

13th Assembly of the CEC

MEDITATION BY BROTHER ALOIS OF TAIZÉ

Prayer at the Grand Temple, Saturday, 18 July 2009

I would like to thank the CEC for inviting us to participate in this meeting and to lead a time of prayer. We are grateful for this mark of confidence for the ecumenical commitment of our community and our pastoral work with young people.

A Taizé we want to do all we can for the young people we welcome to deepen their roots in the faith tradition of their church family and at the same time to discover a wider vision of the Church as the communion of all the baptized.

These days, you are trying to discover a clearer vision of the future of our Churches. It can only come from Christ himself and the Holy Spirit. The Gospel that we just read (Luke 9:28-36) is illuminating in this regard.

On the Mount of the Transfiguration, Jesus was praying in great intimacy with God. Then a voice from heaven was heard: "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him!"

That voice that Jesus alone had heard at his baptism now speaks to the disciples and to us all. The relationship of love that Jesus has with God his Father is offered to us as well. The mystery of Christ can become the mystery of our lives. We too are the beloved child of God.

"Listen to him!" said the voice from heaven. Our vision of life, of the future, depends on this listening, this attention to the continual presence of the beloved Son: through the Holy Spirit, he speaks to us.

Listening to Christ does not automatically make our projects to animate the life of our churches more successful. If we choose to give priority to this listening, we may become even more vulnerable because we shall see our shortcomings, not only our personal shortcomings but those of our Churches and communities.

But an inner determination will grow, and with it a flexibility to abandon ourselves more easily to the breath of the Holy Spirit. We will be more able to discern God's presence among us and to follow his will more courageously.

Peter, James and John were together on the mountain. Through them, the whole Church was represented.

If we, too, meet together more often to listen, in a humble common prayer, to the voice of the beloved Son, perhaps we shall understand it better. The Holy Spirit could act better and – who knows? – might even surprise us, suggesting new initiatives.

We can only communicate the hope of Christ, which was at the heart of your reflection on the first day, to those around us, in Europe and beyond, if we are together. In the past, in the name of the truth of the Gospel, Christians separated. Today, in the name of the truth of the Gospel, we are asked to be reconciled.

How can we be credible when speaking of a God of love if we remain separated? Let us not waste so much energy in oppositions, sometimes even within our Churches. When Christians are separated, the message of the Gospel becomes inaudible.

According to our common faith, in Christ God has reconciled humanity to himself: he welcomes us and communicates his own life to us. In this sense, reconciliation is not one

dimension of the Gospel among others; it is the very heart of the Gospel. It is the restoration of trust between God and humanity, and this transforms the relations between human beings.

Our search for reconciliation can only be similar to God's approach to us. It means going towards one another to make an exchange of gifts possible.

So let me repeat here once again a concrete proposal that we are already trying to put into practice with young people: inviting once a month, or at least once every three months, the inhabitants of our cities or our regions to a vigil of reconciliation. For years now many Christians have been celebrating the week of unity once a year. Let us dare to go further!

For an exchange of gifts among Christians to become a reality, let us meet together more often in God's presence, listening to his Word, in silence and in praise. Coming together in prayer vigils is already a way of anticipating unity.

Through a simple prayer, the Holy Spirit already unites us. Humbly, in such a prayer, we learn to belong to one another. And this can undoubtedly also help theological dialogue to go forward.

In this way we will help God's people to discern better what is at the heart of the Christian tradition. This unchanging heart is distinct from human traditions and habits that each of our Churches are attached to, but that we must not require from other Churches as a condition for being in communion.

Then the desire will grow to do together all that can be done. What unites us is more important than what separates us: we often say these words in our meetings, but we must let this reality be reflected in our lives!

To prepare such vigils, in many places young people set out, going towards others, towards another parish, another movement or group, and even inviting young people who are searching for faith.

Such vigils of reconciliation can overcome the division of our societies. We can bring together people who normally do not meet, such as foreigners and local residents. We can prepare such gatherings in significant places: on the border between two countries, in a prison, in an area suffering from violence, with abandoned children...

Let us dare to listen to the risen Christ and, through our lives, he will be able to kindle a hope for the world. Together our witness to Christ will acquire new credibility, and we will contribute to a civilization marked more by trust than by mistrust.