

SHORT WRITINGS FROM TAIZÉ

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Brother Alois

“Make the Unity
of Christ’s Body
Your Passionate
Concern”

The Path of Communion

Followed at Taizé

The Christ of Communion

If you had asked Brother Roger what the essential of the Christian faith was in his eyes, he might have referred to his mother.¹ She said that the words of Saint John, “God is love,”² were enough for her. For him too, the heart of the Gospel was there. The vision of God as a stern judge had wreaked havoc in the consciences of many. He took the opposite view, affirming that all God can do is love.

He would sometimes tell the young people gathered in Taizé, “If Christ were not risen, we would not be here.” The resurrection is the sign that God loves without limits. It brought together the disciples scattered by Good Friday and it continues to bring Christians together; its first fruit is the new communion born of its mystery.

The centre of our faith is Christ, the Risen Lord, present among us, who is in a personal bond of love with us and who brings us together. Brother Roger called this reality “the Christ of communion.”

In his last book, published a few weeks before his death, Brother Roger wrote: “Christ is communion.... He did not come to earth to start one more religion, but to offer to all a communion in God... ‘Communion’ is one of the most beautiful names of the Church.”³

¹ This text was written at the request of the review *Concilium* and was published in its May 2011 issue, in English, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Croatian. That explains its style, a bit different from the other *Short Writings from Taizé*, particularly all the notes.

² 1 John 4:16.

³ *Glimmers of Happiness* (GIA Publications, 2007), p. 89, 92. Before him, Dietrich Bonhoeffer had already said this in 1928: “Christ is not the bringer of a new religion, but the bringer of God.” (DBW 10, *Barcelona, Berlin, Amerika* 1928-1931, eds. Reinhart Staats & Hans Christoph von Hase, Chr. Kaiser

Personally, I can say that this vision in Taizé of the Church as communion struck me from my first visit to the hill. I was very young; it was in 1970. I was impressed not only by the prayer and the silence, but also by the communion which could be concretely sensed: the Gospel lived out not individually, but in community. That was the first time I ever spoke with Africans. This communion of the universal Church fascinated me. And I can testify to the fact that, as a Catholic, I discovered at Taizé the catholicity of the Church more deeply.

In the early days of our community, writing the Rule of Taizé, Brother Roger had addressed this call to each brother: “Make the unity of the Body of Christ your passionate concern.”⁴ I would like to show here how Taizé was led to live this “passion for the unity of the Body of Christ,” this passion for communion. First of all, what does “the Body of Christ” mean? And why is reconciliation in the Body of Christ so important?

Reconciliation in the Body of Christ

In the letters that Saint Paul addressed to various communities of his day, he refers to the Church as the “Body of Christ,” to try to make them understand the mystery of the unity between Christ and Christians as well as the mystery of the unity between Christians. “You are

Verlagshaus, München 1991, p. 321) Then on July 18, 1944 : “Jesus does not call men to a new religion, but to life.” (*Letters and Papers from Prison*, SCM, 1953, p. 123-124).

⁴ Brother Roger, *The Rule of Taizé* (SPCK, 2012).

one body,” he wrote to the Christians of Corinth, “and this body is Christ, each of you is a part of it.”⁵

“Although we are many, as he says in his letter to the Romans, we are one body in Christ. All of us are members of one another.”⁶

Forming one body in Christ, we belong to each other. “Is Christ divided?”⁷ asks Paul, concerned that Christians in the same community are separating. And he calls for reconciliation.

His words remain so relevant today: you are the Body of Christ, so do not waste so much energy in opposition, sometimes even within your Churches.

Communion Received as a Gift

Emblematic for the life of Brother Roger and our community are these words of Christ: “May all be one! As you, Father, are in me and I in you, may they also be one in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”⁸

Often the words “may all be one” are construed as a command to be put into practice. But they express first of all the gift that Christ gives to humankind: he bears us within himself; he brings us with himself into the communion of the Holy Trinity; he makes us “sharers in the divine nature.”⁹ He does not only pray that all may be one but that they may be one “in us”.

⁵ 1 Corinthians 12:27.

⁶ Romans 12:5.

⁷ 1 Corinthians 1:13.

⁸ John 17:21.

⁹ 2 Peter 1:4.

