

R: We pray for the visible unity of the Church.
Lead us to fulfil Jesus' prayer that we may be one
and work together to manifest your Kingdom.
Today we ask you:

All: O God, hear our prayer and grant us passion for unity.

R: We thank you for the many colours, cultures, and customs that we
share in this world.

In our differences, unite us by your love.

Enable us to act together to uphold life

and to make this world a just and peaceful household for all humanity.

Today we ask you:

All: O God, hear our prayer and grant us your peace.

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn/Song

Dismissal

L: As you leave this gathering you will be given one of the commitment
cards. We invite you to pray for the commitment written on the card.

Blessing

L: May God embrace you with love

and make kindness flow out from you.

May God ignite courage within you

and transform you into agents of his justice and peace.

May God grant you humility

and give you perseverance to nurture unity.

All: Amen!

*(As the congregants leave, the ministers distribute the commitment
cards.)*



Roman Catholic
Archdiocese
of Vancouver



Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Jan. 18-25, 2019

An Ecumenical Celebration
of the Word of God



Roman Catholic
Archdiocese
of Vancouver

rcav.org/christian-unity

*"Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue"
(cf. Dt 16:18-20)*

Introduction to the Worship

Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue

(Deuteronomy 16:18-20)

This worship service emphasizes the importance of moving from our discourses about unity, justice and mercy to action and concrete commitment, and to acts of unity, justice and mercy in our personal lives and in the life of our Christian communities.

Two particular elements of the worship need to be noted in the preparation of the celebration.

The first concerns the choice of readers in the **Prayer of Repentance**. It is important that the first reader (R1) be either an ordained minister or congregational leader while the other two readers may be members of the congregation.

The second element concerns the liturgical symbolic action which takes place after the **Commitment to Unity through Justice and Mercy**. It will be necessary to prepare two cards or tags for each person. During the service, participants are called to reflect on how they might commit to a particular act of justice, mercy, or unity. They will then be invited to write on each of the two cards what their own concrete commitment is. Each person attaches one of these cards to their own shirt. The second cards will be gathered up at the offering and will be put at the foot of the cross. At the conclusion of the worship, these cards will be distributed to each one as they leave the church, so that each may pray for another's commitment.

Offering

L: What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8) We commit ourselves to acts of justice.

(At this point the ushers collect the second card and bring them forward to be put at the foot of the cross.)

L: Gracious God, you have shown us your compassion and care for all creation. Your love inspires us to offer these commitments to act justly by loving others wholeheartedly regardless of their cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. Accept now our offerings and transform them into action for the unity of your Church. We ask this through your Son Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, who live with you as one God forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Sharing peace *(The leader invites the assembly to exchange a sign of peace, so that together we can proclaim our faith.)*

The Nicene Creed

Prayers of the People

L: Let us raise to the Lord our common prayer for the Church and for the needs of all humanity.

R: From the islands and the oceans,
we worship you, O God, the Creator of life.
Throughout the mountains and the valleys,
we praise you, O God, the Saviour of the world.
With the tongues of all nations,
we thank you, O God, the Comforter of bodies and souls.
We come before you bearing our burdens and hopes.
Today we ask you:

All: O God, hear our prayer and grant us your love.

R: We pray for those who live in the midst of injustice.
Encourage us to lift up their voices and strengthen their hope.
We pray for those who continue to perpetuate injustice.
May your kindness fill our hearts and make us agents of freedom and peace. We pray for every institution and person who stands for justice.

Let us act justly according to your words.

Today we ask you:

All: O God, hear our prayer and grant us your justice.



Commitment to Justice, Mercy and Unity

L: Jesus Christ prays for the unity of his disciples.
The gift of his life is justice for the world.

R1: As members of the body of Christ, we are called to walk together in his path.

R2: Let us hear his calling.

All: Holy Spirit, unite us in action.

R1: As members of the body of Christ, we are called to keep our lives free from the love of money, and be content with what we have.

R2: Let us break the cycle of greed and live in simplicity.

All: Holy Spirit, unite us in action.

