

WALKING, PRAYING AND WORKING TOGETHER ECUMENICAL PRAYER IN THE CHAPEL OF THE ECUMENICAL CENTRE, GENEVA

On the day of the visit of His Holiness Pope Francis in the year
of the 70th Anniversary of the World Council of Churches

1948 - 2018



Geneva, 21 June 2018

MESSAGE OF WELCOME

Moderator, Central Committee of the World Council of Churches

What a joy it is to welcome you to this service of celebration of the 70th anniversary of the World Council of Churches in the company of His Holiness Pope Francis. This gathering of church leaders and lay people to sing and pray together and to hear the Holy Father's homily is a high point of WCC's anniversary year.

In 1948, at a gathering in Amsterdam, representatives of 147 churches agreed to work together to create visible Christian unity and formed the World Council of Churches. Today's service marks another of those moments in which the world is witness to Christians from diverse traditions gathered together to pray for unity, peace and justice.

The Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches walk on parallel paths. We share a common commitment to the challenges facing today's world, not least of which is concern for refugees fleeing violence and the impact of environmental change. We are engaged, too, in joint study of theological diversity and what we can learn from it. In these ways, and others, we work together to seek faithful responses to the needs of the world's peoples.

By accepting the invitation of the WCC to participate in our anniversary celebration, Pope Francis is continuing the tradition of openness to encounter and dialogue for which he is known and that lies at the heart of WCC's ecumenical pilgrimage for justice and peace. What better way of modelling pilgrimage and the gift of encounter than this service?

May we leave this place renewed in our commitment to being a visible sign of Christian unity!

Dr Agnes Abuom, moderator of the central committee of the World Council of Churches

21 June 2018

MESSAGE OF WELCOME

General Secretary, World Council of Churches

It is with pleasure that I greet you on this historic day as we gather in the chapel of the Ecumenical Centre to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the World Council of Churches. We are honoured that His Holiness Pope Francis has accepted our invitation to join in celebrations to mark this occasion.

It is a day for which many around the world have longed and prayed, as we know that we can do more for those who are in need when we work together in common witness to God's love for the world. We are called to draw on this time of common prayer in order to strengthen our commitment to joint response to the fears and hopes of God's people.

We believe that God has created us as human beings for fellowship and for unity with one another. We are brought into this fellowship by and with Christ through our baptism. In this way, we understand that our churches have been woven together by Jesus Christ: "That they may all be one ... so that the world may believe" (John 17:21).

This day will live on in shared memories for years to come — memories that will guide and encourage joint action among Christians of all traditions. Above all, this day is a symbol of the divine love that is embedded at the heart of our faith. It is a day of blessing to take with us on our pilgrimage of faith.

The Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the WCC

21 June 2018

ECUMENICAL PRAYER SERVICE

Walking, praying and working together

(You may stand.)

Procession

The church's one foundation

Samuel J. Stone

Samuel Sebastian Wesley: England

1. The chur-ch's one foun - da - tion is Je - sus Christ her Lord; she
1. Die Kir - che ist ge - grün - det al - lein auf Je - sus Christ. Sein
1. L'É - glise u - ni - ver - sel - le, fon - dée en Jé - sus - Christ, est
1. Un so - lo fun - da - men - to y so - lo un fun - da - dor la

is his new cre - a - tion by wa - ter and the Word; from
Wort hat an - ge - zün - det das Licht, das in ihr ist. Er
la mai - son nou - vel - le vi - vant de son Es - prit. Du
san - ta i - gle - sia tie - ne en Cris - to, su Se - ñor. Pa -

heaven he came and sought her to be his ho - ly bride; with
kam und hat ge - wor - ben um sie mit sei - nem Blut. Sie
ciel il vint lui - mê - me pour ê - tre son é - poux, le
ra ha - cer - la su es - po - sa del cie - lo des - cen - dió, y

his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.
lebt, weil er ge - stor - ben. Er bleibt ihr Heil und Gut.
Ré - demp - teur su - prê - me don - nant son sang pour nous.
con su pro - pia san - gre su li - ber - tad com - pró.

English:

2. Elect from every nation,
yet one o'er all the earth;
her charter of salvation:
one Lord, one faith, one birth.
One holy name she blesses,
partakes one holy food,
and to one hope she presses,
with every grace endued.

