



DAILY SCRIPTURE & PRAYER RESOURCE for the WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 12 MAY – 19 MAY 2013

DAY 2—MONDAY 13 MAY

“Walking with the broken body of Christ”

Scripture Readings

Ezekiel 37:1-14	“Shall these dry bones live?”
Psalms 22: 1-8	God’s servant, mocked and insulted, cries out to God
Hebrews 13: 12-16	The call to go to Jesus “outside the camp”
Luke 22: 14-23	Jesus breaks the bread, giving the gift of himself before his suffering

“Walking with the broken body of Christ”

Recognising the solidarity between Christ crucified and the broken peoples of the world, such as the Dalits, we seek as Christians together to learn to be more deeply a part of this solidarity ourselves. In particular, the relation of eucharist and justice is opened up, and Christians are invited to discover practical ways of eucharistic living in the world.

Commentary:

To walk humbly with God means hearing the call for us to walk out of the places of our own comfort, and accompany the other, especially the suffering other. “Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.” These words from Ezekiel give voice to the experience of many people across the globe today. In India, it is the “broken people” of the Dalit communities whose lives speak vividly of this suffering – a suffering in which Christ, the crucified one, shares. With injured people of every time and place, Jesus cries out to the Father: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Christians are called into this way of the cross. The Epistle to the Hebrews makes clear not only the saving reality of Jesus’ suffering, in the place of the margins, but also the need for his disciples to go “outside the camp” to join him there. When we meet those who have been excluded, like the Dalits, and we recognise the crucified one in their sufferings, the direction we should be going is clear: To be with Christ, means to be in solidarity with those on the margins whose wounds he shares.

The body of Christ, broken on the cross, is “broken for you”. The story of Christ’s suffering and death is prefaced by the story of the last supper: it is then celebrated as victory over death in every Eucharist. In this Christian celebration, Christ’s broken body is his risen and glorious body; his body is broken so that we can share his life, and, in him, be one body.

As Christians on the way to unity we can often see the Eucharist as a place where the scandal of our disunity is painfully real, knowing that, as yet, we cannot fully share this sacrament together as we should. This situation calls us to renewed efforts towards deeper communion with one another.

Today’s readings might open up another line of reflection. Walking with Christ’s broken body opens up a way to be eucharistic together: to share our bread with the hungry, to break down the barriers of poverty and inequality – these, too, are sacramental acts, in which all Christians are called to work together. Pope Benedict XVI frames his reflections on Eucharist for the church in just this way: that it is a sacrament not only to be believed in and celebrated, but also to be lived (*Sacramentum caritatis*). In keeping with the Orthodox understanding of “the liturgy after the liturgy”, here it is recognised that there is “nothing authentically human” that does not find its pattern and life in the eucharist. (SC 71)

Questions for reflection/ discussion

1. How are Christians united in the Eucharist? How divided?
2. What do you understand by the word ‘sacrament’? What other meanings are there?
3. In light of that prophetic tradition in which God desires justice, rather than ritual without righteousness, we need to ask: how is the Eucharist, the mystery of Christ’s brokenness and new life, celebrated in all the places where we walk?
4. What might we do, as Christians together, better to witness to our unity in Christ in places of brokenness and marginality?

Prayer for the Day: God of compassion, your Son died on the Cross so that by his broken body our divisions might be destroyed. Yet we have crucified him again and again with our disunity, and with systems and practices which obstruct your loving care and undermine your justice towards those who have been excluded from the gifts of your creation. Send us your Spirit to breathe life and healing into our brokenness, that we may bear witness together to the justice and love of Christ. Walk with us towards that day when we can share in the one bread and the one cup at the common table. God of life, lead us to justice and peace. Amen.



National Council of
Churches in Australia
Faith and Unity Commission