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# **Christians and Muslims: Praying together?**

## **Reflections and Texts**

Study paper - April 2003  
prepared by the "Islam in Europe" Committee  
of the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE)  
and of the Conference of European Churches (CEC)



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# **Christians and Muslims: Praying together?**

## **Reflections and Texts**

### **Preface**

Christians living together with Muslims have long been exercised by the question of whether or not there is a place for common prayer. The Islam in Europe-Committee of CEC and CCEE has sought to address this issue. In preparing these reflections the Committee discovered very different attitudes and experiences across Europe. Since we cannot speak of a consensus on this issue, we have decided to present a provisional survey of the present situation to illustrate the diversity of responses and theological thinking and to encourage every church to take up a position.

### **General Reflections**

Living together is more than physical proximity. It is not enough to know about our neighbours, where they have come from, to which religion or sect they belong. Living together includes sharing the highs and lows of human experience: Giving and receiving hospitality, laughing and crying together, a desire to praise God and to mourn together. For these reasons praying together is a reality, often spontaneously, performed by individual members of different churches as well as by informal gatherings of Christians and Muslims together.

Nevertheless, this topic is controversial. Prayer across Christian traditions can be difficult enough, even more when Christians and Muslims come together. Therefore the materials we have collected may only apply to some parts of Europe, especially to Western Europe. The examples we cite come from France, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, Great Britain, Spain ... They show a series of snapshots as people respond tentatively and experimentally to an emerging new religious reality in Western Europe.

Describing this situation includes critical observations: There can be a mismatch between informal words of church leaders (e.g. at opening ceremonies of conferences) and practical behaviour in the same churches. For example: Muslims can sometimes be addressed as brothers and sisters, or Muslims and Christians alike are seen as children of God. But what this means practically has not been thought through, still less its practical implications for a shared spirituality. In reality there are many examples of events where Muslims and Christians have been together in a self-consciously religious way, e.g. at funerals, in praying for peace, in joint studies of scriptures, but seldom do we find a theological justification for this by church authorities or Muslims.

### **Challenging Occasions for Prayers of Muslims and Christians**

The situations that require prayer are usually not planned but rather responses to public and civic life. When a mining accident involves Christian and Muslim fatalities alike, any public commemoration must needs involve both faiths. When emotions are running high following a

national disaster or in the midst of an international conflict, Christians and Muslims may wish to demonstrate their solidarity through prayers to comfort the bereaved or for peace. They share the same concern, but seek to respond respecting their own integrity.

In Great Britain a mayor appointment is usually followed by a civic service in a cathedral or local church. If it happens that a Muslim is elected mayor how and where is the religious component of the ceremony to be celebrated? On the other hand, in Russia even on the occasion of interreligious meetings, which are increasing with the public recognition of religious identity, such civic religion is not deemed appropriate.

In primary schools the beginning and ending of a school year may be celebrated with prayers and songs: could one exclude Muslim children from such celebrations? And if they attend should they not be allowed to say a prayer or sing a hymn in their own religious tradition? There are religious feasts to which Muslims may invite their Christian friends and vice versa: Can one accept or extend such an invitation oneself?

It happens that Christians and Muslims marry. If they ask for a religious rite to mark this event what might we do respecting the religious integrity of all? If in such a mixed marriage a relative dies, can contributions from both traditions be included in a commemorative act? In Turkey it happens that Muslim neighbours come into Christian houses to pray for the deceased. What prayers will children in mixed marriages learn and use in the presence of the parent from different religious tradition?

These occasions, whether political, civic, social or private, have their own dynamic and require some structured response. On the other hand one can ask: Is it forbidden for Christians to attend Muslim prayer or to pray in the presence of Muslims? There have been public ceremonies like the opening of a working session period of UN where religious leaders have been invited to speak and to pray: Should Christians refuse to do so? The example of Pope John Paul II inviting 1986 different religions for the Assisi Prayer Meeting motivated many groups to prepare similar encounters and to create many forms of spiritual gatherings. And if Christians and Muslims come together to discuss in seminars how to overcome hatred and hostility so to achieve reconciliation, drawing on their faiths to enable understanding and peace, is prayer to be excluded?

In reality, there are numerous situations where Muslims and Christians already have prayed together. It is not churches that have taken the initiative, but Christians, singly or in groups. A brochure produced by the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches<sup>1</sup> captures the reality well when it points to such actions embodying a spiritual exploration<sup>2</sup>: churches may not officially have given advice, but parishes and groups feel the need to respond to such challenges in social or personal life.

### **Theological Reflections**

One well-known phrase is often quoted: „We have come together here to pray, but we have not come here to pray together.“ This is said to avoid or reject any thought of syncretism. This may sound overly sophisticated. It reflects the necessity of not hiding real differences while

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<sup>1</sup> Schweizerischer Evangelischer Kirchenbund, Interreligiöses Gebet. Eine Orientierungshilfe für evangelische Kirchen in der Schweiz, Bern, 1998

<sup>2</sup> op.cit., p. 35

acknowledging the importance of prayer. However, we need to remember that common prayer remains a controversial issue even amongst Protestant theologians.

In a German Bavarian paper<sup>3</sup> distinctions are drawn between "interreligious" and "multireligious" prayer. *Multireligious* prayer is a gathering at which different religions prepare an order in which each religious tradition present prays in their own distinctive way in a serial manner. *Interreligious* prayer on the other hand occurs when the different religions subsume their distinctive idioms in common expressions mingling their perceptions of God. The result of the latter is one common prayer, the former is a chain of several different prayers.