3. Through toil and tribulation,
and tumult of her war,
she waits the consummation
of peace forevermore;
till with the vision glorious
her longing eyes are blest,
and the great church victorious
shall be the church at rest.

4. We now on earth have union
with God, the Three in One,
and mystic sweet communion
with those whose rest is won.
Oh, blessed heavenly chorus!
Lord, give us grace that we
like them, the meek and lowly,
on high may dwell with thee.

Français:

2. Partout dans la prière,
l'Eglise unit les coeurs
pour invoquer le Père,
un même et seul Seigneur.
Aux ordres de son maître,
rompant le même pain,
l'Eglise fait connaître
à tous l'amour divin.

3. Le monde la méprise,
il cherche à la briser.
Des luttes la divisent,
son temps paraît compté.
Mais elle, dans l'épreuve,
reçoit de Jésus-Christ
des forces toujours neuves,
le don de son Esprit.

4. Déjà sur cette terre
elle est unie à Dieu,
et par un grand mystère
aux rachetés des cieux.
Car la vie éternelle
est pour tous ceux de nous
dont Christ est le modèle
dans un coeur humble et doux.

Deutsch:

2. Aus allem Volk erkoren,
ist eins sie nah und fern.
Durch eine Tauf geboren,
dient sie dem einen Herrn.
Ein Heilswort is ihr Segen,
ein Gnadentisch sie speist,
ein Geist gibt ihren Wegen
das Licht, das heimwärts weist

3. Gehorsam ihrer Sendung
in Unruh, Kampf und Schmach
trägt sie bis zur Vollendung
ihr Kreuz dem Heiland nach.
So wird sie sich bewähren
bis sie verklärt ersteht
und froh mit Siegesehren
in Gottes Frieden geht.

4. Schon hier ist sie verbunden
mit der Dreieinigkeit
und denen, die gefunden
die Ruhe nach dem Streit.
O selig, die da sehen!
Herr, hilf uns, dass auch wir
in Lieb und Demut gehen
den Heimweg hin zu dir!

Español:

2. Aunque de muchas razas,
disfruta la unidad;
sólo una fe confiesa
en santa caridad.
Es uno su bautismo,
un pan de santidad;
por gracia siempre espera
una felicidad.

3. Cercada de tumultos,
de guerra y confusión,
la paz entera espera,
serena en su visión;
hasta que victoriosa
la iglesia terrenal
reciba por su premio
descanso celestial.

4. Mas ella aquí disfruta
celeste comunión
con Dios y con los santos
en paz y perfección.
Jesús, cabeza nuestra.
Concedenos lugar
con los que habitan siempre
en tu celeste hogar.

His Holiness Pope Francis:

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

His Holiness Pope Francis:

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

Dr Agnes Abuom:

O Lord, open my lips

And my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Bishop Mary Ann Swenson:

Create in me a clean heart, O God,

And renew a right spirit within me.

Dr Agnes Abuom:

Do not cast me away from your presence,

And do not take your Holy Spirit from me.

(Please be seated.)

Metropolitan Gennadios of Sassima:

Your Holiness, dear sisters and brothers in Christ! Welcome to this ecumenical prayer service, which commemorates the 70th anniversary of the World Council of Churches. Since its foundation in 1948, the WCC has grown into a world-wide Christian fellowship that has brought together to this day 348 churches of Orthodox, Anglican, Old Catholic and Protestant traditions from all continents.

We have gathered to offer God praises and thanks for the “cloud of witnesses” who, during the 70 years of the Council’s existence, have worked for Christian unity as well as the unity of humanity and creation.

Bishop Mary Ann Swenson:

Following the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches started a fruitful dialogue and cooperation that have been strengthened and intensified over the years. We are glad to welcome at this historic commemoration the Holy Father Pope Francis, whose vision and work has inspired, enthused and strengthened the relationship and cooperation with the World Council of Churches on the common journey of the pilgrimage of justice and peace.

Dr Agnes Abuom:

We have also gathered to ask for God's help and blessings for our desire to continue to be a prophetic voice in the world today, an instrument of God's mission for reconciliation and healing, justice and peace, working and advancing together in fulfilling God's will with Christians and with people of other faith communities around the world.

