

## 2025 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

“Do you believe this?” (*John 11:26*)

### REFLECTIONS AND PRAYERS FOR THE EIGHT DAYS: A JOURNEY THROUGH THE NICENE CREED

The 2025 WPCU international and Canadian resources are available to download at:

[www.weekofprayer.ca](http://www.weekofprayer.ca) (English)

[www.semainedepriere.ca](http://www.semainedepriere.ca) (French)

*The daily themes, Scripture readings, reflections, and prayers below were prepared by the community of Bose, an ecumenical monastery of brothers and sisters in northern Italy, and by the international Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Writing Team.*

*The “Exploring Our Canadian Context” introductory section below, quotes from contemporary Canadian ecumenical and church leaders, several of “For reflection” questions for each day, A New Creed from The United Church of Canada, various quotes from For the Love of Creation website, and the Living Faith Statement from The Presbyterian Church in Canada were prepared by the Canadian Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Writing and Animation Team.*

*This material is offered with the understanding that, whenever possible, it will be adapted for use in local contexts. Account should be taken of local liturgical and devotional practice, and of social and cultural context. For example, we invite you to use gender-inclusive language as appropriate for your communities. Such adaptation should ideally take place ecumenically.*

**We encourage you to be creative in your use of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity resources!** For example, you may wish to alter the *Eight Days of Prayer* resource to better suit the context of your community, or you may draw inspiration from the WPCU materials to create something entirely new. Communities should also feel free to use the WPCU materials not only during the traditional Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (January 18-25 in the northern hemisphere), but throughout the year, to pray for Christian unity and to foster ecumenical fellowship and service.

“While awaiting [Christ’s] return, Christians around the world are called to witness together to this faith in the resurrection, which is for them the source of hope and joy.”

*From “Introduction to the Theme”, 2025 international WPCU materials*

## Exploring our Canadian Context

“Do you believe this?”

*As you go through these Eight Days of Bible study and reflection, ask yourselves: What are the crucial elements in expressing faith in 2025?*

It is no accident that the biblical text chosen by the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity international team to explore the 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, out of which came the Nicene Creed, invites us to ask—and answer—what it is that we truly believe, especially in the context in which we live in Canada today. We remember that this anniversary is a celebration of an important element of Christian history. The Council of Nicaea was convened to address a number of divisive issues that threatened the unity of the Christian faith in 325. Today in Canada, we live in a society that is increasingly secular, more diverse religiously, and has a more varied and complicated understanding of the purpose and place of a creed in contemporary church life. This year’s WPCU Eight Days Bible studies draw from four ancient voices from patristic sources (Greek, Syriac, Armenian, and Latin) and encourage participants to reflect on their significance for the Church and for Christians in our time and place. In our pluralistic society those four voices could easily be forty and more, all answering the question ‘Do you believe this?’ (John 11:26) from the vantage point of unique communities living and interacting in the Canadian context.

*As you go through these Eight Days of Bible study and reflection, ask yourselves: What sources inform your faith and enable you to express your life in Christ in 2025?*

The WPCU materials remind us of the struggle at Nicaea to express that which is essential for diverse Christian communities. Ecumenism in the Canadian context is often a similar struggle to seek unity together while remaining true to the unique expressions of various denominations. Our pressing question might be: ‘What concrete things can we do together to manifest our oneness in Christ?’ As we approach the themes for the Eight Days of Prayer, we must also ask: ‘How do we express this today and what does it mean for us in our Canadian context?’

*As you go through these Eight Days of Bible study and reflection, ask yourselves: What activities are you engaged in that express your faith in Christ?*

The Eight Days Bible studies will invite such questions and conversations as participants express themselves and their beliefs. The response to the biblical question regarding our faith stance is ‘Yes, Lord, I believe that...’