There are several publications which offer theological reflection about praying together with Muslims. In a German Rhineland paper<sup>4</sup> it is pointed out that negative theological criticisms about Islam in the past have translated into assessments of Islam as not simply a post-Christian religion but one embodying an anti-Christian attitude. But church attitudes change, as seen in the decisions of Vatican II. In the course of recent Protestant thinking the relation to other religions can be described in a new way. To start with, Christians and Muslims both say that there is only one God. Christians learn from the Bible that God wants salvation for all people. God is acting not only amongst Christians, but also in the entire world. Thus, He is acting even through non-Christian religions. We have to accept that Muslims in their own self-understanding refer to the God of the Bible. Therefore we have to make clear that as Christians we can only worship the Triune God, the Creator through the Son in the Holy Spirit. At the same time we have to acknowledge that Muslims pray to the Merciful God, while not accepting our Trinitarian understanding. Nevertheless, we cannot condemn Muslim prayer but have to leave it up to God to decide about the right way of praying. For this reason Christians cannot join in a Muslim liturgical prayer (*salat*), but can attend respectfully such Muslim prayer.

In a similar way, an orientation booklet produced by the Evangelical Church in Germany asks whether a joint prayer is possible given different way of thinking about God<sup>5</sup>. The perceptions of God undeniably are different. However, we cannot force the Spirit of God to conform to our theological thinking! Therefore the possibility of praying together does not depend on theoretical agreement about a common perception of God. God's reality goes far beyond our human understanding. Prayer with the other - without glossing over real differences - may generate new insights. On the other hand, the Spirit of God binds us to God's Word. Because of this, prayer must not be instrumental, recruited for worldly purposes. In the end, it is to the grace and mercy of God that Christian and Muslim address their prayers. So we trust in Him that He can bring together Christians and Muslims if they pray in deep concern and great gratitude.

The Bose Meeting of World Council of Churches and Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (1997) in the Final Document looked at the theological horizons of prayer. In

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<sup>3</sup> Landeskirchenrat der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in Bayern, *Multireligiöses Beten. Orientierungshilfe für die Gemeinde*, Munich 1992

<sup>4</sup> Evangelische Kirche im Rheinland, *Christen und Muslime nebeneinander vor dem einen Gott. Zur Frage gemeinsamen Betens*, Düsseldorf 1998

<sup>5</sup> Rat der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland, *Zusammenleben mit Muslimen in Deutschland. Gestaltung der christlichen Begegnung mit Muslimen*, Gütersloh 2000, p. 43ff.

reflecting the universal phenomenon of prayer it was stated (using the expression interreligious in a different way): „We see interreligious prayer as a sharing in the »groaning of the whole creation«, longing for the fullness of salvation and liberation, partaking in the groaning of the Spirit«, the Spirit who sustains us in our weakness since we do not know how to pray.

Interreligious prayer is an expression of the coming together of all the »scattered children of God«. It is a sharing in the common journey towards the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God. ... Prayer together is an invitation to friendship, to share the reality of a loving God who is our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. It is an invitation to enter into the mystery of God which is beyond human intellectual grasp and understanding.“<sup>6</sup>

Such experimentation with and development of common rituals has been a response to our shared life rather than any artificial religious exercise. One has to bear in mind that rituals carry a range of meaning, varying in significance from traditional ceremony to sacrament. Clearly, sacraments cannot be shared with Muslims.

From an external perspective, especially in a secularised society, religion and its practices are given a minor role, whereas within the context of religious conviction rituals cannot be neglected. In most western European countries religion no longer has a ruling function but a serving one. Jesus as a servant is the example how to behave in such circumstances. He encountered several non-Jewish people and, far from rejecting them, helped them. This must be our model for how to behave today.

### **An Orthodox View**

The Orthodox Church's theology is permeated with the conviction that the Holy Spirit works in ways transcending human thought and imagination and, therefore, cannot be confined within any theological system, nor described with any finality nor anticipated in predictable ways. Everything ennobling and essentially good is the effect of the action of the Holy Spirit, whose fruit – “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Galatians 5,22) - is essential to any harmonious existence. From this assurance of St Paul we may conclude that wherever this fruit is found there we may discern the action of the Holy Spirit. And, at first glance, such fruit can be found in the life of many Muslims.

However, even today, Christian and Muslim inhabitants of the traditionally Orthodox regions of Europe do not have the opportunity of common prayer. This is due to three factors:

1. Historical context: Orthodox nations and Muslims had for centuries the misfortune to coexist as conqueror and conquered. In Southeastern Europe the faithful of both religions lived together, knowing the limits of their possible interaction. This historic memory continues to shape relations today. There is, of course, mutual respect, but there is also a definite distance to enable religious obligations to be carried out and this distance is preserved in interpersonal contacts. For example, mixed marriages are extremely rare and if they ever occur, the wedding ceremony is a civil one, while spouses decide about the upbringing of the children. Religious leaders have excellent communication between themselves as do the laity. In religious feasts gifts between

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<sup>6</sup> Pontificium Consilium pro Dialogo inter Religiones, Interreligious Prayer, Pro Dialogo & Current Dialogue, Bulletin 98, 1998/2, p. 237-243; here: p. 240.



Christians and Muslims are common; in addition, Muslims watch (and in a way participate at) Easter festivities and Christians at Ramadan. Yet limits are never transgressed, and this “participation” is done solely for social reasons, since people are well aware of the differences of faith and the approach to salvation.

2. There is no relevant decision of a Pan-orthodox Authority to allow common prayer with Muslims.

3. Theological reasons that are fully understood and accepted by the vast majority of the members of the Orthodox Church have kept and continue to keep Christians and Muslims apart. Islamic disavowals of the Incarnation of the Word of God and the faith in the Holy Trinity make a shared approach in prayer difficult.

These reasons are well known and result in a reserve on both sides. Every exception merely verifies the previous rules.

Nevertheless, researchers and Church scholars claim that some common moments of prayer may be possible if they are separate from the frames of worship, given the similarities existing between some prayers from Orthodox services and some Islamic prayer texts.

