

Sanctus (Vicene)  
ABB-E-13  
2<sup>3</sup>

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power & might: Heaven & earth are full of your glory: Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

Sanctus Liturgy  
Orthodox Slaves  
2<sup>3</sup> (Oshelias)

OUR FATHER — DELIVER us, Lord, from every evil, and grant us peace in our day. In your mercy, keep us free from sin and protect us from all anxiety, as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ: For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. This week and next, from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>, is the special week of the year when all of us Christians are asked to pray for the restoration of unity among us all, the unity for which Christ Himself prayed for His followers at the supreme moment of His life on earth. It's become a yearly institution, this "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity", a fairly modern custom that began in the early years of the century as a private devotion but subsequently was taken up on an official level by various churches one after another. It's become something of a ritual time, of pulpit exchanges between different churches, of more public inter-church meetings and activities. But it's only one week of the whole year, and some people get the impression (unfortunately) that it's the only time, or the only way, in which Christians of different traditions come together, work together or pray together. It is indeed a special week, ... or better, perhaps, a week of special attention to and concentration on prayer. Not that we aren't or shouldn't be praying all the year round, and in various ways working towards and promoting the unity of the Church in all that we do during all of the year: it's not that; but this week is a kind of headline, a symbol or a sign of one important part of Christian life, that, whatever else we can do or achieve together as children of God, we must also pray for the Christian community, for the unity among ourselves that may make us more clearly and visibly the one family of God. It has also

been objected to this "Unity Week" that it's so inward-looking, so remote from and even oblivious to the cares and problems of the world we live in. And it's been said that some activities and events that take place during this week seem so self-congratulatory and thus somehow ring false. I record these comments now simply as a check, a jolt (perhaps) to remind us to pray always, and to pray with sincerity, honesty, humility. Of course we'll be misunderstood, deliberately or not, and complained about both for not being concerned for the world about us and for being too involved. [A few years ago the theme chosen for this week of prayer together was — "And here we make contact with the special theme that's proposed this year for our common prayer this week:"] "Called to unity, thro' the Cross of Christ". Thro' the cross. It is ultimately that cross that has brought us to be followers of Christ in the first place, and it should be no surprise that the shadow of the cross falls anywhere in our Christian lives, and can seemingly make a contradiction out of our best efforts and intentions to be faithful followers of Jesus. That there should persist such divisions and differences between professed followers of the one way, one truth, one life, is already a cross that many Christians are very conscious that we carry. <sup>It's</sup> one they find heavy and even discouraging in what seems to be the negative impact of a divided Christianity's witness & proclamation of the Good News. But thro' this cross too we can think of ourselves as called to unity. The cross of Christ both stretches out to east and west, left and right, north and south, as well as between heaven and earth and rooted in this earth. That in itself is symbolic of the movement of Christian life and activity, of prayer and of work, reaching upwards towards heaven, planted firmly in the world and reaching outwards to embrace all. In this week of invitation especially to pray, let's reflect on that while: we adore

ABB-E-14, 6  
2:48

you O Christ, because by your cross you have redeemed the world.

MUSIC (Adrianus Te)

PRAYERS Deiss 118

We're invited

especially to pray for <sup>the</sup> unity of Christians during this week of prayer. That's so that we may be helped, strengthened and encouraged in the knowledge that this same prayer is rising from the lips of hundreds of thousands, of millions, of Christians all over the globe at the very same time, earnestly together asking Our Father in heaven to hear the prayer we offer and join with that of Jesus our Brother: that we might all be one, as He is with you, Father, and You - Him. Whether we pray alone, in our "inner room" when Jesus suggested we go to make our personal and intimate prayer to the Father: or whether in the company of our Christian brothers & sisters, with Jesus among us as we're gathered in His name: let us earnestly pray this week: pray, not just talk or meet or discuss or visit or be active or plan together / work together - there is time and place, and occasion to be found and made for all of these: But in prayer, most especially this week let's reflect that we are called to unity, and that that call (as the unity too) comes through the Cross of Christ. Do pray for each other - and thus, indeed, for all the peoples of the world: pray for people whom we don't or can't see eye-to-eye with in our understanding and way of acceptance of the Word of God: pray for our sisters and brothers with whom we're not in full communion and feel we can't honestly yet be - this too is the cross: pray for a mutual understanding and support that will make us recognize our unity in Christ through His Cross, and make us pray and work together in showing the world the family unity of God's children which He's called everyone to share in.