

Abiding in Christ: John 1.35-51

Today is the start of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, a global movement of prayer which started over 100 years ago. Each year, a different Christian community puts together a sequence of prayers and readings so that we can join in praying with our sisters and brothers around the world. TFTD is going to follow the readings and prayers over the next week-and-a-bit.

This year's theme is "Abiding in Christ", and it has been chosen by the sisters of the Grandchamp Community in Switzerland. The Community has its origins in Europe in the 1930s, when a group of women of the Reformed tradition sought to rediscover the importance of silence and listening to the Word of God. Today the community has fifty sisters, all women from different generations, Church traditions, countries and continents. In their diversity the sisters are a living parable of communion. They remain faithful to a life of prayer, life in community and the welcoming of guests. The sisters share the grace of their monastic life with visitors and volunteers who go to Grandchamp for a time of retreat, silence, healing or in search of meaning. You can visit their website here: <https://www.grandchamp.org/en/>

The Sisters have offered us something uniquely precious for this time of pandemic. Lockdown forces us all to think again about what's really important in life. What does it mean to be part of the one Church, the Body of Christ, when all we see of our sisters and brothers is a face on a screen? The Week of Prayer offers us an opportunity to engage with an ancient rhythm of prayer and silence. It teaches us that when we pray, we are not praying on our own but with the whole Body of Christ, the "blessed company of all faithful people" (as the Prayer Book puts it) across space, time and eternity.

So I invite you to come with us this Week of Prayer and enter into a place of community and blessing, a place where we can simply "be" and be carried by the prayers and the reality that it is God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who carries us and accompanies us. Always.
God bless,
Loveday

Day 1 Called by God

"You did not choose me but I chose you"
(John 15:16a)

Genesis 12:1-4 The call of Abraham
John 1:35-51 The call of the first disciples

Meditation

The start of the journey is an encounter between a human being and God, between the created and the Creator, between time and eternity.

Abraham heard the call: "Go to the land I will show you". Like Abraham we are called to leave that which is familiar and go to the place that God has prepared in the depths of our hearts. Along the way, we become more and more ourselves, the people God has wanted us to be from the beginning. And by following the call that is addressed to us, we become a blessing for our loved ones, our neighbours, and the world.

The love of God seeks us. God became human in Jesus, in whom we encounter the gaze of God. In our lives, as in the Gospel of John, God's call is heard in different ways. Touched by his love, we

set out. In this encounter, we walk a path of transformation - the bright beginning of a relationship of love that is always started anew.

“One day you understood that, without your being aware of it, a yes had already been inscribed in your innermost depths. And so you chose to go forward in the footsteps of Christ....

In silence in the presence of Christ, you heard him say, ‘Come, follow me; I will give you a place to rest your heart.’”

[The Sources of Taizé (2000) p. 52]

Prayer

Jesus Christ,

you seek us, you wish to offer us your friendship
and lead us to a life that is ever more complete.

Grant us the confidence to answer your call

so that we may be transformed

and become witnesses of your tenderness for the world.

Questions

- Have you ever been aware that God was asking you or someone you know to begin a new journey in life – whether literally moving to somewhere else, or ‘changing direction’ in some other way? How did you respond?
- What changes could your church or group of churches make to empower God’s people to walk more faithfully the path God has set for you, or to discern God’s guidance more clearly?
- What are some of the stories of the ‘new’ members of your community, whether they have crossed a county boundary or journeyed across continents to get there?

Go and Do

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

Global: Get informed about and take action on global refugee and asylum issues and campaigns.

Local: Participate in any hospitality being offered locally to those who have had no choice but to go on a long journey to find safety in an unfamiliar place across the world.

Personal: Spend time exploring what is unfamiliar to you in another Christian tradition and which might help lead you to greater understanding and unity.