*As you go through these Eight Days of Bible study and reflection, create a personal ‘credo’ (faith statement) that will help guide your life in Christ.*

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We might also be guided by the advice of a contemporary voice which reminds us that “Christianity did not begin with a confession. It began with an invitation into friendship, into creating a new community, into forming relationships based on love and service.”<sup>1</sup>

*As you go through these Eight Days of Bible study and reflection, consider how these studies help create friendship, a new community and deep relationships with others who may not share your faith stance or background.*

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<sup>1</sup> Bass, Diana Butler, *Christianity After Religion: The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening*, (HarperOne, 2012).

## DAY 1

### The fatherhood and care of God who rules the universe

#### *The place of God in the modern world*

We are not alone,  
we live in God's world.  
We believe in God:  
who has created and is creating,  
who has come in Jesus,  
the Word made flesh,  
to reconcile and make new,  
who works in us and others  
by the Spirit.  
We trust in God.  
We are called to be the Church:  
to celebrate God's presence,  
to live with respect in Creation,  
to love and serve others,  
to seek justice and resist evil,  
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,  
our judge and our hope.  
In life, in death, in life beyond death,  
God is with us.  
We are not alone.  
Thanks be to God.<sup>2</sup>

#### Scripture Readings

Isaiah 63:15-17

Psalm 139:1-3, 13, 23, 24b

1 Corinthians 8:5-6

#### Patristic<sup>3</sup> Reading

##### *From the Greek tradition*

Behold the mysteries of love, and then you will contemplate the bosom of the Father, which the only-begotten Son of God has revealed. God himself is love, and through love he is contemplated by us. And while in his ineffable reality he is Father, in his compassion he has become for us mother.

- **Clement of Alexandria** [c. 150-215], *Which Rich Man Will Be Saved?* 37:1-2

##### **For reflection:**

1. How have you experienced God's fatherly care and motherly compassion in your own life?
2. What hinders us from recognising each person as a child of God?
3. How does acknowledging God as the Father of all affect our perception of and relationship with others?

#### Prayer

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<sup>2</sup> A New Creed, the United Church of Canada, <https://united-church.ca/community-and-faith/welcome-united-church-canada/faith-statements/new-creed-1968>

<sup>3</sup> From early Christian writers.

**R: Thanks and praise to you, O Lord**

We bless you, O Lord, Father of lights:  
from you descend every good thing and every perfect gift. **R/**

You have made the world and all that it contains,  
you are the Lord of heaven and earth.  
To all mortals you give life and breath and all things. **R/**

You created all the peoples that dwell on the earth.  
For them you established the order of time and the boundaries of their space. In  
the heart of human beings, you have placed the thought of eternity **R/**

Heavenly Father, according to your great goodness  
you grant us a way of life through the Law and the Prophets.  
Merciful Father, in Jesus, your Son, you proclaimed the good news of the  
kingdom. **R/**

God of all consolation, call us to follow you.  
Make firm for us the work of our hands. **R/**

Let us pray.  
Father of compassion,  
renew our faith in you and bind us together through your love, so  
that we can recognise each other as your children,  
and come together as one.  
We praise you through Jesus Christ, your only-begotten Son, in  
the communion of the Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

### **Alternative Patristic Readings**

#### ***From the Syriac tradition***

What man can contemplate God with vigilant thought, and look upon his majesty, and consider his hidden nature, and can with the eye of his understanding look upon that pure and holy Nature, which has need of nothing? ... He who begs, and entreats, and urges every man to live. He who suffers to give us life, and seeks to find us, and is more pleased at our happiness than we ourselves. He who continually entreats us to take from his riches and to carry off wealth from his storehouse, that we may be rich through his treasures and not poverty-stricken. He who rejoices not so much for his own life as that we live.

- ***Philoxenus of Mabbug*** [c. 440-523], *Discourse 7*

#### ***From the Latin tradition***

The Fountain of Life is that chief Good, from which the means of life are dispensed to all, while he has life abiding in himself. He receives from none as though he were in need. He confers good on others rather than borrows from others for himself, for he has no need of us ... What then can be more lovely than to approach him, to cleave to him? What pleasure can be greater? He who has seen and tasted freely of the Fountain of Living Water, what else can he desire?