### **Experiences and Reactions**

A body of experience with and responses to common prayers and rituals within Europe is emerging. Those who attend such rituals and prayers mostly react positively. Negative reactions usually have to await the publication of such events. In the CIBEDO periodical after publication of a report of Christian-Muslim wedding the Roman Catholic Church authorities in Germany objected to this ceremony referring to the church laws. In Berlin the Protestant Church administration criticised a pastor after newspapers reported on a Christian-Muslim wedding ceremony which involved an Imam. This is a new aspect of the problem of mixed marriages.

In visiting Mosques and Churches each group often shares aspects of their tradition appropriate to the occasion with the other. However, such activities can be ambiguous: is the call for prayer merely illustrative or a means of mission? What are we to make of the spontaneous singing of spiritual Muslim songs in a church by Muslims, or Christian hymns sung by Christians on a mosque visit? In the opening ceremony of a new purpose-built mosque a Church choir was invited to sing in the programme. No objection was heard in this case.

Several texts have been published especially from the evangelical side critical of common prayer in general. The Lausanne movement published a critical commentary to the German Rhineland paper on common prayer. The objection was that no distinction had been drawn between the act of God in creation and history on one side (common to Christians and Muslims alike) and in salvation on the other side (which is special for Christians). The Lausanne movement commented that „According to the Bible the one God revealing himself finally in Jesus Christ excludes different perceptions of God. Muslims who do not believe in Jesus Christ do not pray in a different way to the one God, but miss the only God and worship a human perception of God, pray to a none-God. Therefore Christians and Muslims can neither pray side by side nor together to the one God, the Father of Jesus Christ.” The theological understanding of God is in this case the criterion for the decision whether a

common prayer of Muslims is possible or not. In another article it is said „The »common« prayer to the »same« God is the first step in the direction of syncretism.”

### **Difficulties, Problems, Discussions**

There have been discussions about appropriate places for common prayer: should they take place in churches or mosques or in neutral places, such as schools, open air sites, hospitals? The local situation usually determines location. It is not impossible to meet in churches or mosques, but this has to be negotiated and agreed upon in advance by all groups.

Other questions often asked in this field are: have we to exclude confessional parts in prayers and if so, does not this amount to betraying our faith? The answers given usually urge sensitivity, boldness - do not restrict your faith to expressions that are acceptable to your partners - and seek to reassure that such actions are not tantamount to betrayal.

Since interreligious prayer can neither be drawn directly from biblical traditions nor from Christian dogmatic traditions, where does the imperative come from to engage in it at all? The following factors have to be taken into account:

- a) The actual situation has to be seen in the perspective of reconciliation, not aggression.
- b) Love of neighbour and respect must shape Christian responses.
- c) God's action outside the church has to be taken into account.
- d) God is greater (Deus semper maior).
- e) The ecumenical rule has to be practised: do together with others whatever you can, but do not neglect the differences.<sup>7</sup>

In seeking to discern the way ahead there are at least three components in relation to common prayer: a sign of respect, an expression of common concern and an open acknowledgement of differences.

### **What to bear in Mind**

For all Christian-Muslim encounter mutual respect is necessary. All the group, not only the leaders, must have some basic knowledge of the religious principles of the other party. This knowledge must be accompanied by sensitivity and tolerance, which allows different convictions to co-exist. Over and above such attitudes, specific information is often necessary e.g. the need to remove shoes on entering a mosque etc.

To summarise: in planning common prayer or common rituals one has to bear in mind:

Sensitive preparations involving all participant bodies.

The juridical aspect has to be taken into account. Therefore the participation and approval of the appropriate Christian or Muslim organisation has to be sought.

It is helpful to provide clear structures.

The different aims and topics of a prayer meeting should be discussed beforehand. Subjects could be: reconciliation, overcoming violence and racism, integration of minorities, solving social tensions, ecological crisis as violating God's good creation.

Check the acceptability of material in advance so as to avoid the unwitting use of offensive or inappropriate texts, prayers or handouts.

Make sure all parties know about and agree to any additional events such as book expositions, concerts etc.

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<sup>7</sup> Schweizerischer Evangelischer Kirchenbund, op.cit., p.35

**Additions of local Churches**  
(space for text prepared by local churches)

## APPENDIX: Models/Examples/Useful Pieces

(Original French and the Sufi texts in German are not translated)

### a) Official regulations

Spain: Order for a Roman-Catholic Wedding Ceremony for Christian-Muslim couples  
(Approved by Bishops' Conference)

Germany: Order for a Protestant Wedding Service for Christian-Muslim couples  
(Approved by all regional synods of the EKD)

Italy: Order for a Roman-Catholic Wedding Celebration for Christian-Muslim couples

### b) Orders

#### Order of a wedding service ,

taken from „Couples islamo-chrétiens ? Promesse ou Impasse”. This order is a proposal based on Roman-catholic material prepared by Secrétariat pour les relations avec l'Islam: *Les mariages islamo-chrétiens, Paris, 1986*

1. Organ prelude (as couple enter)
2. Welcome and Opening
3. Introduction: e.g. Psalm 127: 1; 128: 1-4
4. Hymn
5. Prayer
6. Bible Reading:
  - a) e.g. Marc 10: 6-9,  
*short organ recital*
  - b) e.g. 1 Corinthians 12: 31 –13: 8  
*short organ recital*
7. Sermon
8. Interlude
9. Exhortation (about marriage) of the priest
10. Declaration of the couple:
  - a) declaration of the Muslim bridegroom
  - b) declaration of the Christian bride
11. Marriage vows of the couple
12. Exchanging of rings
13. Consecration of marriage prayer
14. Organ interlude
15. Presentation of a bible
16. Intercessory prayer
17. Hymn
18. Blessing
19. Organ recital (as couple leave)

## **Order of a Christian-Muslim common prayer**

(Closing ceremony of an interreligious meeting)

Lighting of candles at Quran and Bible

Opening: Reading of Al Fatiha

Story from the life of the Prophet

Song about the appearance of the Prophet

8 Prayer-parts for meditation

The Our Father with Muslim commentaries

Ritual of sharing bread and dates

(Believers, Christians and Muslims, gathered in a circle passed a loaf of bread, breaking a piece of it and presenting it to the neighbour, and a plate of dates. They shared the food and wished each other „Peace” „As-Salaam”)