This communion with God is an exchange. By becoming incarnate, God chooses to take on human frailty. He comes to experience our divisions and our suffering. Christ meets us at the lowest point; he becomes one of us so as better to reach out his hand to us. God welcomes our humanity in him and in return he gives us the Holy Spirit, his own life. The Virgin Mary is the permanent guarantee that this exchange is real; she supports our hope that it will lead to the life of humanity in God.

We can be infinitely grateful to Orthodox theology to have made this clear in such a profound way.

When we discover that communion with God is an exchange, we understand better that reconciliation is not one dimension of the Gospel among others; it is the very heart of Christ’s message. It coincides with what is at the centre of our life as baptized persons – Christ re-establishes mutual trust between God and man, the beginning of a new creation. And this transforms relationships among human beings.

Christ asks in fact that “all” may be one: this gift is not restricted to a few individuals; it is offered to all those who bear the name of Christ, and is intended for all human beings.

God sends into the world those whom he reconciles to himself. If God brings us into communion with him, this communion reflects our way of being with others. Christ makes all the baptized ambassadors of reconciliation in the world.

We are the Body of Christ, not just to be content among ourselves and to withdraw into ourselves, but to

reach out to others. The human body has the vocation of expressing the personality on the outside. Likewise, the Body of Christ has the vocation of expressing that Christ wants to reconcile all humanity.

Why is the reconciliation of Christians so important in the eyes of the apostle Paul? It is not because it would allow us to be stronger all together. No, it is for a deeper and more fundamental reason. Paul explains this when he writes that Christ came to “reconcile all things on earth and in heaven.”¹⁰ It is this vast reconciliation, accomplished by Christ, that is the source of every other reconciliation.

Redemption contains the gift of unity: the unity of man with God, inner unity as the healing of each person, the unity of the whole human family and of all creation. We cannot receive unity with God without receiving unity among all people. The Church’s reason for existing is to be the visible sign, the sacrament of this. “The Church is in Christ like a sacrament, or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race.”¹¹

¹⁰ Colossians 1:20.

¹¹ Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, § 1. This vision of redemption as a gift of unity is rooted in Scripture, in the Johannine writings as well as in those of Saint Paul, notably the Letter to the Ephesians. Irenaeus of Lyons developed this thinking in a beautiful way.

Reconciliation among Christians, a Credible Sign

Today’s youth, with their great thirst for authenticity, make us attentive to this reality: if the commitment of Christians to foster reconciliation in the world is to be credible, it is essential that they seek visible unity among themselves.

Do we know that we have a specific gift, as Christians, to prepare paths of peace and trust on earth? We are the Body of Christ, and a deep communion among those who follow Christ can become an irreplaceable leaven of peace in the one human family. All the baptized are involved, concerned. All together, by our unity, we can be a credible sign of reconciliation among human beings.

Even with our limitations, even where circumstances are not favourable, God makes us creators of reconciliation with him. Going towards others, sometimes empty-handed, listening, trying to understand, and already a paralyzed situation can be transformed. Person-to-person encounters are irreplaceable. Christ sends us out to heal the wounds of division and violence around us.

Our time needs courageous women and men who express the Gospel call to reconciliation by their whole lives. There do not necessarily have to be many of these men and women. Does not the Gospel compare the kingdom of God to a little yeast that leavens all the dough?

There were periods in history when, in the name

of the truth of the Gospel, Christians became divided. Today, on behalf of the truth of the Gospel, we would like to do everything possible to become reconciled. We cannot pass on Christ's message to those around us unless we are together. When Christians are separated, their message becomes inaudible. The communion between us Christians may allow God's Word to speak to people today.

So let us dare to head towards visible unity! Will each Church have the courage not to act without taking the others into account?

Ecumenism and Communion in God

If communion is a gift from God, then ecumenism cannot be primarily a human effort to harmonize different traditions. It must situate us within the truth of the redemption of Christ, who prayed: "My wish is that where I am, they too may be with me."¹² The apostle Paul said this in another way, "Our life is hidden with Christ in God."¹³

The first ecumenical effort is to seek to live in communion with God, in Christ, through the Holy Spirit.¹⁴ It is true that Churches and ecclesial communities

¹² John 17:24.

¹³ Colossians 3:3.