- ***Ambrose of Milan*** [c. 337-397], *Letters IV*, 11, 18

## DAY 2

### Creation as God's work

#### *For the Love of Creation*

***For the Love of Creation invites Canadian faith communities and faith-based organizations to come together under a unified banner to mobilize education, reflection, action and advocacy for climate justice.***

#### Scripture Readings

Genesis 1:1-5

Psalm 148:1, 3, 9-14

Romans 8:19-23

#### Patristic Reading

##### *From the Greek tradition*

God cannot be seen by human eyes, but is seen and perceived through his providence and works. Just as one who sees a fully equipped ship entering port assumes that it has a pilot to guide it, so we must perceive that God is the pilot of the entire universe, even though he is not visible to the eyes of the flesh because he is incomprehensible.

- ***Theophilus of Antioch*** [2<sup>nd</sup> century], *Ad Autolytus*, I:5

#### Canadian Readings

So much is conspiring to awaken us to a new relationship with earth...a new relationship with each other. May this love lead us to be persistent and practical and offer prophetic hope in our world.<sup>4</sup>

- ***Sister Margo Ritchie, Congregational Leader, Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada***

The Creation is our neighbour, just like every human person is our neighbour.<sup>5</sup>

- ***Rev. Susan Johnson, National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada***

#### For reflection:

1. We believe that God is present in all of creation although his presence is sometimes difficult to perceive.
2. Creation is a gift of God subjected to suffering, often inflicted by human beings. How can we better recognize our responsibility for its care and preservation?
3. If possible, spend some time in nature and contemplate how it connects us with the Creator.
4. Question for the Canadian context: What 'voices' are addressing the critical issues around global warming and the many environmental concerns facing us in 2025 and how does the Church partner with these voices?

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<sup>4</sup> "For the Love of Creation," effective 2020, <https://fortheloveofcreation.ca/>

<sup>5</sup> "For the Love of Creation," effective 2020, <https://fortheloveofcreation.ca/>

## Prayer

**R: Blessed are you, O Lord!**

We praise you and give you thanks,  
God of steadfast love  
for the great signs of your favour  
and your mercy for the whole creation. **R/**

You have made all things.  
You declared them to be good, for your Spirit dwells in them all  
and they belong to you, O Lord, who love the living. **R/**

We confess, O Lord, your glory  
in the immense starry spaces of the universe and in the smallest seed of life.  
We give thanks for the works of your hands and the creation of all people. **R/**

Blessed are you for the air that gives us life. Blessed are you for the earth that  
nourishes us.  
Blessed are you for the water that quenches our thirst. Blessed are you for the  
fire that warms us. **R/**

Giving voice to the whole creation and gathering together every grief and joy, we  
glorify you and give you thanks.  
Lord God, you made all things,  
and will soon transfigure them, clothing them with your glory. **R/**

Let us pray.  
Lord God, Father of lights,  
strengthen our hearts in expectation and hope  
as we work for unity and together seek the harmony of all creation. Let  
us be burning lamps,  
until the day of the coming of your Son in glory,  
with all his saints in the everlasting kingdom.  
Blessed are you, now and forever, and to the ages of ages. **AMEN.**

## Alternative Patristic Readings

### *From the Syriac tradition*

The first book given by God to rational beings is the nature of created things. Instruction by means of ink was added after the transgression.

- *Isaac of Nineveh* [7<sup>th</sup> century], *First Collection*, 5

## DAY 3

### The Incarnation of the Son

#### Scripture Readings

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Psalm 72:7, 12, 16-17

John 1:1-14

From the Latin tradition

For all things were made out of nothing, and their being would again sink into nothing, if the Author of all things did not hold it by the hand of governance.