Benediction

## **Dismissal ceremony** at the end of a school year

Welcome by Protestant Pastor and Turkish teacher

Song of Yunus Emre (In paradise all rivers stream shouting Allah)

Meditation with Psalm 91 (Street picture)

Christian hymn: I wish someone were going with me

Meditation with Matth 6, 34

Christian hymn: Lord, You have called us

Sermon

Christian hymn: We have seen God's footprints

Muslim prayer (Arabic)

Muslim hymn (Turkish)

Lord's prayer

Benediction

## **c) Prayers**

**Prayer in a wedding liturgy** from Presbyterian background (Source: Interfaith Marriage, Presbyterian Church, USA, after 1990)

Let us pray. O God, whose name is love, we pray for all who love: when love dawns, when love flowers, when love matures, and also when it grows cold or just old, and when it disappears. We pray especially for each to have the grace: to accept the other person as he or she is, to take nothing for granted and always to resist the temptation of manipulating and denying the other's freedom. We pray that they may be so dominated by a sense of concern and responsibility for those they love: that they may be hurt but not withdraw, that they may repay rejections with acceptance without being too virtuous about it, that they may give of themselves unconditionally and that tenderness may always be the dominant note in the music of their love. Amen.

## **Children's Prayers**

### **Prière du matin** (Morning prayer)

Mon Dieu, je te remercie  
d'avoir si bien dormi.  
Je t'offre le rêve que j'ai fait.

Mon Dieu, je te remercie  
pour cette journée qui commence.  
Je te l'offre comme un bouquet de fleurs.

Mon Dieu, je te remercie  
pour toutes les bonnes choses de ma vie.  
Aide-moi à les partager.

Mon Dieu, je te remercie  
de ton amour pour nous.  
Apprends-nous à mieux t'aimer.

### **Prière avant le repas** (Prayer before meals)

Seigneur, nous t'offrons cette nourriture  
que nous allons prendre.  
Qu'elle profite à notre corps!  
Qu'elle nous aide à mieux te servir!

Que la joie de ce repas  
soit aussi celle de beaucoup  
d'autres familles sur la terre!

Que tous ceux qui ont beaucoup  
pensent à partager avec ceux  
qui n'ont pas assez!

Gloire à toi, Seigneur!

### **Prière après le repas** (Prayer after meals)

Seigneur, ce repas nous a fait du bien:  
nous te disons merci.

Pour tout ce que tu nous donnes  
par les mains des hommes!  
nous te disons merci.

Seigneur, que le reste de cette journée

se déroule comme tu le veux,  
dans la paix et le partage.

Gloire à toi, Seigneur!

**Merci à Dieu** (Thanks be to God)

Dieu qui es dans le ciel,  
je sais que tu nous aimes.  
Merci!

Dieu qui es dans une belle lumière,  
éclaire mon cœur d'enfant.  
Merci!

Dieu qui es très bon,  
fais-nous s'il te plaît un sourire.  
Merci!

Dieu qui veux notre bonheur,  
donne la joie à tout le monde.  
Merci!

**Demandons pardon** (We ask for mercy)

Quand j'ai fait du mal à quelqu'un, je sais lui demander pardon. Je sais aussi demander pardon à Dieu que j'ai peiné, car il veut que je sois toujours "juste" comme son ami Abraham. Nous pouvons dire:

Mon Dieu, j'ai péché contre toi et mes frères,  
          mais près de toi se trouve le pardon.  
Accueille mon repentir et donne-moi la force  
de vivre selon ton amour.  
Gloire à toi, Seigneur!

**Prière du soir** (Evening Prayer)

Merci, Seigneur, pour cette bonne journée.  
Voici la nuit qui vient!  
je te confie mon repos.

Merci pour les personnes que j'ai rencontrées.  
Protège-les et protège-moi.  
Je te confie spécialement maman, papa,...

Pardon, Seigneur, pour mes manques d'amour:  
demain, avec ton aide, je veux mieux faire.

Mon Dieu, toi qui es unique, très bon et très fort,  
toi qui n'arrêtes pas de penser à nous  
avec tendresse, je te donne mon cœur  
et celui de tous ceux que j'aime.

Bonsoir, Seigneur! Gloire à toi!

### **Peace Prayer**

Loué sois-tu pour tous les spirituels  
fr. Gwenolé o.f.m.

Qu'il est bon de te rendre grâce en cette heure,  
Toi, le seul vrai Dieu, Créateur, Maître et Père de tous les hommes.

Oui loué sois-tu, trois fois Saint,  
pour tous ceux qui, de par le monde, te cherchent  
dans la ténèbres ou la clarté, dans la souffrance ou la joie,  
dans le doute en la certitude.

Oui loué sois-tu, Très Haut et Tout Puissant  
pour tous ceux qui de par le monde, t'implorent  
comme l'Unique, le Clément, le Miséricordieux.

Loué sois-tu, Seigneur de gloire,  
pour tous ceux qui, de par le monde, te chantent, te bénissent  
et te glorifient, à toute heure et de toute manière.

Loué sois-tu, Dieu proche de tous ceux qui t'invoquent en vérité,  
pour tous les Spirituels des temps passés et du temps présent,  
hommes ou femmes de tous pays, de toutes races, de toutes religions,  
qui ont donné et donnent encore un sens à la marche des hommes.

Loué sois-tu, Bon et Admirable Seigneur :  
car cette marche des hommes va vers Toi qui, en chacun d'eux,  
admire le meilleur pour l'attirer à Toi.

Loué sois-tu encore, ô Seigneur de tendresse,  
qui a commencé à nous révéler ton intimité d'amour  
par Jésus notre Frère.

