



CONFERENCE ON WORLD MISSION AND EVANGELISM

COME HOLY SPIRIT - HEAL AND RECONCILE

Called in Christ to be reconciling and healing communities

Athens (Greece), 9-16 May 2005

Meditation 14 May

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CLOSING WORSHIP

Exhortation and Invitation

Our three Bible texts are stories about how people have used their hands and arms in positive and beautiful ways. They have used their hands and arms to give healing, extend comfort and bring reconciliation to people they know and people they don't know. By doing this they have also revealed something of themselves and they have also offered glimpses of who God is. Through all their embracing and reaching out, God's love is always the starting point and the reconciliation and healing of human beings is always the future hope.

Reconciliation has never been and is still not easy. But, as we have heard and experienced this week, it is essential and crucially must begin with people like you and me, people like us. Each of us came to the conference, some from nearby, others from far away, we are from many different places, cultures and churches. To reach out our hands and to open our arms and minds to other people is always challenging. Here and now, I would like to invite you to use your hands and arms to give a sign of reconciliation to the sister or brother standing next to you. You can do it by a handshake, a hug, by opening your hands or in any other way you feel comfortable with.

Anointing with oil

In the Bible one of the ways hands are used for caring and for healing is through anointing with oil. From the time of the Apostles anointing with olive oil that has been blessed has been a sacramental sign of healing for many Christians.

Tonight we have been given a flask of of blessed olive oil from one of the most well-loved shrines of the Greek people. It comes from the Church of the Mother of God on the Island of Tinos which has an icon to which miracles are attributed. Many healings and other miraculous signs of Christ's love, grace and care have flowed to innumerable pilgrims to Tinos.

So now let us extend the ever-renewed healing blessing of the Risen Christ to each other by anointing each others' hands and drawing the sign of the life-giving cross on the back of the hand of the sister or brother standing next to you.