¹⁴ Maurice Zundel wrote: "Jesus is within us. As has been said magnificently, he can be at home within others because he has no home of his own, because all possessing is impossible for him, because he subsists in an infinite giving that embraces all humanity and the entire universe.... It is in a mystical union with Christ that ecumenism

sometimes show different paths to achieving this communion with Christ. However, the more deeply each one belongs to Christ, the more they are enabled to see the others correctly, seeing them as sisters and brothers.¹⁵ We should even go further: recognizing the others as sisters and brothers is the sign that one truly belongs to Christ.

This requires a purification of our way of believing, a "conversion" undertaken over and over again in an *Ecclesia semper reformanda*, a "Church continually in need of reformation."

One of the documents of the "Groupe des Dombes"¹⁶ provided a solid basis for this view by calling for priority to be accorded to baptismal identity over denominational identity. This document explains that, to identify Christian identity, in all the Churches today denominational identity is given priority. People are defined first of all as Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox. The theologians of the Groupe des Dombes show that, in reality, baptismal identity should be given priority; all Christians should first of all define themselves as baptized persons. The document then calls on Churches to enter into a "dynamic process of conversion."¹⁷

can find its ultimate realization. Without this self-emptying that follows from the self-emptying of the Trinity, the self-emptying of the Incarnation, ecumenism is just idle chatter." (1974, in: Marc Donzé, *L'humble présence*, Inédits de Maurice Zundel, Vol. I, 1985, p. 103.)

¹⁵ Dorotheus of Gaza, in the sixth century, described this reality with an image: if God is at the center of a circle, the more the radii approach the center, the closer they come to one another. (*Œuvres Spirituelles*, Sources Chrétiennes, Le Cerf, 1963, p. 285-287.)

¹⁶ A group of French-speaking theologians, Catholics and Protestants, who meet once a year and publish a text on ecumenical questions.

¹⁷ Groupe des Dombes, *Pour la conversion des Églises*, Centurion 1991, pp 11-12.

Reconciliation, an Exchange of Gifts

One sometimes has the impression that, across the centuries, Christians have become used to being divided, as if this were something normal.¹⁸ To prepare reconciliation, Brother Roger taught us brothers to emphasize the best of the different traditions. Then an exchange of gifts can take place: to share what we have received from God, and also to see the gifts that God has placed in others.¹⁹ Without bringing together the gifts of the Holy Spirit in this way, how can Christians witness to unity and peace in the human family?

An exchange of gifts has begun. Through praying together and personal encounters, mutual appreciation has deepened. Many have realized that certain aspects of the Mystery of the faith have been exploited better by another tradition than their own. How can we go further in sharing these treasures? And what are these treasures?

Eastern Christians have focused on the resurrection of Christ, which is already transforming the world. Is it not because of this that many of them managed to survive decades of suffering in past centuries? The East has preserved the teaching of the Church Fathers with great faithfulness. Monasticism, which it gave to the West,

¹⁸ "Easy acceptance of Christian division is, we believe, as great a threat to the integrity of our churches as division itself." (*In One Body through the Cross: The Princeton Proposal for Christian Unity*. Carl E. Braaten & Robert W. Jenson (eds.), Eerdmans 2003, no. 10.)

¹⁹ This expression, "an exchange of gifts," was used many times by Pope John Paul II.

has instilled in the whole Church a life of contemplation. Could Western Christians be more open to these treasures?

The Christians of the Reformation have emphasized certain realities of the Gospel: God offers his love freely; by his Word he encounters anyone who listens to it and puts it into practice; the simple trusting of faith leads to the freedom of the children of God, to the immediacy of a life with God today; singing together internalizes the Word of God. Are not these values, to which the Christians of the Reformation are attached, essential for us all?

The Catholic Church has kept visible, throughout history, the universality of communion in Christ. She has constantly sought a balance between the local Church and the Church universal. One cannot exist without the other. A ministry of communion at all levels has helped to maintain unanimity in the faith. Could not all the baptized go further in a progressive understanding of this ministry?

Brother Roger's Path

Is it because Brother Roger was so consistent with this vision of the Church bringing together all the baptized, and lived it out with all its consequences, that he was recognized by different church leaders as a brother sharing communion in Christ?