Dr Agnes Abuom:

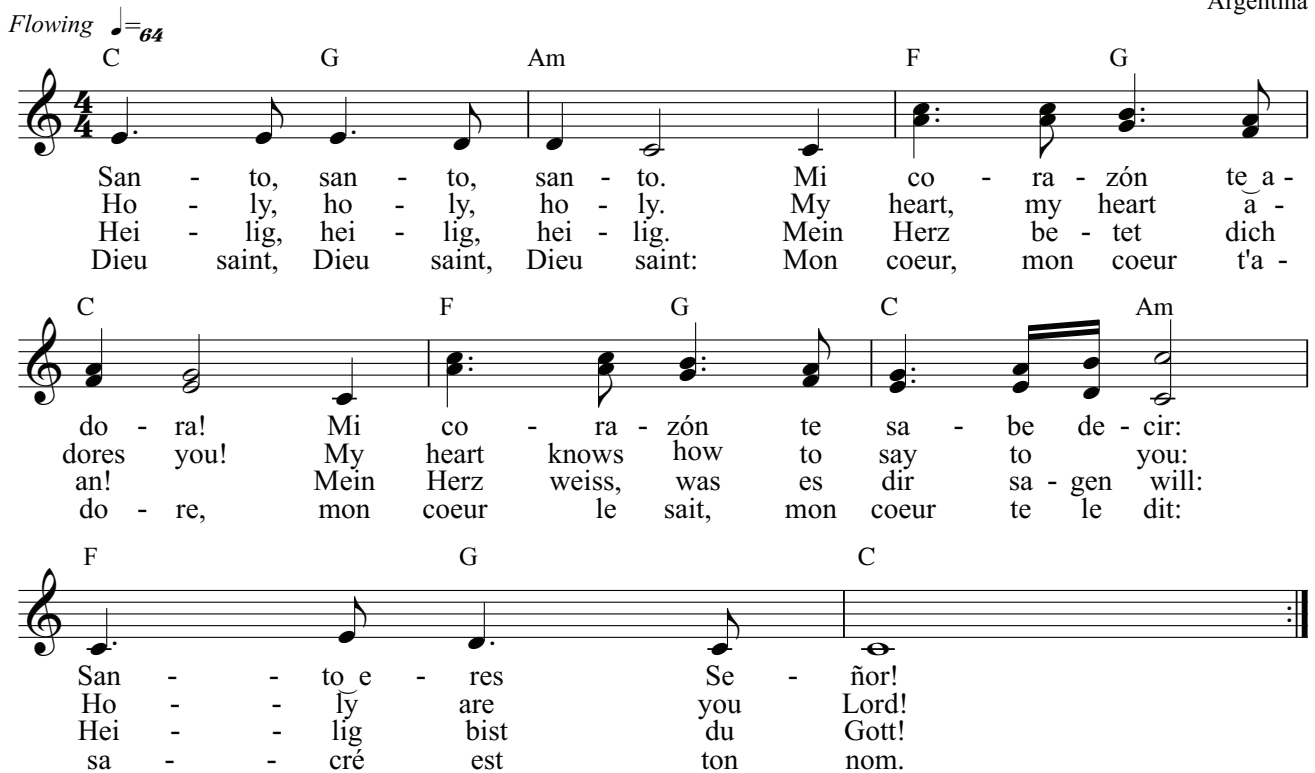
Let us invoke God's presence among us.

**O heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of truth,
present in all places and filling all things;
treasury of good things and giver of life,
come and dwell in us and purify us from every stain,
and save us.**

♪ **Santo, santo, santo**

Argentina

Flowing ♩ = 64



San - to, san - to, san - to. Mi co - ra - zón te a -
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly. My heart, my heart a -
Hei - lig, hei - lig, hei - lig. Mein Herz, be - tet dich
Dieu saint, Dieu saint, Dieu saint: Mon coeur, mon coeur t'a -
do - ra! Mi co - ra - zón te sa - be de - cir:
dores you! My heart knows how to say to you:
an! Mein Herz weiss, was es dir sa - gen will:
do - re, mon coeur le sait, mon coeur te le dit:
San - - to e - res Se - ñor!
Ho - - ly are you Lord!
Hei - - lig bist du Gott!
sa - - cré est ton nom.

German: Wolfgang Leyk. French: Joëlle Gouël © 1990 WCC.