C'est Toi que chantent les anges  
et que chantent tous ceux qui nous ont précédés,  
car c'est Toi que tout homme droit recherche, sans toujours le savoir.

Avec tous ceux qui connaissent enfin ton visage  
de paix, de joie et de lumière ;  
avec tous ceux qui s'inclinent devant l'Agneau,  
et qui, parmi tous les esprits bienheureux  
dansent de joie autour de ton autel,



**DIEU GRAND NOUS T'ACCLAMONS :**

Dieu nous te louons, Seigneur nous t'acclamons,  
dans l'immense cortège de tous les Saints.  
Avec les Saints de tous les âges, comme autant de frères aînés,  
en qui sans trêve se répandent tous les dons de ta charité. (refr.)

**Prayers**

**Free Prayer for Peace**

Seigneur! Installe la paix entre nous, fais régner l'amour et la concorde dans nos cœurs.  
Guide-nous vers les chemins de la paix,  
Sauve-nous des ténèbres vers la lumière et éloigne-nous des turpitudes, ce qui en est apparent  
ou caché.  
Fais de nous des reconnaissants de tes bienfaits, que nous les recevions et les acceptions et  
Accorde-nous les entièrement.  
Seigneur! Tu es la paix, de toi émane la paix; vers Toi est la paix;  
Seigneur! Fais nous vivre dans la paix.  
Donne-nous accès au paradis, demeure de la paix.  
Seigneur! Nous t'invoquons par tous tes beaux attributs de ce que nous savons parmi eux et ce  
que nous ignorons, pour que Tu nous pardonnes et Tu nous fasses miséricorde.  
Seigneur! Nous implorons la miséricorde de Ta part, une miséricorde qui illuminera nos  
cœurs, qui nous rassemblera autour de Toi, qui nous unira, qui guidera nos absents, qui  
corrigerà nos oeuvres, qui nous guidera vers le droit chemin, et qui nous éloignera des péchés.

## **Intercession**(Interreligious Prayer Group) (Interreligious Prayer Group)

Nous sommes des femmes et des hommes de bonne volonté, d'appartenances religieuses diverses: chrétiens, musulmans, bouddhistes, baha'is, et juifs à l'occasion, qui nous réunissons depuis quatre ans pour prier.

- Etre ensemble pour prier, dans le respect de la spécificité de chacun.
- Etre ensemble pour nous enrichir de nos différences.
- Parce que l'acceptation et l'amour de l'autre dans sa pleine humanité puisent leur source dans la foi qui anime le croyant, quelle que soit son appartenance religieuse,
- Parce que la foi trouve sa source d'eau vive dans la prière renouvelée.

C'est la raison pour laquelle nous avons souhaité être présents ce soir et partager avec vous notre prière pour cette journée de solidarité avec le peuple algérien.

Ce soir, Seigneur, nous remettons particulièrement dans Tes mains le peuple algérien. Que Ta compassion intervienne; que Ton Amour soulage les douleurs et les blessures. Dans Ta main, mon Dieu, sont la Puissance et la Force.

Dans Ta main, le pouvoir de tout élever et de tout affermir. Lève des hommes et des femmes de tous horizons, capables de porter Ta concorde et Ta paix!

Que la compréhension, que le dialogue, que la justice et surtout l'Amour sauvent nos frères algériens de cette épreuve.

Créateur de tous les hommes, Toi qui as, maintes fois, répondu à nos prières, exauce une fois encore notre prière de ce jour pour le peuple algérien, peuple martyrisé par tant de violences et d'injustices.

Nous T'en supplions au nom de Ta Toute Puissance et de Ta Miséricorde infinie.

## **Prayer of the Religious Fraternity in Cairo** (by Georges C. Anawati)

Dieu, c'est à Toi que nous nous adressons, c'est Toi en qui nous mettons notre confiance, c'est Toi dont nous implorons le secours et c'est Toi que nous supplions : de nous accorder la force de la foi en Toi, et la bonne conduite par la direction de Tes Prophètes en Envoyés.

Et nous Te supplions, ô Dieu, de rendre chacun d'entre nous fidèle à sa croyance et à sa religion, sans étroitesse qui nous fait tort à nous-mêmes, et sans fanatisme qui fait du tort à nos compatriotes.

Nous T'implorons, notre Seigneur, de bénir notre fraternité religieuse et de faire que la Société soit le guide qui nous y conduit, la justice le but que nous y poursuivons, et la paix le bien que nous y trouvons, ô Vivant, ô Eternel, ô Toi à qui est la Gloire et l'Honneur.

AMEN

## **Orthodox Prayer**

Chaste, Pure, Beginningless, Invisible, Incomprehensible, Inscrutable, Unalterable, Insurmountable, Immeasurable, Forbearing Lord; the Only One possessing immortality, dwelling in the unapproachable light; the Maker of Heaven and Earth and Sea and of everything

created in them ..., ... God the Great and Eternal One, the Holy and the Charitable, the One who has enabled us at this hour to stand in front of Your inaccessible Glory in order to praise and sing Your wonderful ones, have mercy on us, Your unworthy servants.

### **Prayer**

O Dieu de vérité  
Que les hommes divers nomment de divers noms,  
Mais qui es l'Un, Unique et le Même,  
Qui es Celui-qui-est,  
Qui es en tout ce qui est  
Et dans l'union de tous ceux qui s'unissent  
Qui es dans la hauteur et dans l'abîme,  
Dans l'infini des cieux et dans l'ombre du cœur  
Comme une infime semence.

Nous te louons,  
Seigneur, de ce que tu nous exauces,  
Puisque cette prière est un exaucement;  
Puisqu'en nous adressant ensemble à toi  
Nous élevons notre vouloir, nous épurons notre désir  
Et nous nous accordons.

