

Week of prayer focuses on reconciliation among Christians

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The 2021 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity should help Christians see that the closer they draw to Christ, the closer they will be to one another, said materials for the week published by the Vatican.

“Divisions among Christians – moving away from one another – are a scandal because it is also moving further away from God,” the material said. “Christ’s prayer for unity is an invitation to turn back to him and so come closer to one another, rejoicing in the richness of our diversity.”

The resource material for the Jan. 18-25 octave of prayer, published on the website of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, was prepared by the Monastic Community of Grandchamp, an ecumenical religious community of women based in Switzerland.

“The theme that was chosen, ‘Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit,’ is based on John 15:1-17 and expresses the Grandchamp Community’s vocation to prayer, reconciliation and unity in the church and the human family,” the pontifical council said.

The community’s reflections were adopted by the World Council of Church’s Faith and Order Commission and the pontifical council and are proposed to Christians worldwide for the week of prayer.

According to its website, the Monastic Community of Grandchamp is comprised of 50 religious sisters who dedicate themselves “to the work of reconciliation between Christians, within the human family and with respect to all creation.”

The Faith and Order Commission and the pontifical council alternate identifying communities to choose the Week of Prayer theme, draft a worship service, come up with sub-themes and Bible readings for each day of the octave and describe the ecumenical situation in their local community.

Representatives of the pontifical council and the commission met in Switzerland in September 2019 to work on drafting the reflections prepared by the Grandchamp community.

With input from international representatives and then approval from the World Council of Churches and the Vatican, the material was sent around the world.

Jesus' call to "abide" in his love is an "inner attitude that takes root in us over time," the community wrote. "It demands space to grow. It can be overtaken by the struggle for the necessities of life and it is threatened by the distractions, noise, activity and the challenges of life."

Each day of the octave will reflect on a different aspect of Jesus' words in John 15 and will be modeled after the monastic community's life of prayer.

"In this tradition, three of the monastic prayer services – sometimes called 'vigils' or 'nocturns' in the Benedictine tradition – traditionally said during the night are combined into one evening service. In the same way, our service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is shaped by three sections, called 'vigils,' which follow a pattern used by the community of Grandchamp," the resource material states.

The reflections drafted by the community, it said, "allowed the sisters to share the experience and wisdom of their contemplative life abiding in the love of God, and to speak about the fruit of this prayer: closer communion with one's brothers and sisters in Christ and greater solidarity with the whole of creation."

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The resource material [can be found in English at here.](#)