



## CHURCH

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# Christians unite in prayer for Pope Francis' health and all who are suffering

*On Friday afternoon at the Roman parish of San Lorenzo in Piscibus, Christians of various traditions gathered for an ecumenical prayer service for the health of Pope Francis. The Taizé Community, the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, in collaboration with other denominations, organized the celebration.*

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Vatican News

The opening prayer of the ecumenical prayer service for the health of Pope Francis, and all those infirm and suffering, read "Living God, we come before you from different Christian denominations to pray for the sick and the suffering, for the health of all the leaders of the Churches, and in this moment, for your servant Francis, Bishop of Rome, at this time when he is afflicted by illness." The ecumenical prayer service took place on Friday afternoon, 21 March, at the Roman parish of San Lorenzo in Piscibus, home also to the International Youth Center.

## Remembering the sick and caregivers

Organized by the Taizé Community, the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, and the Office for Ecumenism and Dialogue of Rome, in collaboration with the Anglican Center and the Ecumenical Methodist and Reformed Churches offices of Rome, the prayer session continued with the Psalm "Bless the Lord, O my soul," followed by a passage from Saint Paul's Letter to the Ephesians (6:13-18), read in Italian, English, German, Spanish, and French. The Prayer of the Faithful was also in several languages, with intentions read by representatives of the churches together with some young people. In particular, prayers were offered "for all the sick, for those helping them, and for all the medical staff," with a petition to the Holy Spirit to grant Pope Francis "the strength and peace he needs during his illness."

## Prayers for peace

A prayer for peace was also included, especially for "the people of Ukraine, Gaza, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Nicaragua, and every place where there is war in our troubled world." A plea was raised for those affected by global warming and exploitation of the earth's resources, with the hope that humanity may become increasingly aware of its responsibility "for the care of Creation, a gift from God." A final intention was dedicated to the unity of Christians, that they may be one.

## Ecumenical blessing

Before the final blessing — given together by representatives of the various Christian traditions — prayer was offered once again for the Lord to accompany Pope Francis in his illness. The celebration — attended by, among others, Brother Matthew, Prior of Taizé; Archbishop Flavio Pace, Secretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity; Tara Curlewis, of the Reformed Churches; Matthew A. Laferty, Methodist; Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, of the Armenian Apostolic Church; and Jim Linthicum of the Anglican Communion — concluded with the hymn "Bonum est confidere in Domino."

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