

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

The National Council of Churches in Australia again supported the call for the annual, *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* during the week of May 8 to 15, 2016.

A number of Church communities in the Ballarat area, responded to the request for gatherings to voice the Word and pray for Christian unity as we were “called to proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord” (1 Peter 2:9). This year’s resources were prepared by representatives of a variety of ecumenical projects in Latvia and it was these reflections which formed the basis of materials and suggestions offered for the ‘Eight Days’ .

Members of the Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican and Uniting faith communities gathered together at the different churches during the week. About forty people gathered at St Patrick’s Cathedral whose community was responsible for the liturgy on the fourth day. A small working party developed the liturgy around the theme of *a priestly people called to proclaim the Gospel*. The Scripture, prayers and hymns were prepared to help all gathered to recognise other Christians as brothers and sisters that dare to take God’s Word into the public space.

Fr Justin Driscoll led us in this liturgy and through his homily reminded us that there is indeed ‘unity in diversity’. Where our Christian faiths and traditions are close to being one, yet being different gives us much through the very diversity that is present. As the prayer came to a close Fr Justin invited all to gather around the Baptismal font for the final blessing and hymn, signifying that we are all baptised in the one Christ, though many parts of the One Body, striving to live out the same Christian message.



Prayer for Unity:

You call us O God to be your people through our common baptism. Journeying together with you and each other we proclaim, through our words and actions, your love and concern for all people. We pray that we will continue to work together for peace, unity, reconciliation and justice as witnesses of the risen Christ, inspired by the Holy Spirit. May we be ready to respond to your call to further service as we, through your grace, recommit ourselves to strive for unity and truth. We pray in Jesus’ name.

Amen

Susan Crowe