as the Church that is meaningful?
- **Global:** What does/might merciful unity look like on a global scale?

Go and Do

(see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

- **Personal:** Reflect on how you have experienced 'other Christ's' and been Christ to others, then share some stories about this with others, and pray for more opportunities.
- **Local:** Where is God already at work in your community? Map out where you live highlighting the places where you notice something happening that may be God's dream for your communities. Explore how you might join in and go and do likewise.
- **Global:** 'Go and do likewise' does not mean we have to go to places such as the Sahel region to have an impact. Explore ways of connecting with churches and partner organisations in Burkina Faso and other places that seem far away and actively seek deeper connection and understanding of situations/context.