R1: As members of the body of Christ, we are called to proclaim release to captives and victims of all forms of violence.

R2: Let us help them to live in dignity.

All: Holy Spirit, unite us in action.

R1: As members of the body of Christ, we are called to extend hospitality to strangers.

R2: Let us outdo one another in showing honour.

All: Holy Spirit, unite us in action.

R1: As members of the body of Christ, we are called to proclaim the good news to the whole creation.

R2: Let us protect the life and beauty of God's creation

All: Holy Spirit, unite us in action.

L: To make concrete our individual commitment to work together for justice, you are invited to write your commitment on two separate cards. We invite you to keep one of these cards close to your heart. The second one will be collected and brought forward as an offering.

(A song for unity and/or justice may be sung as the congregants write their commitments.)

L: Leader

All

R: Reader

Call to Worship

Words of Welcome

L: The Let us worship the Triune God.

God, our Father, you crown your creation with justice and mercy.

All: We come to worship you.

L: Jesus Christ, your cross brings new life and justice,

All: we come to worship you.

L: Holy Spirit, you inspire our hearts to act justly,

All: we come to worship you.

L: May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and

the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Gathering hymn *(will be chosen locally)*

Introductory Words

L: As Christians from separated communities, we gather here to pray for unity. This year, the theme of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity chosen by the churches in Indonesia is "Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue." This theme is imperative due to the recurring situations that bring divisions and conflicts. As we pray together, we are reminded that our calling as members of the body of Christ is to pursue and embody justice. Our unity in Christ empowers us to take part in the wider struggle for justice and to promote the dignity of life.

Hymn of praise



Prayer of Repentance

L: Beloved sisters and brothers, let us confess before the Lord that we have sinned and ask for forgiveness so that our worship will be pleasing to God.

R1: *(read by an ordained minister or a leader of the congregation)*

Compassionate God,
you have chosen us to shepherd your flock. Jesus, your Son, taught us to act justly. We are aware that in our ministry, we sometimes behave unjustly towards the people whom you have entrusted to us by: prioritizing those who are close to us or those who have higher social status; ignoring strangers, the poor and the least in society; fearing to defend the oppressed; misusing church resources. These deeds have caused some people to turn away from your church.
Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy. *(the response may be sung.)*

R2: *(read by a member of the congregation)*

Loving God,
you have gathered us as members of your flock. Jesus, your Son, taught us to love one another as a sign of being his disciples. We confess that we have failed to live his commandment of love by: regarding those of other churches as rivals; being hostile to each other and slow to forgive; focusing only on our personal interest; ignoring the needs of sisters and brothers; excluding those who do not share our point of view. In these ways, our attitudes strengthen the dividing walls between us.
Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

R2: *(read by a different person)*

Gracious God,
You have commissioned us to make our common home a place of justice for all. In your generous love, you send rain on the righteous and the unrighteous and, in Jesus, teach us to love without discrimination. We confess that we have failed to follow this teaching by: disrespecting our neighbours; spreading falsehoods through various social media; participating in the disruption of social harmony. Our conduct risks making the world a barren field that no longer brings forth your justice for all of creation.
Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

L: May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive our sins and lead us to eternal life. **All: Amen.**

Hymn/Song/Meditative music

Proclamation of the Word of God

First Reading: Deuteronomy 16:11-20

Psalm 82:1-8 *(read or sung)*

R/ Rise up, O God, judge the earth.

God has taken his place in the divine council;
in the midst of the gods he holds judgement:
'How long will you judge unjustly
and show partiality to the wicked? **R/**

Give justice to the weak and the orphan;
maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute.
Rescue the weak and the needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked. **R/**

They have neither knowledge nor understanding,
they walk around in darkness;
all the foundations of the earth are shaken. **R/**

I say, 'You are gods,
children of the Most High, all of you;
nevertheless, you shall die like mortals,
and fall like any prince.
Rise up, O God, judge the earth;
for all the nations belong to you! **R/**

Second reading: Romans 12:1-13

Alleluia *(sung)*

Gospel reading: Luke 4:14-21

Alleluia *(sung)*

Sermon