- **Gregory the Great** [c. 540-604], *Moralia in Job*, XVI:37, 45

#### Patristic Reading

##### *From the Armenian tradition*

He took upon himself all human passions, excluding sin. That is: he hungered who gives food to all the living. He thirsted who gives the water of life to his believers. He felt weariness who is the rest of the weary. He slept who always kept Israel vigilant. He wept who wiped away every tear from all eyes ... He took on our passible body, so that he who is impassible might suffer with the passible body and he who is immortal might die with the mortal body, to free us who are guilty.

- **Gregory of Skevra** [12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> centuries], *On True Faith and Pure Conduct in the Virtues*, 15-17

#### For reflection:

1. How does faith in Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, inspire and shape our lives?
2. How have you experienced Christ's consoling presence in your life?
3. Wherever we see someone who is thirsty, hungry, weeping or suffering, Christ is present.
4. How is Christ incarnate in the work of the churches of Canada in 2025?

#### Prayer

**R: Glory to you, O Christ. Glory to you!**

Word of God, you became flesh, and came to dwell among us.  
You have shared our life in all things;  
you died as we all die. **R/**

Son of David, desired by the righteous and the prophets, you  
have proclaimed the good news to the poor;  
you have proclaimed the Lord's time of favour. **R/**

You came to break the chains of bondage; you  
went about doing good;  
you have opened the way to the presence of God for all. **R/**

You came into the world in weakness and poverty; you



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have confounded the proud with your humility;  
you have drawn the weary and overburdened to you. **R/**

You are the Lamb of God and our Shepherd, the  
Servant of God and our Lord:  
you were made sin for us, our Redeemer. **R/**

Let us pray:

Lord God, our Father draw  
our eyes to you  
so that together we may walk  
from darkness to the light of your face, revealed  
to us in Jesus,  
your Son and our brother,  
who lives with you and the Holy Spirit now  
and for ever and ever. **AMEN.**

### **Alternative Patristic Readings**

#### ***From the Syriac tradition***

Now that the highest and lowest creatures have become one, there is no longer high and low. God has even appeared on earth and our [human] nature has ascended to heaven. When God came down to us, the earth became heaven, and when the Son of our kind was raised up, heaven became earth. Then heaven and earth became one.

- ***Abdisho bar Bahriz*** [9<sup>th</sup> century], *Commentary on the Celebrations of the Church*, p. 58

#### ***From the Greek tradition***

This is the grace of the Lord, and these are the Lord's means of restoration for the sons of men. For he suffered to prepare freedom from suffering for those who suffer in him. He descended, so that he might raise us up. He experienced being conceived, so that we would love who is not generated. He went down to corruption, so that corruption might put on immortality. He became weak for us, so that we might rise with power. He descended to death, so that he might bestow on us immortality and give life to the dead. Finally, he became human, so that we who die as human beings might live again, and death should no more reign over us.

- ***Athanasius of Alexandria*** [c. 295-373], *Festal Letters*, 10:8, 19

## DAY 4

### The Paschal Mystery: The Incarnation, Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus

#### *Addressing our separation and brokenness*

#### Scripture Readings

Exodus 3: 7-8

Psalm 16:5, 7, 10, 11

Philippians 2:5-11

#### Patristic Reading

##### *From the Latin tradition*

God the Father was very merciful: he sent his creative Word who, in coming to deliver us, came to the very place and spot in which we had lost life, and broke the bonds of our fetters. His light appeared and made the darkness of the prison disappear and hallowed our birth and destroyed death, loosing those same fetters in which we were enchained.

- **Irenaeus of Lyon** [c. 135-198], *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, 38

##### For reflection:

1. We know that we will all die. How does belief in Jesus destroying death change the way we approach this reality?
2. “God lets himself be pushed out of the world on to the cross. He is weak and powerless in the world, and that is precisely the way, the only way, in which he is with us and helps us.” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)
3. As the Risen One, Jesus is with us until the end of all time. In what ways does his companionship encourage you in your daily life?