In August 2010, five years after Brother Roger's death, Pope Benedict XVI wrote: "May his witness

to an ecumenism of holiness inspire us in our march towards unity.” Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople added: “This search for unity, in joy, humility, love and truth, both in relation to others, ‘sacrament of the brother’ as well as in the relationship with God, ‘sacrament of the altar’, sums up the essence of this approach, the path of Taizé.” And the Patriarch of Moscow, Kirill, commented: “Combining fidelity to the teaching of the Holy Fathers with creative adaptation to the needs of today, in a missionary ministry among youth, characterized the path of Brother Roger and that of the community founded by him.” For his part, the Secretary General of the World Council of Churches, Olav Fykse Tveit, recalled that what Brother Roger has done “has inspired churches throughout the world.”²⁰

Brother Roger lived in Christ. Is that what enabled him to discern the presence of Christ in others? He did not let himself be brought to a halt by the splits between different tendencies. For example, at the Vatican Council, where he was present as an observer, many were surprised that he was able to establish ties of friendship with both Cardinal Ottaviani and Dom Helder Camara.²¹ He discovered Christ in the baptized of all denominations. He even saw as “bearers of Christ” women and men who, without professing an explicit faith, were witnesses to charity and peace: some of them, he wrote, “go before us into the Kingdom.”²²

²⁰ The full text of these messages can be found on the Taizé website: www.taize.fr

²¹ Two men known for having, at the Second Vatican Council, very different and sometimes opposed positions.

²² Matthew 21:31, quoted in *Dynamique du provisoire*, Les Presses de Taizé, 1965, p. 55.

In the course of his journey, Brother Roger never worried that his choices would cause him to lose his identity. He saw the identity of a Christian above all in communion with Christ, working itself out in the communion among all those who belong to Christ. He undertook a step that had no precedent since the Reformation, going to the point of saying, “I found my own Christian identity by reconciling within myself the faith of my origins with the mystery of the Catholic faith, without breaking fellowship with anyone.”²³ And sometimes he would add: “... and with the Orthodox faith,” since he felt so close to the Orthodox Churches.

Entering into communion with others without breaking with his origins: since this approach was so new, it was easy to misinterpret it and overlook its significance.

Creating a Parable of Communion

When he was still very young, Brother Roger had the intuition that a life of community made up of men constantly searching for reconciliation could become a sign. That is the primary vocation of Taizé, to constitute what he called “a parable of communion.”

But monastic life had disappeared from the Churches of the Reformation. So, without repudiating his origins, he created a community which had its roots in the undivided Church beyond Protestantism, and which by its very existence was inextricably linked to the Catholic and Orthodox tradition.

²³ *God Is Love Alone* (GIA Publications, 2003), p. 54.

Brother Roger was convinced that such a community could give visible expression to the unity of the Body of Christ, which not only lies before us as a goal, but which already exists in God. The Church is divided, but in its depths it is undivided. In the heart of God it is one. So it is up to us to create places where this unity can emerge and be manifested.

In a book about our community, the Orthodox theologian Olivier Clement wrote a few lines that have helped us to understand our own life better: “There is only one Church, and this One church is the secret bedrock of all the churches, and therefore unity is not something to be built but something to be discovered... a re-emergence of the undivided Church which is still, in spite of all kinds of tensions and problems about identity, the crucial phenomenon of our time.” Then Olivier Clement applied this thinking to our community: “The parable of Taizé is to show that the divided Church remains the One Church. People crucify the Body of Christ in trying to divide it, but still they are not able to divide it. For in its depths the Church is one.”²⁴

Brother Roger lived a life so deeply rooted in the undivided Church that, born in a Church of the Reformation, he wanted the community he created to anticipate communion with the Catholic Church and with the Orthodox Churches.

Our community sought early on to express a communion with the Orthodox Church. In 1965, Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople sent monks to Taizé to share monastic life with us for several years. Bonds of

²⁴ *Taizé, A Meaning to Life* (GIA Publications, 1997), p. 11-12, 35.

friendship and trust with the Orthodox Churches have become deeper and deeper, until the present day.

When the first Catholic brothers entered our community at the end of the 1960s, the question of anticipating a communion with the Catholic Church became even more urgent within the community: how to overcome the barrier of separation between these two traditions?

For Brother Roger in his personal life, gradually entering into full communion with the Catholic Church became a reality in two ways, by receiving the Eucharist and by recognizing the need for a ministry of unity exercised by the Bishop of Rome. He did not see this as expressing an “ecumenism of return to the fold,” because in his eyes, beginning with John XXIII and Vatican II, the Catholic Church had welcomed the basic demands of the Reformation: the priority of the grace of God, freedom of conscience, Christ-centred faith and the emphasis on the Bible. And he would have been glad to learn that in 2008 the Synod of Bishops in Rome, devoted to the Word of God, recalled that two realities already united all Christians – Baptism and the Word of God.

