



Office of the Archbishop  
835 North Rush Street  
Chicago, IL 60611-2030  
312.534.8230  
archchicago.org

January 11, 2024

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Each year from January 18-25, Christians around the world observe the “Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.” During this week, we join Jesus’ prayer that his disciples be united, as he and his Father are one, “that the world may believe” (John 17:21). Praying for Christian unity is a foundation of evangelization rooted in a synodal vision of the Church, which calls all Christians to discern where the Holy Spirit is leading us in our walking together as disciples. Becoming a synodal Church builds upon the priorities of the Second Vatican Council and is central to goals of *Renew My Church*.

The Vatican’s Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity and the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches annually selects Christian leaders from around the world to prepare the theme and text for the Week of Prayer. An ecumenical team from Burkina Faso facilitated by the local *Chemin Neuf* Community developed the 2024 theme, “You shall love the Lord your God...and your neighbor as yourself,” (Luke 10:27). Burkina Faso is experiencing high levels of Christian persecution and hopes this year’s prayer theme will foster collaborative efforts at peacebuilding in this country and so many others in desperate need of healing.

During this year’s “Week of Prayer for Christian Unity,” I encourage you to consider how living out of the Golden Rule to “love your neighbor as yourself,” which is common to all the major world religions, opens your heart and contributes to making our communities safer and more just. Together, may we join in Christian unity in direct response to Christ’s prayer for oneness among his followers and provide new opportunities for expressing our love for God by loving our neighbors.

I invite you to join with Pope Francis’ prayer intention for January that Catholics recognize the gift of diversity in the Church. “To move forward on the journey of faith, we also need ecumenical dialogue with our brothers and sisters of other confessions and Christian communities,” the Holy Father said. “This is not something confusing or disturbing, but is a gift God gives to the Christian community so it might grow as one body, the Body of Christ.” (See [The Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network Video for January](#).)

Please take time each day during this week to ask the Holy Spirit to fill the hearts of all Christians to assist in drawing us ever closer to one another in Christ. If possible, join other Christians at a prayer service for unity in your neighborhood or online. (Please visit our Office for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs webpage about the [Week of Prayer for Christian Unity](#) for more information.) Wishing you every blessing, with kind regards, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

  
Archbishop of Chicago