Et qu'avons-nous à demander encore, si cela est accompli?  
Oui, que demander sinon que cela dure, ô Eternel,  
Le long de notre jour et notre nuit,  
Sinon de t'aimer assez pour aimer tous ceux qui t'aiment  
Et t'invoquent comme nous,  
Assez pour aimer ceux qui te prient et te pensent autrement,  
Assez pour vouloir du bien à ceux qui nous veulent du mal,  
Assez pour vouloir du bien à ceux qui te renient ou t'ignorent,  
Le bien de revenir à toi.

Donne-nous l'intelligence de ta Loi, Seigneur,  
Le respect émerveillé et miséricordieux de tout ce qui vit,  
L'amour sans revers de haine,  
La force et la joie de la paix.  
Amen

### **Prayer of Pope John Paul II (in Morocco)**

...Je voudrais terminer en L'invoquant personnellement devant vous.  
O Dieu, Tu es notre Créateur. Tu es bon et ta miséricorde est sans limites. A Toi la louange de toute créature. O Dieu, Tu as donné aux hommes que nous sommes une loi intérieure dont nous devons vivre. Faire Ta volonté, c'est accomplir notre tâche. Suivre Tes voies, c'est connaître la paix de l'âme.  
A Toi, nous offrons notre obéissance. Guide-nous en toutes les démarches que nous

entreprenons sur terre. Affranchis-nous des penchants mauvais qui détournent notre cœur de Ta volonté. Ne permets pas qu'en invoquant Ton Nom, nous venions à justifier les désordres humains. O Dieu, Tu es l'Unique. A Toi va notre adoration. Ne permets pas que nous nous éloignons de Toi. O Dieu, juge de tous les hommes, aide-nous à faire partie de tes élus au dernier jour. O Dieu, auteur de la justice et de la paix! Accorde-nous la joie véritable et l'amour authentique, ainsi qu'une fraternité durable entre les peuples. Comble-nous de Tes dons à tout jamais.

Amen

### **Prayer**

(by Father Maurice Borrmans )

Rends-nous assez semblables à eux pour que notre prière et la leur se confondent en la Tienne, pour que notre mort et la leur prennent sens dans la Tienne.

Rends-nous assez semblables à Toi pour qu'en notre visage ils découvrent le Tien, pour qu'en nos paroles ils comprennent les Tiennes, pour qu'en nos gestes ils deviennent les Tiens et pour qu'en nos vies filiales ils apprennent ta condition de Fils, en attendant l'Heure où, reconnaissant enfin qu'ils sont fils avec Toi et avec nous, la manifestation du Père sera totale et définitive dans l'unité de l'Esprit.

### **Millennium Prayer**

We all pray as believers of different religions:

Looking back to the last millennium we ask God and each other for forgiveness.

Forgive us that we have not fully put into practice the teaching of our religion on justice and peace, tolerance and love.

Forgive us that we allowed our religion to be misused in the strife for political, economic and military power, that wars have been and are fought in the name of religion.

Forgive us that we did not resist enough in the evils in our societies like the oppression of minorities, the discrimination of women, the exploitation of the poor and the destruction of nature.

Forgive us so that we may start the new millennium with a renewed longing for true humanity.

### **Prayer of Dag Hammerskjöld**

Let Your name be hallowed – not my name,

Let Your kingdom come – not my kingdom.

Your will be done – not my will.

Give us to live in peace with You,

With humanity and with ourselves,

And deliver us from fear.

**Prayer: Example**

from the Final Statement of the Bosisio (Italy) meeting in 1997 „Theological Reflections on Interreligious Prayer”, prepared jointly by World Council of Churches and Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue:<sup>1</sup>

Kindle within us all the fire of your love,  
Carry upon your wings the prayers of all men and women,  
Who long for the truth to set us free. O come, Spirit of God,  
Walk with us along the paths of life,  
Embrace us all with the friendship of your love,  
Take away barriers that divide us and  
Make us pray together in spirit and in truth.  
O come, Spirit of God,  
Draw all peoples together and  
Bring us into the mystery of your life.  
Teach us through the prayers of others,  
That you are God and no-one else.  
Enable us together to praise your name for evermore.  
Amen.

**Commemoration of Earthquake**

Poem recited at the memorial ceremony for the victims of the earthquake in Turkey, in the Turkish mosque of Zaandam in The Netherlands, August 1999.

**The Cry of the Snowdrop**

I resist death  
And resisting death I live  
Under mountains of stone and concrete  
Because I have the snowdrop's will to exist,  
Its longing and its lust for life.  
Don't look at the blood covering me,  
Don't look at the mourning sun,  
Let the moon and the stars turn away  
If only the snowdrops lust for life is mine

I resist death,  
And by resisting death our babies live  
In the hour of dire need  
So not look at the blood covering those poor little ones

The cries of despair  
From eighteen thousand meters deep  
Asia and Europe  
And all the seven continents could hear it.  
Entail is crying  
And the whole of Turkey mourns  
The body of the mother is a shield  
To her baby under the concrete

I say it again, we fight death  
And by fighting death our children stay alive.

#### **d) Christian and Muslim texts that could apply to common meetings**

##### **St. Francis' Prayer**

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let us sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is discord, union;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy.  
Grant that we may not seek so much to be comforted as to comfort;  
to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved as to love;  
for it is in giving that we receive;  
it is in forgiving that we are forgiven,  
and it is in dying that we are born into eternal life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

##### **Material of Sufi tradition**

**Rabi'a al-Adawiyya** († 801) (Translation: Annemarie Schimmel):

O Gott, die Nacht ist vorüber, und der Tag dämmt. Wie gern möchte ich wissen, ob Du meine Gebete angenommen oder sie zurückgewiesen hast. Deshalb tröste mich; denn Du bist der Tröster. Du hast mir Leben gegeben und mich versorgt, und Dein ist der Ruhm. Wolltest Du mich auch von Deiner Tür vertreiben, ich würde sie doch nicht verlassen, weil ich Deine Liebe im Herzen trage.

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<sup>8</sup> Pontificium Consilium pro Dialogo inter Religiones, Interreligious Prayer, Pro Dialogo & Current Dialogue, Bulletin 98, 1998/2, p. 243.

