

Tēna ra kōutou e te whanau, he mihi aroha tenei i te wāhanga nei o ngā karakia. Kei a kōutou te mana karakia i roto i tou whanau whanui i te wiki ka eke mai. Mau tonu ki ēnei karakia nō rātou i a mātou whanaunga i te whakapono i a Tiamana. Kia tau te rangimarie, kia tau hoki te Wairua Tapu, kia pāi ano te aroaro o Hēhu te Karaiti. Tēna ra kōtōu.

A very warm acknowledgment of whanau in this week of prayer. Feel free to pray in your language as the Spirit guides in your families and communities in the week of prayer that approaches. Feel free also to use the prayers given by our German brothers and sisters in faith. May peace be with you, may the Holy Spirit be with you, and indeed may you experience the presence of Jesus the Christ. Go well whanau.

Theme of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2017

The materials for this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity have two themes:

- a celebration of God's love and grace, the "justification of humanity through grace alone", reflecting the main concern of the churches marked by Martin Luther's Reformation, and
- a recognition of the pain of the subsequent deep divisions which afflicted the Church, openly name the guilt, and offer an opportunity to take steps toward reconciliation.

Ultimately it was Pope Francis' 2013 Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (Joy of the Gospel) which provided the theme for this year, when it used the quote: "The Love of Christ Compels Us" (EG 9). This scripture verse (2 Cor 5:14), taken in the context of the entire fifth chapter of the second letter to the Corinthians, provided the theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2017.

2017 – a special year for Christian Unity

Reconciliation – The Love of Christ Compels Us (cf. 2 Cor. 5:14-20)

In 1517 Martin Luther raised concerns about what he saw as abuses in the Church of his time by making public his 95 theses. 2017 is the 500th anniversary of this key event in the reformation movements that marked the life of the Western Church over several centuries.

The prayers and service for this year focus on a "celebration of Christ". The emphasis on Jesus Christ and his work of reconciliation has allowed ecumenical partners – Roman Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox, Baptist,

Methodist, and others – to participate together in marking the 500th anniversary, and to transcend the painful divisions of the Reformation. Father, just as you 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).

After centuries of mutual condemnations and vilification, in 2017 Lutheran and Catholic Christians, together with other denominations, will for the first time commemorate the beginning of the Reformation. From this ecumenical context emerges the strong theme of this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: "Reconciliation – The Love of Christ Compels Us" (cf. 2 Cor 5:14-20).

The world needs ministers of reconciliation, who will break down barriers, build bridges, make peace, and open doors to new ways of life in the name of the one who reconciled us to God, Jesus Christ. His Holy Spirit leads the way on the path to reconciliation in his name.

May the wellspring of God's gracious reconciliation overflow in this year's Week of Prayer, so that many people may find peace, and bridges may be built. May people and churches be compelled by the love of Christ to live reconciled lives and to break down the walls that divide!

BIBLICAL TEXT FOR 2017

2 Corinthians 5:14-20: For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God

Suggested Prayer of the Faithful

That all divisions in our hearts, in our communities, and in the world, may be removed so that we may grow in communion with our Lord Jesus Christ and with all our brothers and sisters, and become one in Jesus' name.

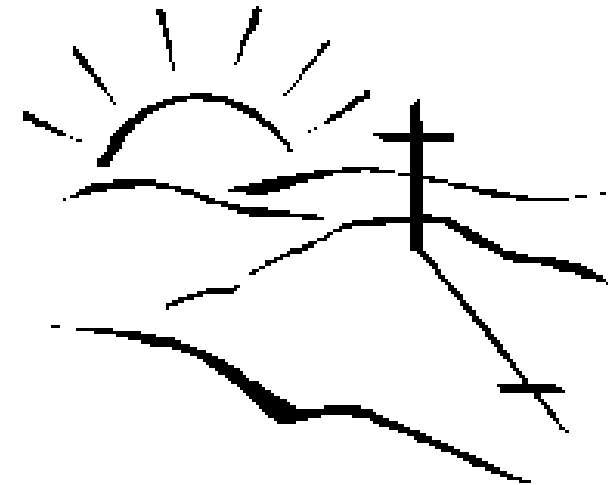
WEEK OF PRAYER
FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Ko te Wā Karakia mō te
Kotahitanga o Ngā Hāhi Karaitiana

28 May – 4 June 2017



*The Love of Christ Compels Us (cf. 2
Corinthians 5:14-19)*



Adapted for Aotearoa New Zealand by the Catholic Bishops Committee for Ecumenism. The original resource was jointly prepared and published by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches. It can be found at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/index.htm, select *Pontifical Councils – Promoting Christian Unity – Spiritual Ecumenism at the International Level – Booklets published in preparation for the “2017” week – English*. New Zealand website: www.catholic.org.nz — Ecumenism

Resources:

Prayer of the Faithful

Ecumenical Order of Service

Personal and Communal Prayers for the
Octave