

# DEVOTIONAL SERVICE OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

SATURDAY, 4:45 P.M., 20<sup>TH</sup>  
JANUARY 2007

*SAINT JAMES THE APOSTLE EVANGELICAL  
LUTHERAN CHURCH, BROCKE*

**HYMN: "Keep in Mind" LBW No. 13**

## INTRODUCTION TO THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

**L:** Let us keep silence before God... silent within ourselves... opening our hearts to the silence of our sisters and brothers living in suffering: "if one member suffers, all suffer together" (1 Cor 12: 26). May our ears be opened by this silence in communion with those whose voices we do not hear, either because they keep silent or they are silenced. Let us hear the call of Christ rather than remain deaf. He teaches that we should allow ourselves, like him, to feel the suffering of others. In this, we are united as one church.  
Three minutes of silence.

**Song/chant/hymn: "Keep in Mind"  
(refrain repeated three times)**

## Prayer

**L:** O God who reigns in heavenly splendor, you have broken the silence through the revelation of your Word, Jesus Christ, who came forth from the heart of your silence and was hidden from the Prince of this world.

**A: Open our eyes that we may see  
Jesus, the star who dispels our  
shadows;**

**L: Open our ears that we might hear the**

voices muffled in the silence of millions, those voices muffled by the trials and suffering of this transient world.

**A: Open our hearts that we may know how to respond to the pain of those who suffer among us, as the woman of Bethany pouring perfume on Jesus' head, and like Simon of Cyrene who without complaint carried your Son's cross, reduced to silence by those who attacked him.**

**L:** Assembled here together, we shatter the silence with the words of the prayer that Jesus taught us.

**A: Our Father...**

## PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

**Lector:** Joel 2:26-29

Psalm 104 *Antiphon:* **You renew the face of the earth.**

**Lector:** 1 Corinthians 12:12-29.

**ALLELUIA VERSE: "Alleluia! Sing to  
Jesus" LBW No. 158:1**

**L:** The Gospel is proclaimed:  
John 15:26-27, 16

## MEDITATION

## CONFESSION OF SINS – FORGIVENESS – SIGN OF PEACE

**L:** God is more ready to forgive our sins than we are to confess them.

Let us come then before God to acknowledge the weight of our sins.

**A: Lord, have mercy.**

**L:** God of mercy, in your Son you offer us unconditional forgiveness for the sins

we truly confess. Grant us your pardon for those sins that we acknowledge and those we do not have the courage to confront.

**A: Christ, have mercy.**

When, by our actions we have impeded your will;  
When, through our indifference to others we have taken away their hope;  
When, through indifference to the obedience of your laws and through weakness we have not responded in the way you wished, either personally or as communities.

**A: Lord, have mercy.**

**L:** Come to us in your mercy, to repair our broken lives and to hasten the hour of full communion among us, in the name of the love of Jesus Christ.

**A:** Amen.

**L:** We have opened our hearts to that pardon for our sins which gives us peace, so let us now give to each other the peace of Christ. The peace of Christ be with you.

**A:** And also with you.

*Music might be played or a choir may sing while the members of the congregation exchange the sign of peace.*

#### **INTERCESSIONS**

**L:** God of grace, our creator, God of mercy, our savior, merciful God, our help, who knows what we need before we ask, we praise you for your creation, for salvation and your unceasing compassion for us.

Heal us of our deafness, that together we may more clearly hear the sound of your

voice in the silence of the poor and suffering.

Breathe into us the desire to work without ceasing for that Christian unity which is your desire and grant that nothing will overcome our search for that unity for which Jesus prayed as we now pray for one another:

**L:** God our shepherd, you called us from the shadows into your marvelous light. Make us to shine as children of light.

**A: Shine, Lord, shine. Shine in our lives.**

**L:** Jesus, friend of the poor and of strangers, you have held out your hand to lead all who were far away to your grace and salvation.

**A: May those who feel like strangers find comfort and signs of your presence in our communities of faith.**

**L:** Jesus, sent by the Father, you have called your disciples to announce the gospel and to be instruments of transformation in this world together.

**A: Help us, so that the vision of a world transformed may fire the imagination of all believers!**

**L:** Holy Spirit, giver of life, may we continually be nourished by your life giving power.

**A: Through your presence among us, give power to those who are powerless and help us to give a voice to those who are voiceless.**

**L:** Holy Spirit, who leads us to unity, give to the leaders of our faith communities unshakeable zeal in their efforts towards unity.

**A: Hear our prayers, open new ways for your church to be united.**

**L:** Holy Spirit, who leads us to the whole truth and makes straight that which is crooked, inspire all those who exercise a role in government.

**A: Grant them the desire to ensure that the needs of the poor, the humble and the weak without voice are a priority; and guard them from all temptation so that their integrity is preserved from all corruption.**

**L:** O God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one in three persons.

**A: Be with us and break down the walls that separate us. Bring us together in Christ through your Spirit.**

**L:** Merciful God of love, look kindly upon our churches whom you call to join together in reflecting in everyday life the merciful and kindly love of your son Jesus Christ, God with us forever and ever.

**A: Amen.**

#### **HYMN OF PRAISE**

*“Open My Eyes That I May See” (Clara H. Scott) is suggested.*

#### **BLESSING AND WORDS OF CONSOLATION**

**L:** “As you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me. (Mt 25: 40)” “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. (Mt 11: 28)”

Dear friends, these words of Christ apply to every one of us. Christ is close to us in the heart of our actions, including our ecumenical actions, as well as in the suffering of the sick, the solitude and discouragement of many of us. He supports us in our weakness. He is our consolation and blessing.

**L:** Blessed be the Lord our God for the love that you have shown us through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**A: In him who loved us we are conquerors over hardship, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril and the sword.**

**L:** In the silence of abandonment and solitude, of sickness and death, pour out the riches of your blessing, that we may be ever more faithful to serve you in our sisters and brothers, and that our joy to do your will be ever greater.

**A: We bless you and glorify you, for you listen to the silence of our hearts. You act within us with power, healing us and leading us to speak in the name of Jesus, your Son.**

**L:** Send us into the world to carry out your will and to break down the walls of silence that separate us.

**A: May we witness to you, our only Savior, being ever more united by “one faith and one baptism.”**

**L:** And may we grow in grace and in the peace of God that passes all understanding, that your name may be glorified.

**A: Amen.**

#### **FINAL BLESSING**

**L:** May the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord, the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you/us always.

**A: And also with you.**

**L:** Let us go in peace, with opened ears and loosened tongues to announce the gospel to all.

**A: Thanks be to God.**

#### **CLOSING HYMN: “GOD THE OMNIPOTENT” LBW NO. 462**