**Yunus Emre** († 1321) (Translation: Annemarie Schimmel):

Mit Bergen und mit Steinen auch  
Will ich Dich rufen, Herr, o Herr!  
Mit Vögeln früh im Morgenhauch  
Will ich Dich rufen, Herr, o Herr!

Mit Fischen in des Wassers Grund  
Gazellen in der Wüste Rund,  
Mit „Yahu“ aus der Toren Mund  
Will ich Dich rufen, Herr, o Herr!

Mit Jesus hoch im Himmelsland,  
Mit Moses an des Berges Rand,  
Mit diesem Stab in meiner Hand  
Will ich Dich rufen, Herr, o Herr!

Mit Hiob der vor Schmerz versteint,  
Mit Jakob, dessen Auge weint,  
Und mit Muhammad, Deinem Freund,  
Will ich Dich rufen, Herr, o Herr!

Mit Dank und Preis und Lobeswort,  
Mit „Gott ist Einer“, höchstem Hort,  
Barhäuptig, barfuß, immerfort  
Will ich Dich rufen, Herr, o Herr!

Mit lesend frommer Zunge Hallen,  
Mit Turteltauben, Nachtigallen,  
Mit denen, die Gott lieben, allen  
Will ich Dich rufen, Herr, o Herr!

**Süleyman Celebi** († 1419) (Translation: Annemarie Schimmel):  
Opening Prayer of Mevlud

Gottes Namen woll'n wir nennen allererst,  
Das ist Pflicht für jeden Menschen allererst.  
Wer des Namens Gottes zu Beginn gedenkt,  
Gott in jeder Arbeit ihm Erleicht' rung schenkt.  
Ist der Name Gottes jeder Tat Beginn,  
Niemals geht ihr Ende dann zum Schlechten hin.  
Gottes Name sei genannt in jedem Hauch!  
Dann vollendet sich in ihm die Arbeit auch.  
Spricht die Zunge einmal „Gott“ voll Liebe hier,  
Fall'n wie Herbstlaub alle Sünden ab von dir.  
Wer den reinen Namen nennt, wird selber rein.  
Wer sagt „Gott“, gelangt zu jedem Ziele sein.

Komm, voll Liebe lass „Allah“ uns sagen jetzt  
 Und mit Seufzern und mit Tränen klagen jetzt:  
     Möge jener König unser gnädig sein,  
     Der Erbarmer, Gnadenvolle, Gott allein!  
 Einer ist Er, seine Einheit zweifellos,  
 Ist sie Zahl der Falsches Sagenden auch groß.  
 Als die Welten noch nicht waren, war doch Er,  
 Unbedürftig aller Schöpfung, hoch und hehr.  
 Als schon Er war, war noch Mensch und Engel nicht,  
 Thron und Himmel, Sonne, Mond, neun Sphären nicht.  
 Voller Kunst bracht Er sie all ins Sein,  
 Heiß bekennen alle, dass er Eins ist, Ein.  
 Braucht' der Mächt'ge Seine Kraft so zum Erweis,  
 Wurden sie für Seine Einheit zum Beweis.  
 „Sei!“ sprach Er einmal, da wurde diese Welt.  
 Spricht Er „Sei nicht!“ – wie im Nu sie gleich zerschellt!  
     Aber braucht es hier denn vieler Worte noch?  
     Gott ist Einer, neben Ihm kein anderer noch!

**Ibrahim Hakki Erzurumlu** (1703 – 1772) (Translation: Annemarie Schimmel)

Gott macht alles Schlimme gut,  
 Denk nicht, dass Er andres tut,  
 Des Weisen Blick auf Ihm nur ruht.  
     Lasst uns sehen, was Gott tut:  
     Was er macht, das macht Er gut!  
 Gottes ist das Wort des Lebens,  
 Gram und Sorgen sind vergebens,  
 Er zeigt Weisheit Seines Webens.  
     Lasst uns sehen, was Gott tut:  
     Was er macht, das macht Er gut!  
 Treib mit niemand niedern Scherz,  
 Quäle und zerschlag kein Herz,  
 Wende dich nicht fleischeswärts!  
     Lasst uns sehen, was Gott tut:  
     Was er macht, das macht Er gut!  
 Jeder Seinen Namen nennt,  
 Jede Seele Sein gedenkt,  
 Jedem Er auch Hilfe schenkt –  
     Lasst uns sehen, was Gott tut:  
     Was er macht, das macht Er gut!  
 Hoffnungslose dunkle Zeit,  
 Plötzlich hebt sich Schleier weit,  
 Hält Er Heilung dir bereit!  
     Lasst uns sehen, was Gott tut:  
     Was er macht, das macht Er gut!  
 Jedes Wort gibt einen Rat,



Schmuck in allem, was ihr saht,  
Ein Gewinn in jeder Tat!  
    Lasst uns sehen, was Gott tut:  
    Was er macht, das macht Er gut!  
Höre den, der redet, an,  
Und verstehe ihn sodann,  
Nimm von Herzen ihn auch an!  
    Lasst uns sehen, was Gott tut:  
    Was er macht, das macht Er gut!

## **Psalms**

### **Psalm 23**

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want;  
he makes me lie down in green pastures.  
He leads me beside still waters;  
he restores my soul.  
He leads me in paths of righteousness  
for his name's sake.  
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I fear no evil;  
for thou art with me;  
thy rod and thy staff,  
they comfort me.  
Thou preparest a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
thou anointest my head with oil,  
my cup overflows.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life;  
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD  
for ever.

### **Psalm 90**

LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place  
in all generations.  
Before the mountains were brought forth,  
or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,  
from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.  
Thou turnest man back to the dust,  
and sayest, "Turn back, O children of men!"  
For a thousand years in thy sight  
are but as yesterday when it is past,  
or as a watch in the night.