Prayer of repentance

The Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit:

Almighty God, in spite of the unity we receive in Christ, we persist in our disunity.

Have mercy on us!

Have mercy on us!

Kurt Cardinal Koch:

We harden our hearts when we hear the gospel.

Have mercy on us!

Have mercy on us!

The Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit:

We fail to serve you in our brothers and sisters
and to live in harmony with and respect for your creation.

Have mercy on us!

Have mercy on us!

Kurt Cardinal Koch:

May God almighty have mercy on us, forgive our sins and lead us to eternal life.

Amen.

(from Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2012)

♪ Moran ethra

Aramaic

as taught by Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: Syria

Fine

Mo - ran e - th - ra ha - ma' - lain. Mo - ran e - th - ra ha - ma' - lain.

Mo - ran e - th - ra ha - ma' - lain. Mo - ran e - th - ra ha - ma' - lain.

D.C. al Fine

Mo - ran e - th - ra ha - ma' - lain. Mo - ran e - th - ra ha - ma' - lain.

Lord, have mercy on us. /Herr, erbarme dich. /Seigneur, aie pitié de nous. /Señor, ten piedad de nosotros. /Senhor, tem piedade de nós.

© Metropolitan Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim, P.O. Box 4194, Aleppo, Syria.

Prayer for reconciliation and unity

Mr Samuel Nderi Wairimu:

God of grace and holiness, send upon us today your Holy Spirit
as you sent the Spirit upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost,
so that our prayers and our deeds may bear witness to this desire that possesses us:

**We wish to be one, Lord,
so that the world may believe
that we belong to you.
Fill us now with your love.**

Ms Aleshia Johnson:

When your church unites people with Christ in the power of the Spirit
and manifests communion in prayer and action,
when your church proclaims reconciliation,
provides healing and overcomes divisions of race, gender, age and culture,
we give thanks and praise, O God.

**As we draw closer to Christ,
we draw closer to each other.**

The Rev. Martina Viktorie Kopecká:

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free,
there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus (*Gal. 3:28*).
In him all nations shall be blessed (*Gal. 3:8*).

Mr Thomas Hyeono Kang:

Many people will come from east and west, from north and south,
and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven (*Luke 13:29; Matt. 8:11*).

**The nations will walk by its light ...
People will bring into it the glory
and the honor of the nations** (*Rev. 21:26*).

Ms Hanbeet Rhee:

Because God's purpose is to gather the whole creation under the lordship of Jesus Christ,
because the church is to unite people with Christ in the power of the Spirit,
because the church is a foretaste of the koinonia that God wills,

we give thanks and praise, O God.

(AWPC © 2013 WCC)

(You may stand.)

Masithi

♩=126

Stephan Cuthbert Molefe: Xhosa, South Africa

Ma - si - thi: A - men, si - ya - ku - du - mi - sa, Ma - si - thi:
Sing a - men: A - men, we praise your name O Lord, Sing a - men:
Singt a - men! A - men! Wir prei - sen Gott, den Herrn! Singt a - men!

A - men, si - ya - ku - du - mi - sa, Ma - si - thi: A - men, Ba - wo,
A - men, we praise your name O Lord, Sing a - men: A - men, a - men,
A - men! Wir prei - sen Gott, den Herrn! Singt A - men! A - men, a - men,

A - men, Ba - wo, A - men, si - ya - ku - du - mi - sa.
a - men, a - men, A - men, we praise your name O Lord.
a - men, a - men! A - men! Wir prei - sen Gott, den Herrn.

From the Lumko Song Book © Lumko Institute, P.O. Box 5058, 1403 Delmenville, Republic of South Africa.
Transcription and English: Dave Dargie © Lumko Institute. German © Dieter Trautwein.

Scripture reading

Galatians 5:13-15, 22-25

(Archbishop Vicken Aykazian)

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh ... But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

(Please be seated.)