#### Prayer

##### **R: Glory and praise to you, O Lord**

Blessed are you, O Christ, Firstborn of all creation:  
you are crowned with glory and honour. **R/**

At your Name every knee will bend in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue will confess that you are the Lord. **R/**

Let us rejoice and sing praises to you, O Christ, beloved Son of the Father: you are the Risen One, you call us to live in you. **R/**

We adore you, we glorify you, for you are King of kings and Lord of lords: you have opened to us the kingdom of heaven. **R/**

We give you thanks at all times and we bless your Name: you are with us always,  
to the end of the age. **R/**

Let us pray  
Lord our God,  
glorifying your Son Jesus, you have freed us from death. Through  
his resurrection,  
awaken our slumbering hearts,  
enlighten all who seek you  
and make the morning star shine upon us, Jesus  
Christ, the Living One,  
who is Lord for ever and ever. **AMEN.**

### **Alternative Patristic Readings**

#### ***From the Greek tradition***

The Saviour came down to earth out of mercy for mankind. He fully suffered our passions, before he suffered the cross and deigned to take on our flesh. For if he had not suffered, he would not have come to dwell in the midst of human life. First he suffered, then he descended and was seen. What is that passion which he suffered for us? The passion of charity.

- **Origen of Alexandria** [c. 185-254], *Homilies on Ezekiel*, 6:6

#### ***From the Syriac tradition***

The body thanks you, that it was saved by your humiliation. It was a strayed sheep, and the lion lay in ambush to dismember it, and sin in secret is the beast that tears it into pieces. Instead of our body you delivered your body to that death that devoured us but was not sated. By you alone it was sated and destroyed.

- **Ephrem of Nisibis** [c. 306-373], *Hymn on Virginity*, 37:5

## DAY 5

### The Holy Spirit, the giver of life and joy

#### Scripture Readings

Ezekiel 36:24-28  
Psalm 104:24-25, 27-29, 33-34  
John 3:4-8

#### Patristic Reading

##### *From the Syriac tradition*

It is not correct to say that the Spirit departs when we sin to return when we are converted ... What good is it for me if he dwells in me after I have become righteous? If at the time of the fall he does not dwell in me, does not give me a hand, and does not raise me up, how will I feel his help? What physician, when he sees a sick person who falls sick, leaves and abandons him, to come to him when he becomes healthy? Is it not more useful that the physician be with the sick person at the time of his illness?

- *Philoxenus of Mabbug* [c. 440-523], *On the Inhabitation of the Holy Spirit*

##### For reflection:

1. God's Spirit renews the face of the earth every day, calling us to cooperation.
2. What are the sources of joy in your life and how are they related to the Holy Spirit?
3. Where do we see the Holy Spirit at work, overcoming our divisions and drawing us into deeper unity, and how can we join in this work?

#### Prayer

**R/ Amen, amen! Alleluia!**

You are the Spirit breathed upon the face of Adam: making human flesh a living being. **R/**

You are the Spirit given by the Risen One: our sins have been forgiven. **R/**

You are the Spirit sent at Pentecost: you opened the way for the Gospel to reach all people. **R/**

You are the Spirit that awakens our prayer: we are held in God's love. **R/**

You are the Spirit of God poured out upon the dead: the graves will be opened, and the dead will rise **R/**

Let us pray:

God our Father,  
you have revealed to us the wondrous mystery of your life,  
sending your Son into the world  
and sharing with us your Spirit of holiness and joy. Let us rejoice in  
the Spirit,  
who renews the face of the earth and draws us towards unity. We  
confess our faith in you,  
the One God, three times Holy:  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
Blessed are you, now and for ever and ever. **AMEN.**

### Alternative Patristic Readings

#### *From the Greek tradition*

This is my God, the Lord of all, who alone stretched out the heavens and established the breadth of the earth under it, ... who founded the earth upon the waters and gave a spirit to nourish it; whose breath gives light to the whole, who, if he withdrew his breath, the whole would utterly fail. By him you speak, O man. His breath you breathe yet him you know not.