Thou dost sweep men away; they are like a dream,  
like grass which is renewed in the morning:  
in the morning it flourishes and is renewed;  
in the evening it fades and withers.  
For we are consumed by thy anger;  
by thy wrath we are overwhelmed.  
Thou hast set our iniquities before thee,  
our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.  
For all our days pass away under thy wrath,  
our years come to an end like a sigh.  
The years of our life are threescore and ten,  
or even by reason of strength fourscore;  
yet their span is but toil and trouble;  
they are soon gone, and we fly away.  
Who considers the power of thy anger,  
and thy wrath according to the fear of thee?  
So teach us to number our days  
that we may get a heart of wisdom.  
Return, O LORD! How long?  
Have pity on thy servants!  
Satisfy us in the morning with thy steadfast love,  
that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.  
Make us glad as many days as thou hast afflicted us,  
and as many years as we have seen evil.  
Let thy work be manifest to thy servants,  
and thy glorious power to their children.  
Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us,  
and establish thou the work of our hands upon us,  
yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

### **Psalm 104: 24 - 35**

O LORD, how manifold are thy works!  
In wisdom hast thou made them all;  
the earth is full of thy creatures.  
Yonder is the sea, great and wide,  
which teems with things innumerable,  
living things both small and great.  
There go the ships,  
and Leviathan which thou didst form to sport in it.  
These all look to thee,  
to give them their food in due season.  
When thou givest to them, they gather it up;  
when thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good things.  
When thou hidest thy face, they are dismayed;  
when thou takest away their breath, they die  
and return to their dust.  
When thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created;

and thou renewest the face of the ground.  
May the glory of the LORD endure for ever,  
may the LORD rejoice in his works,  
who looks on the earth and it trembles,  
who touches the mountains and they smoke!  
I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;  
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.  
May my meditation be pleasing to him,  
for I rejoice in the LORD.  
Let sinners be consumed from the earth,  
and let the wicked be no more!  
Bless the LORD, O my soul!  
Praise the LORD!

### **Surats etc**

#### **Fatiha**

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.  
Praise be to God,  
The Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds;  
Most Gracious, Most Merciful;  
Master of the Day of Judgement.  
Thee do we worship,  
And Thine aid we seek,  
Show us the straight way,  
The way of those on whom  
Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace,  
Those whose (portion)  
Is not wrath,  
And who go not astray.

#### **Sura 2: 255**

God! There is no god  
But He, - the Living,  
The Self-subsisting, Eternal.  
No slumber can seize Him  
Nor sleep. His are all things  
In the heavens and on earth.  
Who is there can intercede  
In His presence except  
As He permitteth? He knoweth  
What (appeareth to His creatures  
As) Before or After  
Or Behind them.  
Nor shall they compass  
Aught of His knowledge

Except as He willeth.  
His Throne doth extend  
Over the heavens  
And the earth, and He feeleth  
No fatigue in guarding  
And preserving them  
For He is the Most High,  
The Supreme (in glory).

### **Sura 49: 13**

O mankind!  
We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female  
and made you into nations and tribes  
that ye may know each other.  
Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah  
is (he who is) the most righteous of you.  
And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).

### **Litany of the 99 names of God**

You are the Merciful  
You are the Compassionate  
You are the King  
You are the Holy one  
You are the Fount of peace  
You are the Protector of faith  
You are the Guardian  
You are the Incomparable  
You are the Strongest  
*Response:*  
Lord, hear us, have mercy upon us

You are the Supreme  
You are the Creator  
You are the Bearer  
You are the Fashioner  
You are the Forgiving  
You are the Dominating  
You are the Giver of all Good  
You are the Sustainer  
You are the Solution  
You are the Knowing  
*Response:*  
Lord, hear us, have mercy upon us

You are the Narrowing  
You are the Broadening  
You are the Humbling  
You are the Exalting  
You are the One Giving of power  
You are the One Taking power away  
You are the All-hearing  
You are the All-seeing  
You are the Arbiter  
You are the Just

*Response:*

Lord, hear us, have mercy upon us

You are the Benevolent  
You are the All-Cognisant  
You are the Forbearing  
You are the Elevated  
You are the All-Forgiving  
You are the Grateful  
You are the Most High  
You are the Greatest  
You are the Preserver  
You are the Provider

*Response:*

Lord, hear us, have mercy upon us

You are the One Calculator  
You are the Sublime  
You are the Generous  
You are the Waiting  
You are the Caring  
You are the All Encompassing  
You are the Wise  
You are the Loving  
You are the Glorious  
You are the Raising to life

*Response:*

Lord, hear us, have mercy upon us

You are the Witness  
You are the Truth  
You are the Keeper  
You are the Strong  
You are the Firm  
You are the Patron  
You are the Praiseworthy  
You are the Enumerating  
You are the Maker

You are the Restorer

*Response:*

Lord, hear us, have mercy upon us

You are the Creator of life

You are the Creator of death

You are the Living

You are the Self-subsisting

You are the One without needs

You are the Glorified

You are the Unique

You are the Impenetrable

You are the Mighty

You are the All-Mighty

*Response:*

Lord, hear us, have mercy upon us

You are the Bringing close

You are the Bringing distance

You are the First

You are the Last

You are the Manifest

You are the Hidden One

You are the Governing

You are the Most-High

You are the Fount of all goodness

You are the One accepting the repentant

*Response:*

Lord, hear us, have mercy upon us

You are the Avenger

You are the Eraser of sin

You are the Indulgent

You are the King of the Kingdom

You are the Lord of Majesty

You are the Controller

You are the Equitable

You are the One who calls together

You are the Rich

You are the One who makes rich

You are the Defender

*Response:*

Lord, hear us, have mercy upon us

You are the Saddening

You are the Favouring

You are the Light

You are the Guide

You are the Unequaled One  
You are the Everlasting  
You are the Heir  
You are the Manager  
You are the most Patient

*Response:*

Lord, hear us, have mercy upon us

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