Homily *(His Holiness Pope Francis)*

Short silent reflection

Hymn of the jubilee of mercy

Eugenio Costa

Paul Inwood

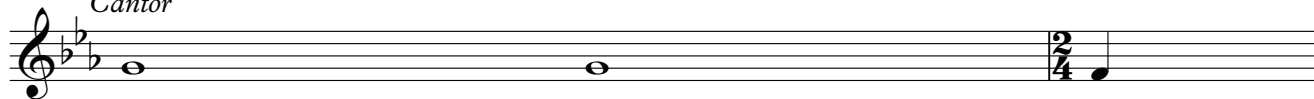
♩ = 80

All



Mi-se - ri - cor - des si - cut Pa - ter! Mi-se - ri - cor - des si - cut Pa - ter!

Cantor



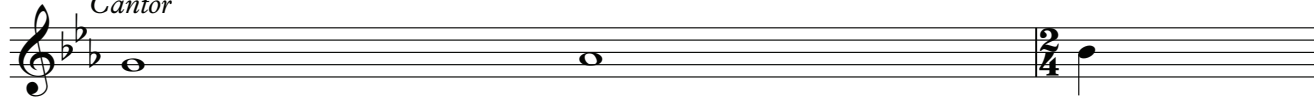
Let us ask for peace from the	God of all	peace
<i>Demandons la paix au</i>	<i>Dieu de toute</i>	<i>paix</i>
Bitten wir um	Frieden von Gott allen	Friedens
<i>Pidamos la</i>	<i>paz, al Dios de toda</i>	<i>paz</i>

All



in ae - ter - num mi - se - ri - cor - di - a e - ius.

Cantor



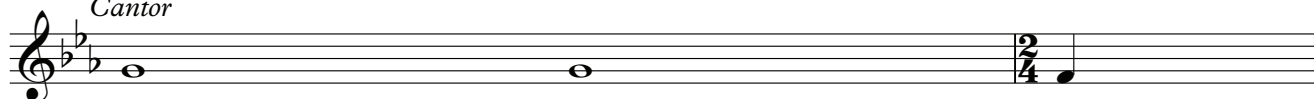
The earth waits for the	Good News of the	Kingdom
<i>La terre attend l'Evan</i>	<i>gile du Roy</i>	<i>aume</i>
Die Welt wartet auf die	Botschaft des Reiches	Gottes
<i>La tierra espera el Evan</i>	<i>gelio del</i>	<i>Regno</i>

All



in ae - ter - num mi - se - ri - cor - di - a e - ius.

Cantor



Joy and pardon in the	hearts of the	little ones
<i>joie et pardon dans le</i>	<i>cœur des pe</i>	<i>tits</i>
Freude und Vergebung werden	sein in den Herzen aller	Kleinen
<i>La alegría y el perdón en el cora</i>	<i>zón de los pe</i>	<i>queños</i>

All



in ae - ter - num mi - se - ri - cor - di - a e - ius.

Cantor



The heavens and the	earth will be re	newed
<i>Seront nouveaux les</i>	<i>cieux et la</i>	<i>terre</i>
Der Himmel und die Erde	werden er	neuert
<i>Se renovarán los</i>	<i>cielos y la</i>	<i>tierra</i>

All



in ae - ter - num mi - se - ri - cor - di - a e - ius.

(You may stand.)

Common witness of our faith *(Nicene Constantinopolitan Creed)*

Kurt Cardinal Koch:

Together, let us confess our faith.

**We believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
begotten from the Father before all ages,
God from God,
Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made;
of the same essence as the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven;
he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,
and was made human.
He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered and was buried.
The third day he rose again, according to the scriptures.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again with glory
to judge the living and the dead.
His kingdom will never end.**

**And we believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life.
He proceeds from the Father
and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.
He spoke through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look forward to the resurrection of the dead,
and to life in the world to come.
Amen.**

(Please be seated.)

Intercessions

Mr Mena Shawki Nassif Habeb:

Lord Jesus, on the night before you died for us,
you prayed that all your disciples may be perfectly one,
as you are in your Father and your Father is in you.
Make us painfully aware of our lack of faith in not being united.
Give us the faithfulness to acknowledge, and the courage to reject,
our hidden indifference, distrust and even enmity towards one another.
Grant that we all may meet one another in you,
so that from our souls and our lips there may ever arise your prayer for Christian unity
as you wish and by the means that you desire.

(Fr Paul Couturier)

♪ Kyrie eleison

Orthodox liturgy of Kiev

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.