- **Theophilus of Antioch** [2<sup>nd</sup> century], *Ad Autolytus*, I:7

#### *From the Latin tradition*

“Your heavenly Father will give the good Spirit to those who ask him.” This is the Spirit by virtue of whom is poured out in our hearts the love with which we observe the divine commandments, by loving God and neighbour. This is the Spirit by virtue of whom we cry out: “Abba, Father”. It is therefore the Spirit who gives us the capacity to ask, and it is the same Spirit whom we desire to receive. It is he who makes us seek, and it is he whom we desire to find.

- **Augustine of Hippo** [354-430], *Exposition on Psalm 118*, 14:2

### Alternative Canadian Readings

The Spirit blesses us with various gifts.  
We seek to discover those gifts  
and to use them for our Lord.  
Faithful loving service is a sign  
that the Spirit is present.  
The presence of the Spirit is evident  
where people are made whole, encouraged,  
and enabled to grow in Christ.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Living Faith, 4.3.4

## DAY 6

### The Church: Community of Believers

#### Scripture Readings

Isaiah 2:2-4  
Psalm 133  
Ephesians 4:1-6

#### Patristic Reading

##### *From the Latin tradition*

The church is one, spread abroad far and wide into a multitude by an increase of fruitfulness. As there are many rays of the sun but one light, and many branches of a tree but one strength based in its tenacious root...in the same manner the church, shone over with the light of the Lord, sheds forth her rays over the whole world, yet it is one light which is everywhere diffused, nor is the unity of the body fractured. Her fruitful abundance spreads her branches over the whole world.

- *Cyprian of Carthage* [c. 210-258], *On the Unity of the Church*, 5

##### For reflection:

1. The Church is called to shed forth the light of Christ over the world. Where do you perceive this reality in your own context?
2. Even though in Christ the Church is one body, historically the churches are divided. How have you experienced the pain of this division?
3. The Church as the community of the Holy Spirit, the giver of peace, is sent to live and spread the message of peace in the world. In what ways might churches enable their members to fulfil this calling?

#### Prayer

##### **R/ O Lord, hear our prayer!**

At the empty tomb, you entrusted the news of your resurrection to the women:  
deliver all messengers of the Gospel from fear. **R/**

On the road to Emmaus, you explained the law and the prophets to the disciples: open  
our minds to understand the Scriptures. **R/**

In the upper room, you gave your friends the gift of your peace: help  
us to keep this peace by our mutual love. **R/**

On the lakeshore, you appointed Peter as shepherd of your flock: uphold  
with your Spirit the leaders of our communities. **R/**

On the mountain, you gathered the dispersed disciples before you returned to the Father:  
give unity in faith and charity to those who believe in you. **R/**

Let us pray.

God of heaven and earth,

your Son Jesus Christ has revealed you as our Father

and promised us the gift of the Holy Spirit:

grant to your Church to overcome the scandal of our divisions, so that we

may bear witness to your life of communion,

in the unity of our profession of faith and in the love of mutual service.

Through Christ our Lord. **AMEN.**

### **Alternative Patristic Readings**

#### ***From the Armenian tradition***

Holy fathers and teachers of truth! Leaders and pastors of the Christ's flock! You who preside over and administer the house of God! Today I see you gathered in one spirit and in one body, in adherence to him who is the head of all. Who has brought you to this tranquil harbour of peace, O peacemakers of the world, if not the Holy Spirit who has been given to us from heaven as our peace? And for what purpose, if not to begin the building of the temple of God demolished and destroyed, which the author of evil threw down?

