

Students and Youth Call to Prayer and Action for Christian Unity

Pray without ceasing

(1 Thess 5:17)

That they all be one... that the world may believe
(John 17:21)

To all members and friends of Christian student and youth organizations:



In our ever changing and divided world, the call of Jesus Christ for his followers to be one is a priority for us as we struggle to proclaim the Good News and to help transform the world.

From 18 to 25 January 2008 Christians all over the world will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. On this occasion, we, the major global Christian student and youth organizations and youth desks of the different Churches call upon all our members to **take action and make our voices heard for Christian Unity**.

The following Christian student and youth organizations are calling our members to Action.

- International Catholic Conference of Guiding (ICCG)
- International Federation of Catholic Parochial Youth Communities (FIMCAP) www.fimcap.org
- International Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth (MIJARC) www.mijarc.org
- International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS-Pax Romana) www.imcs-miec.org
- International Young Catholic Students (IYCS) www.iycs-jeci.org
- International Young Christian Workers (JOCI) www.jociycw.net
- The Lutheran World Federation – LWF Youth www.lwfyouth.org
- Pax Christi Youth www.paxchristi.net
- World Alliance of YMCAs (World YMCA) www.ymca.int
- World Council of Churches Youth Desk www.ecumenicalyouth.org
- World Young Women's Christian Association (World YWCA) www.worldywca.org
- World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) www.wscfglobal.org



Take Action

As part of the Week for Christian Unity, global Christian youth organizations are encouraging all our members to take action for Christian unity. We strongly encourage all our members at the local, national and continental levels to organize common actions during the week with other Christian student and youth organizations.

These actions could include **ecumenical prayer services**, **social action activities** (such as an environmental cleanup), **Bible studies or seminars**. We hope that this Week will be an occasion for our groups to get to know each other better and to work together to proclaim the Good News of Jesus in our world today through word, prayer and action.

Make Your Voice Heard

As part of the Week of Prayer, the leaders of the global Christian student and youth organizations will issue a letter to leaders of the major Christian churches on how young people today see the future of Christian unity. Get your voice heard by sending your comments and messages to Church leaders, contact Natalie.Maxson@wcc-coe.org

Ecumenical Youth Prayer

Loving Creator, you call upon us your children to love one another in a spirit of unity, to give thanks and to pray without ceasing. Forgive us for the times when we forget to pray and when we create divisions instead of unity. Help us to overcome the barriers between us and empower us as young people to take up your call in all parts of our lives. Our Father....

Theme: Pray without ceasing

The Theme of this year's Week, chosen by the World Council of Churches and the Vatican, reminds us of the universal call of Christians to prayer. In looking at the letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, we see that this call to prayer is also a call to unity and social justice:

But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters... Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

(1 Thessalonians 5: 12a, 13b-18)

About the Week of Prayer

The annual Week of Prayer has become one of the most symbolic and active signs of Christian unity among Christians around the world.

One hundred years ago, Father Paul Wattson, Episcopal (Anglican) priest and co-founder of the Friars and Sisters of the Atonement at Graymoor (Garrison, USA), introduced a Prayer Octave for Christian Unity that was first celebrated from 18 to 25 January 1908. Soon after, Catholic and Protestant groups around the world took up this tradition.

In 1965, the tradition was formally endorsed and promoted by the leaders of the major Christian Churches when the World Council of Churches Commission on Faith and Order and the Roman Catholic Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (now known as the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity) began official joint preparation of materials for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Resources:

www.oikoumene.org/?id=3193

www.weekofprayer2008.org