Ms Larissa Ribeiro de Aguiar Garcia:

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the way of peace.
Come into the brokenness of our lives and our lands with your healing love.
Help us to be willing to bow before you in true repentance
and to bow to one another in real forgiveness.
By the fire of your Holy Spirit, melt our hard hearts
and consume the pride and prejudice which separates us.
Fill us, O Lord, with your perfect love which casts out our fear
and binds us together in that unity which you share with the Father and Holy Spirit.
Make us instruments of love, peace, unity and harmony between people
independent of race, colour and creed.

*(Emerging out of the movement of charismatic renewal, this prayer is used in both the Republic and Northern Ireland.
Unity, the newsletter of the Irish School of Ecumenics.)*

♪ Kyrie eleison

Ms Toai Metanoia Tumaai-Vaauli:

Lord Jesus, you who as a child experienced the life of an immigrant and refugee,
today you call us to welcome the members of God's family
who come to our lands to escape oppression, poverty, persecution, violence and war.
But we are filled with fear and doubt and even suspicion.
We build barriers in our hearts and in our minds.
Lord Jesus, help us by your grace to banish fear from our hearts,
that we may embrace each of your children as our own brother and sister

and to welcome migrants and refugees with joy and generosity,
while responding to their many needs.

(US Conference of Catholic Bishops, adapted)

♪ Kyrie eleison

Dr Agnes Abuom:

Let us unite our hearts and voices and say together in our many languages the prayer that Christ the Lord himself has given to us.

(You may stand.)

The Lord's prayer

Prayer for the unity of the church

His Holiness Pope Francis:

Almighty ever-living God, who gather what is scattered
and keep together what you have gathered,
look kindly on the flock of your Son,
that those whom one Baptism has consecrated
may be joined together by integrity of faith
and united in the bond of charity.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity
of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

(from The Roman Missal)

His Holiness Pope Francis:

Christ is our peace.

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And with your spirit.

His Holiness Pope Francis:

The blessing of the almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you and on your way together, now and forever.

Amen.

The Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit:

Let us depart witnessing to the whole world, by word and deed,
about God's love and care for the whole of creation.

In the name of the Lord. Amen.

Recessional

♪ Move when the Spirit says move

The musical score is written on three staves in treble clef, with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with some rests. The lyrics are written below the notes.

We're gon-na move when the Spi rit say move, we're gon-na move when the
Spi - rit say move, we're gon - na move when the
Spi-rit say move, we're gon-na move all ov - er the world.

2. We're gonna walk where the Spirit say walk ...
We're gonna walk all over the world.
3. We're gonna work where the Spirit say work ...
We're gonna work all over the world.
4. We're gonna pray when the Spirit say pray ...
We're gonna pray all over the world.
5. We're gonna move when the Spirit say move ...
We're gonna move all over the world.

ECUMENICAL PRAYER SERVICE PRESIDERS

(in order of appearance)

His Holiness Pope Francis

Dr Agnes Abuom (Moderator of the WCC Central Committee)

Bishop Dr Mary Ann Swenson (Vice-Moderator of the WCC Central Committee)

His Eminence Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima (Vice-Moderator of the WCC Central Committee)

Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit (General Secretary of WCC)

His Eminence Kurt Cardinal Koch (President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity)

Mr Samuel Nderi Wairimu, Kenya (youth member of the WCC Central Committee)

Ms Aleshia Johnson, Canada (youth advisor to the WCC Central Committee)

Rev. Martina Viktorie Kopecká, Czech Republic (youth member of the WCC Central Committee)

Mr Thomas Hyeono Kang, Brazil (youth member of the WCC Central Committee)

Ms Hanbeet Rhee, Korea (youth advisor to the WCC Central Committee)

His Eminence Archbishop Dr Vicken Aykazian (WCC central committee member)

Mr Mena Shawki Nassif Habeb, Egypt (youth advisor to the WCC central committee)

Ms Larissa Ribeiro de Aguiar Garcia, Brazil (youth advisor to the WCC central committee)

Ms Toai Metanoia Tumaai-Vaauli, Samoa (youth advisor to the WCC central committee)

SEVENTY YEARS OF FELLOWSHIP: THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of 348 churches that confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the WCC, says: “Walking, praying and working together is not only the theme chosen for Pope Francis’s visit to the WCC in June 2018 on the occasion of the Council’s 70th anniversary, it describes and celebrates our long history. It is our promise for the future, our road map for the coming years, our policy direction in our activities, and it signals the renewal of our common commitment to continue together our pilgrimage of justice and peace.”

