

Tuesday 18 January 2022

Today is Tuesday the 18 January, the beginning of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, in the 2nd week of Ordinary Time.

One Hope Project sings, 'My Soul Rests'. As you begin to settle into prayer, take a moment to become aware of God's loving gaze upon you, and God's presence with you now...

Today's reading is from the Gospel of Mark.

Mark 2:23-28

One sabbath he was going through the cornfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, 'Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?' And he said to them, 'Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? He entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions.' Then he said to them, 'The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath.'

Today marks the beginning of prayer for Christian Unity. Is this something you normally mark? Spend a few moments reflecting on your own experience of Christian unity...

In the reading that you have just heard, Jesus' opponents are berating him because his disciples "are doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath". Do you recognise echoes of this kind of "religious" thinking in your own experience? Either from others, or from yourself?

Perhaps you've found that religious people are too ready to criticise others... Could this perhaps be one of the reasons why the Christian Church is so divided?

Now listen again to the reading of the passage: do you hear anything in it that points to a solution to the problem of Christian divisions?

Finally, what are the thoughts that you feel rising in your heart at this time? Can you bring them together in a prayer? What would you like to say to God today?

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

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