This path of Brother Roger’s is a delicate and demanding one, and we have not finished exploring it. In his steps, at Taizé, we want to anticipate reconciliation in our lives by living as people who are already reconciled, and we hope that this experience can help to prepare theological developments. In the history of the Church, has not lived-out faith always preceded the theological expression of it? In the future, we will continue to rely on two steps taken by our community at the beginning of the 1970s:

– The first step: since 1973, with the approval and encouragement of the bishop of Autun, the diocese in which Taizé is located, we have all been receiving the communion of the Catholic Church. It was the only possibility given to us to take communion together. The progress of ecumenical theology, particularly the work of our Brother Max on the meaning of memorial, allowed us to come to a common understanding of the Eucharist.

On May 24, 1969, Brother Roger wrote in his journal: “At the present time I often go to the small village church, close to the reserved Sacrament. There is a presence there, witnessed to by the faith of the Catholic Church since the first centuries.”²⁵

– The second step: several years previously, during the yearly council-meeting in 1969, the brothers had found that the mere presence of Catholic brothers in the community led them “to live ever more an anticipation of unity by remaining in communion with the one who exercises the ministry of the servant of the servants of God.”²⁶ Brother Roger often spoke at that time of the role of a universal pastor in fostering Christian unity, and sometimes he quoted the young Luther’s appeal inviting those who had separated from the Roman Church to “run towards, not away, to weep, urge, persuade and set everything in motion”²⁷. Our community had become convinced that the reconciliation of non-Catholics

²⁵ Festival Without End: Journal 1969-1970 (Mowbray, 1983), p. 34.

²⁶ Council of the Taizé Community, *L’unanimité de notre foi*, September 1969.

²⁷ “(...) auch wenn du am äußersten Ende des Meeres wärest, herbeieilen, weinen, zu bewegen, zu überführen suchen, ja alles tun” (D. Martin-Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe; Weimar 1883ff.; WA II, p. 605.), quoted by Brother Roger in *Dynamique du provisoire*, Les Presses de Taizé, 1965, p. 84.

with the Church of Rome would not be accomplished by indefinitely setting conditions, but by helping it to evolve from within. The twentieth century has shown how the Petrine ministry has been able to change. John Paul II himself has appealed to non-Catholics to assist with this evolution.²⁸

The brothers in our community who come from Protestant families accept these two steps without repudiating their backgrounds, but as a broadening of their faith. The brothers from Catholic families find their faith enriched by opening themselves, in line with Vatican II, to the questions and gifts of the Churches of the Reformation. This has become quite natural for us.

If these efforts sometimes involve limitations and sacrifices – can there be any reconciliation without sacrifices? – the broadening of a life of communion is incomparably more important.

²⁸ John Paul II wrote these words, impressive by their humility, “It is out of a desire to obey the will of Christ truly that I recognize that as Bishop of Rome I am called to exercise that ministry... I insistently pray the Holy Spirit to shine his light upon us, enlightening all the Pastors and theologians of our Churches, that we may seek – together, of course – the forms in which this ministry may accomplish a service of love recognized by all concerned. This is an immense task, which we cannot refuse and which I cannot carry out by myself. Could not the real but imperfect communion existing between us persuade Church leaders and their theologians to engage with me in a patient and fraternal dialogue on this subject, a dialogue in which, leaving useless controversies behind, we could listen to one another, keeping before us only the will of Christ for his Church?” Encyclical *Ut unum sint*, 1995, § 95-96.

A Period of Transition towards Reconciliation

Week after week, we welcome to Taizé youth from all the countries of Europe, and also from other continents, with all their differences. Prayer three times a day brings us together in the presence of Christ, and in praying together, the Holy Spirit already unites us. The biblical teaching given each day to the young people enables them to go to the wellsprings common to all. And we reflect with them about how to continue this search in their everyday life.²⁹

We try to help the young people glimpse “the one Church of Christ”³⁰ in its visibility while respecting the traditions of the different Churches, and this necessarily involves a tension.³¹ We find that many young people, after having spent time in Taizé, are more active in their Church of origin, while at the same time having acquired a keener sense of the universal Church.³²

²⁹ These young people are growing up in a fragmented society, which does not offer clear points of reference. Once back home, they are faced with life-choices which are often difficult. In the domain of ethics as well, the divisions between Christians do not help young people find ways of living out the gospel in their personal lives. In this delicate area, rather than defining positions too quickly resolved, which distance them from one another, could not Christians take more time for dialogue and to look for a common path?