The life of the WCC is nurtured by the vision “that all may be one”, as Jesus prayed shortly before he was crucified. The WCC responds to that vision in various ways:

- It brings together church leaders and theologians to explore the doctrinal issues on which their traditions agree or disagree. Ecumenical formation encourages and enables younger theologians to work for unity in their own contexts.
- Within a tragically divided world, the WCC helps churches to renew their common witness to the gospel of life and to bring reconciliation; it helps their message of peace to be heard.
- It connects member churches and ecumenical partners with human rights movements and others working for the common good.
- By uniting their wisdom and voices in the WCC, churches can be more loving neighbours to those who suffer and can challenge social, economic and political powers that control the lives of people.

Throughout its 70-year history, the Council has constantly adapted its focus, responding to the needs of its member churches, the challenges of the world and an ongoing concern for renewal in church life and witness. Thirty or forty years ago there was little if any awareness in most churches about many issues that have become important to us today: mission from the periphery, climate justice, inter-religious relations, religion and violence, HIV and AIDS, children’s well-being, to mention only a few of the Council’s programmatic activities.

In the long pilgrimage of churches together there have been many success stories, such as: a declaration on “The Church, the Churches and the World Council of Churches”, memorable convergence documents on “Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry” and “The Church: Towards a Common Vision”, a “Programme to Combat Racism”, a study document on “My Neighbour’s Faith and Mine”, a “Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women” and a new mission affirmation “Together towards Life”.

For more information about the WCC, visit www.oikoumene.org.

===== GROWING TRUST AND COLLABORATION =====

A brief history of relationships between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God (Rom. 15:7).

The promulgation of the Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio* on 21 November 1964 through Pope Paul VI was the decisive turning point in the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards ecumenism. There were advocates for nurturing ecumenical relationships in the decades before, but the official response had been negative. The newly established Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (later the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity or PCPCU) and the WCC were well prepared. Already in 1965, the Joint Working Group (JWG) between the WCC and the RCC had met for the first time in the Ecumenical Institute Château de Bossey. It has gathered since then in plenary every year in the period between WCC assemblies and has produced nine reports and numerous documents on important ecumenical issues. In the present mandate, it is focusing on peace building and the churches' care for migrants and refugees.

The JWG has promoted various forms of close cooperation that mostly continue today: PCPCU has sent observers to WCC central committee meetings and assemblies and has become a member of the WCC's Faith and Order Commission; Catholic members are included in the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME); a professor for biblical theology is teaching in Bossey and is currently the dean of the institute; PCPCU and WCC prepare the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity together with local partners; mutual staff visits were organized between various Pontifical Councils of the Roman Curia and the WCC and now also the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. The joint committee on Society, Development and Peace (SODEPAX), however, was discontinued in 1980. Pope Paul VI visited the WCC in 1969, encouraging ecumenical collaboration. Pope John Paul II visited the WCC in 1984 and issued in 1995 the Papal encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*, which underlined the irrevocable commitment to ecumenism.

Relationships between WCC member churches and the Roman Catholic Church have improved greatly in many countries and regions of the world. The ecumenical signals given by Pope Francis through his visits, meetings with church leaders and the important apostolic exhortations and encyclicals have improved relationships further and nurtured the understanding that WCC member churches and the Roman Catholic Church are together on a shared pilgrimage of justice and peace. Since the 2013 WCC assembly in Busan, South Korea, all commissions and advisory bodies of the WCC include representatives of the Roman Catholic Church as observers and, as in the case of Faith and Order or CWME, even as members.

Celebrating the Council's 70th Anniversary in 2018

The 70th anniversary of the WCC is an opportunity for member churches to give thanks to God for their common work for Christian unity, for their long pilgrimage of justice and peace. The many events organized throughout the year by the Council, by member churches and by ecumenical partners in some 25 countries are opportunities to celebrate the past and look together towards the future with confidence. "Walking, praying and working together", churches will continue their pilgrimage together, offer a genuine witness to the world and become signs of hope.

Find out more about anniversary celebrations and how you can contribute, individually or collectively at www.oikoumene.org/wcc70.