- ***Nerses of Lambron*** [1152-1198], *Synodal Discourse*

#### ***From the Greek tradition***

Being many and countless, men, women, children, various and profoundly different in origin and appearance, nation and language, way of life and age, knowledge and arts, manner of life, customs and propensities, sciences and honours, fate, temperaments and habits, all are in the [church], through which all are regenerated and recreated in the Spirit. To all equally she gives and imparts the same divine form and denomination, to be in Christ and bear his name and to have the same relation, simple, undivided and indivisible, in the faith, that no longer allows to recognise even the existence of the many and inexpressible differences present among them, because all universally refer to and meet in the [church].

- ***Maximus the Confessor*** [c. 580-662], *Mystagogy*, 1

### **Alternative Canadian Readings**

The church is Christ together with his people called both to worship and to serve him in all of life.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Living Faith, 7.1.1

## DAY 7

### Baptism into the Death and Resurrection of the Lord

#### Scripture Readings

Micah 7:18-19  
Psalm 51:1, 7, 10, 12  
Matthew 28:16-20

#### Patristic Readings

##### *From the Greek tradition*

Such is the power of faith in Christ, such the excess of his grace: As the element of fire, when it meets with ore from the mine, straightway of earth makes it gold, even so and much more baptism makes those who are washed to be of gold instead of clay. The Spirit at that time falling like fire into our souls, burning up the “image of the earthy”, and producing “the image of the heavenly,” fresh coined, bright and glittering, as from the furnace-mould.

- *John Chrysostom* [c. 350-407], *Homily on the Gospel of John*, X:2

##### **For reflection:**

1. Christians are baptised into the death and resurrection of Christ. What does your baptism mean to you today?
2. Sin disfigures us in various ways. Through baptism, God liberates us from this humiliation.
3. In spite of different church traditions and practices, how does confessing “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph. 4:5) affect our relationships with other Christians?

#### Prayer

**R/ We thank you, O Lord, and bless your name!**

For having called us to faith in baptism,  
for the communion we share in the New Covenant, for  
your presence in the holy Church. **R/**

For the witness of persecuted Christians, for  
the suffering of their martyrdom,  
for their participation in Christ’s passion. **R/**

For all servants of communion,  
for those who pray and work for the reconciliation of churches, for  
those who offer their lives for unity. **R/**

Let us pray.  
God our Father, we praise you and bless your name.  
Accept our thanksgiving for the unity Christians already enjoy in the  
confession of Jesus the Lord.



Hasten the day, we beg you, of the full mutual recognition of our churches in the communion that you desire, and for which your Son prayed.

We ask this in the power of the Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

### **Alternative Patristic Readings**

#### ***From the Syriac tradition***

The Son of God descended from heaven, became man and from the abyss raised you, so that you would become a son for God. He became your brother in the womb full of holiness and made you his brother in the womb of baptism. ... A son for God he made you, with him, in the water so that he who is the Only Begotten acquires brothers through the second birth. For he himself by a second birth became man, by that second generation he made you a son for God.

- **Jacob of Sarug** [c. 451-521], *Discourse 10*

#### ***From the Latin tradition***

Man, you dared not lift up your face towards heaven, you turned your eyes towards the earth, and suddenly you received the grace of Christ ... Lift up, therefore, your eyes to the Father, who has begotten you through baptism, to the Father who has redeemed you through the Son, and say, "Our Father!"

- **Ambrose of Milan** [c. 337-397], *The Sacraments*, V:19

### **Alternative Canadian Readings**

Baptism assures us that we belong to God. In life and in death our greatest comfort is that we belong to our faithful Saviour Jesus Christ.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Living Faith, 7.6.5

## DAY 8

### Waiting for the Kingdom and the life to come *Apocalypse Now!*

#### Scripture Readings

Revelation 21:1-4

Psalm 85:8, 10-12

Luke 12:35-40

#### Patristic Reading

##### *From the Syriac tradition*

Whoever lives in love in this creation breathes the life coming from God. While yet in this world, he breathes the air of rebirth. In this air the righteous will delight at resurrection. Love is the kingdom whereof our Lord mystically promised the disciples that they would eat in his kingdom: “You shall eat and drink at the table of my kingdom.” What should they eat, if not love? Love is sufficient to nourish a man instead of food and drink. This is the wine that gladdens the heart of man. Blessed is he who drinks of this wine!

