Proposal for an order of service for an Office for unity

The prayer space is set up for an Office liturgy. It is suggested that the chalice and the empty paten be placed on the altar.

Prior to this, the chalice and the paten are presented

Here are a number of elements for presenting the symbol of the cup and paten when introducing an Office for Christian Unity. They will need to be adapted depending on the context, of course. Remember to mention the dimension of the hope of faith, and not only of the suffering of separation, the two dimensions of the prayer of Father Couturier; Psalm 121 (Hebrew 122) gives an image of a walk, of a pilgrimage towards this promise of unity.

Prayer of Father Couturier said every day:

Each day, we pray that the Holy Spirit will enable us "to experience the suffering caused by division". This empty cup and empty paten, placed on the altar table, symbolise this separation and the sin of division: we are not yet all at the same table.

But every day, we also ask: "to hope beyond all hope." Thus, to pray before this cup and this paten, is also to confess our hope: we believe that one day we shall all be united together at the same table.

We welcome the cup and the paten among us by singing Psalm 121 (Hebrew 122):

I rejoiced when they said to me,
"Let us go to the house of the LORD."
[…]
Jerusalem, built as a city
Where all together form one body!"

All together, we will walk towards this promise, this city "where all together form one body".

Opening of the Office : Psalm 121 (Hebrew122)

Singing of Psalms

Reading of the Bible

Which can be followed by: an exhortation, or a testimony, or the presentation of a Church, or of an ecumenical event, or the reading of a text written by a spiritual writer or Church figure…

Canticle of Zechariah (morning) or of Mary (evening)

Intercessions or thanksgivings or benedictions

For our Churches, their leaders or a particular ecclesial event, …

Prayer for the Unity of Christians

Lord Jesus,
Who prayed that we might all be one,
We pray to you for the unity of Christians,
According to your will,
According to your means.
May your Spirit enable us
To experience the suffering caused by division,
To see our sin,
And to hope beyond all hope.
Amen![1]

Our Father

Collect[2] : For example:

Eternal and merciful God, who are a God of peace, love, and unity, we pray, Father, and we implore you to bring together, through your Holy Spirit, all that has been divided.

Grant that we may be transformed into your unity, that we may seek your one and eternal truth, and that we may abstain from all dissension.

Through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord and our God, who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and ever,

R/ Amen

Lord, Creator of the universe, accept the prayers that the church of your Christ offers to you; lead us all to your Kingdom, sanctify us and gather us together in the unity of your love, through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord and our God, who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and ever,

R/ Amen

Conclusion of the Office

[1] Prayer composed by members of the Chemin Neuf Community, based on a prayer by Father Paul Couturier