

Justice and Only Justice

1 |

by Mary Sellars Malloy

From January 18 through January 25, Christians throughout the world will join in a very special week of prayer called the *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*. This week of prayer was established in 1908, and the dates were chosen so that the week ends on the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul. The Week of Prayer actually consists of eight days—an *octave*—which always designates a very special time of prayer and celebration in the life of the Church.

In *Companion to the Calendar* (Liturgy Training Publications, 1993), Mary Ellen Hynes explains: “. . . Christians have sometimes forgotten that we are all one body with Christ as our head. We think of ourselves instead as Eastern or Western, Protestant or Catholic. . . . [P]rayer is still needed so that the body of Christ on earth can be strong and united. That will help the people of the world hear the voice of Christ speaking clearly. The church prays for Christian unity all during the year. But during [this] week we pray with special concern. We ask that all Christians might be able to work together.”

Each year, representatives of a council of churches from a particular region of the world—including Catholic bishops and leaders from that region—choose the Scripture focus and develop materials for worldwide use during the Week of Prayer. This year’s focus, “Justice and only justice you shall pursue” (Deuteronomy 16:18-20), was chosen by the Christian churches in Indonesia. Indonesia, which has the largest Muslim population in the world, is only 10% Christian. It is estimated that only 12% of Indonesian Christians are Catholic.



St. Mary of the Assumption Cathedral (Jakarta Cathedral), Indonesia during mass. Image by Rantemario, CC BY-SA 4.0 from Wikimedia Commons.

JANUARY | JUSTICE AND ONLY JUSTICE

2 |

Indonesia itself is founded on five principles called *Pancasila*. These principles are:

1. Belief in the one and only God
2. Just and civilized humanity
3. The unity of Indonesia
4. Democracy guided by the inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations among representatives
5. Social justice for all people of Indonesia

Indonesia's motto is *Bhinneka Tuggal Ika (Unity in Diversity)*. Indonesians live by the principle of *gotong royong*, which means to live in solidarity and by collaboration—sharing in all aspects of life, work, grief and festivities, and regarding all Indonesians as their brothers and sisters.

Despite this, corruption and natural disaster have recently greatly impacted economic growth in Indonesia and harmony among its people. That is why the Indonesian Council of Churches chose the theme, "Justice and only justice you shall pursue" (Deuteronomy 16:18-20).

This year, plan to celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity with your students and their families. Our body of resources for this special week of prayer include tips for celebrating the week in your classroom, an activity for families, a prayer card, and a prayer service that can be used in the classroom, in the school, or in the parish religious education program.



State emblem of Indonesia is called Garuda Pancasila. The main part of the coat of arms is the golden mythical bird Garuda with a shield on its chest and a scroll gripped by its leg bears the national motto: "Bhinneka Tuggal Ika", roughly means "Unity in Diversity". The shield's five emblems represent Pancasila, the five principles of Indonesia's national philosophy. The numbers of feathers was meant to symbolize the date of Indonesian Proclamation of Independence; 17 feathers on each wings, 8 tail feathers, 19 upper tail feathers (under the shield, above the tail), and 45 neck feathers; all symbolize 17-8-1945; 17th August 1945. Garuda Pancasila was designed by Sultan Hamid II of Pontianak, and was adopted as national coat of arms on February 11, 1950. Image by Gunawan Kartapranata, Public domain, from Wikimedia Commons