- *Isaac of Nineveh* [7<sup>th</sup> century], *First Collection*, 43

##### For reflection:

1. Love will be the reality of the Kingdom of God. Concrete actions of charity make this Kingdom present in our lives.
2. Living in expectation of the Kingdom of God, how do we embody signs of the coming Kingdom in the world today?
3. We are called to be ready for the second coming of the Lord. How do we prepare ourselves for it?
4. For reflection in the Canadian context: Many question the place of religion in the future in Canada. One study addresses many of these concerns: <https://biblesociety.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/The-Shifting-Landscape-of-Faith-in-Canada-Final.pdf>. “We do not propose a roadmap back to the previous role of religion in Canada, but rather suggest that in building a greater, more nuanced understanding of the journey of faith of our congregants, communities, and fellow Canadians, perhaps we can be better prepared in finding our footing as models and ministers of the common good among institutions, government, and society.”

#### Prayer

##### **R/ Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father**

O Christ the Lord, who for our sakes became poor  
and who promise that the poor will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, you  
fill us with your riches. **R/**

O Lord Jesus, meek and humble of heart,  
who reveal a new world to those who trust in you, you  
give us your fullness. **R/**

O Christ the Lord, who knelt and prayed with your face to the ground,  
you who in sadness traced a way of consolation,  
you are the joy that nothing and no one can take away from us. **R/**

O Lord Jesus, who cast down rulers and powers and  
who clothe peacemakers with a glorious robe, you  
transform us into your image. **R/**

O Christ the Lord, merciful and compassionate  
who on the Cross forgave the thief who died with you  
we beseech you: Remember us when you come into your kingdom. **R/**

Let us pray.

O Lord, hasten the coming of your great and glorious day!  
In our darkness, many men and women no longer dare to hope.  
Protect the flame of faith in the hearts of the weak and the  
suffering.  
May the Church be a faithful herald of the victory of Christ your  
Son over death and a beacon of expectation for his return in glory.  
He is the Living One, with you and with the Holy Spirit. now and  
forever and ever. **AMEN.**

### Alternative Patristic Readings

#### *From the Greek tradition*

You, O Lord, have freed us from the fear of death. You have made the end of this life the beginning for us of true life. You, for a season, let our bodies rest in sleep and awake them again at the last trumpet. You give our earth, which you have fashioned with your hands, to the earth to keep in safety. One day you will take back what you gave, transfiguring with immortality and grace our mortal and unsightly remains ... You showed us the way of resurrection, having broken the gates of hell, and brought to nought him who had the power of death.

- **Gregory of Nyssa** [c. 335-395], *Life of St Macrina*, 24

#### *From the Latin tradition*

By hope God breastfeeds us, nourishes us, strengthens us, and give us consolation in this life of toil. In this hope we sing “alleluia”. Just look what joy there is in hope! What can the reality be? You ask: “What can it be?” Listen to what is said: “They shall get drunk on the plenteousness of your house.” That is the reality that hope is about. We are thirsty. We are hungry. It must be that we shall be satisfied. Hunger while on the road, satisfaction when we come home. When shall we be satisfied? “I shall be satisfied when your glory is revealed.” ... Then it will be “alleluia” in reality, while now it is just in hope.

- **Augustine of Hippo** [354-430], *Sermons*, 255:5

### Alternative Canadian Readings

Life in the age to come is pictured in the Bible in different ways: an eternal kingdom, a new heaven and earth, a marriage feast, an unending day, the father's house, and the joy of God's presence. God will triumph over all opposition and everything that disrupts creation.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Living Faith, 10.2