³⁰ Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, § 8.

³¹ Concerning the Eucharist, we give the young people the possibility to receive communion in their own traditions. A Catholic Mass is celebrated every day. The Orthodox liturgy is celebrated when there are Orthodox participants who come with priests. When there are Anglican, Lutheran or Presbyterian groups, they are invited to celebrate a Eucharist according to their tradition.

³² During his visit to Taizé in 1986, Pope John Paul II alluded to this when he said, “By desiring to be yourselves a ‘parable of community’, you will help all whom you meet to be faithful to their

We do not claim to have found the solution. Our ways of doing things are imperfect. We know that our situation is provisional, awaiting a fully realized unity. The visible character of the unity that we attempt to live does not resolve all the issues. But we are trying to enter into an ongoing process of reconciliation. We would like it to lead separated Christians to learn that they belong to one another, to purify their respective traditions, to distinguish between the Tradition and traditions that are only customs, to go forward in an ecumenism which is not content to keep Christians on parallel tracks. In this way a period of transition towards reconciliation could be begun.

Eucharist and Service

The fellowship offered by Christ makes his disciples men and women with a universal outlook. It stimulates them to reach out to others, to be attentive to the weakest, to those who are poorer than they are, and also to seekers of God belonging to another religion or to those without any reference to God. In many places, Christians of different denominations live this openness together.

It is fortunate that, on Holy Thursday, we are invited to celebrate simultaneously the institution of the Eucharist and the foot-washing. These two acts are closely linked. Through them, perhaps better than with words, Jesus shows what lies at the centre of the Gospel:

denominational ties, the fruit of their education and their choice in conscience, but also to enter more and more deeply into the mystery of communion that the Church is in God’s plan.”

“... having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the very end.”³³ The celebration of the Eucharist invites to the washing of feet – going like Jesus to the very end in serving others, loving as he loved.

Brother Roger often repeated: “Christ is united to every human being without exception.” He held in his heart all human beings of all nations, especially the poorest, young people, children. This vision of universal communion has led us to send brothers in small groups to share the lives of the most destitute in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and also to try and forge links between cultures and peoples.

These brothers are not equipped to change countless situations of distress. But for some of them, remaining each day before the Eucharist is a source of life that allows them, by their mere presence, to “wash the feet” of the people in their neighbourhood. And gradually modest initiatives of solidarity arise. They are only signs, but they can lead the way to Christ, who transfigures humanity and who opens, at the heart of the world, a horizon of hope.

For Brother Roger, and for us brothers, the Church is herself when she loves as Jesus loved, and draws all the consequences from this. Brother Roger once wrote these words that we want to meditate constantly, again and again:

“When tirelessly the Church listens, heals and reconciles, it becomes what it is at its most luminous – a communion of love, of compassion, of consolation, a limpid reflection of the Risen Christ. Never distant,

³³ John 13:1.

never on the defensive, freed from all forms of severity, the Church can let the humble trusting of faith shine right into our human hearts.”³⁴

Just as Christ came “to gather into unity the dispersed children of God,”³⁵ it is necessary in our eyes to be united in him. Christ is the Good Shepherd for all. He is also the Gate, to the Father and to others. Will we go through this gate to enter the Father’s house where we are together with everyone? A new dynamic process of reconciliation would then impel our Churches forward, filled with the joy of Christ and the trust that the Holy Spirit will show us the future step by step.

*O God, we praise you for the multitudes of women, men, young people, and even children who, across the earth, are striving to be witnesses to peace, reconciliation, and communion. In the steps of the holy witnesses to Christ of all times, from the apostles and the Virgin Mary to the believers of today, enable us to surrender ourselves to you in trust and in love.*³⁶

(prayer by Brother Roger)

³⁴ *Peace of Heart in All Things*, (GIA Publications, 2004), p. 52.

³⁵ John 11:52.

³⁶ *Glimmers of Happiness*, (GIA Publications, 2007), p. 110.

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