



Letter of the Casante for the
Week of Prayer for the Unity of Christians
(January 18 - 25, 2021)

*“Remain in my love:
you will bear fruit in plenty”*
(cfr. Jn 15: 5-9)



Dearest Brothers, Sisters and Laity of the **C**alabrian **F**amily,

Love, peace and joy of the Lord remain always in our hearts.

The week of prayer for the unity of Christians, from January 18 to 25, is approaching. I felt deeply in my heart the desire to take this favorable opportunity to make a warm invitation to all to join with us in prayer for this intention, so dear to our Fr. John Calabria and to the spirit of the Opera.

How urgent it is for all of us to work to fulfill the great longing of Jesus: *“ut unum sint”* (that all be one). This heartbeat of Jesus, this thirst for union of his Divine Heart, how much light it must radiate in the present times! I am particularly convinced that this opportunity is propitious to light in us a deep desire to grow in unity and communion, through prayer and concrete actions.

I would like we, the members of the Calabrian Family, didn't let this opportunity of prayer pass in vain, and live this week, as Fr. Calabria used to do, with his deep desire for the unity of Christians. He wrote: *“Today, more than ever, the need is felt to return to Christian unity. But how can we return to it? Just redoing the road: unity was broken because charity was cooled; love for God is love for brothers and sisters. The reverse path requires that charity be revived in the hearts of men and women; **charity prepares unity. We must, therefore, ignite the love of God in Christians; and we must ignite in Christians the love for neighbors.** An arduous task, which the Lord entrusts to us Christians, especially religious and priests of these times”¹.*

These words of Fr. Calabria find today a profound relevance and are in tune with what Pope Francis urges us to live, not only on the unity of Christians, but as a lifestyle that manifests a universal dimension of fraternity, that is capable of making us all necessarily converge to unity.

It is by rediscovering the path of charity that we return to unity. It is not the theories which will lead us to true unity, instead it will be the attitudes of charity lived in daily life, and love for neighbor that will lead us to true unity. It is because charity is the bond of unity, a cement that unites diversities. It is true: when charity cools, unity and communion cools as well.

I was struck by the words of Chiara Lubich in a correspondence with Sister Maria Bredo, who says: *“If we two will be ONE, many will be drawn into unity and the small fold of the Kingdom of Christ will be created on earth in which all will enter – all those who, stronger than any*

¹ Fr. Calabria, *Apostolato Infermi*, Novembre 1952.

other love, feel love for Jesus"². In these words we understand the importance of contributing to the cause of unity by living fraternal love, as a concrete contribution together with that of prayer. *"Prayer and love achieve the impossible"*, Fr. Andrea Gasparino said. And also Fr. Calabria was convinced of this way of charity and fraternal love to attain unity.

In today's world, in this particular pandemic situation that humanity faces, in a society where individualism and personal interests reign, we are called to think of **"we"**, of **"unity"** to be able to face this crisis that affects us. Pope Francis reminds it frequently to us. Even the path to unity, no one can walk alone; only by putting ourselves together, in concrete gestures and acts of fraternal love, will we be able to carry out more and more Jesus' invitation: *"Remain in my love: you will bear fruit in plenty"* (cfr. Jn 15: 5-9). Only by remaining in the love of Christ, in his charity can we bring to the world fruits of true unity and communion.



Brothers and Sisters, on this occasion I invite all our religious communities of the Poor Servants Brothers and Sisters, the Missionaries of the Poor and all the groups that belong to the Calabrian Family, with all the collaborators in the various activities, to be promoters of communion, by proposing moments of prayer, concrete gestures and other spiritual initiatives, during this week of prayer for the unity of Christians. I am certain that we will be able to take this opportunity to mature and make the desire of Jesus grow in us: *"that all be one"*, through charity. Let us begin, let us feel this urge to concretely practice love and authentic charity in our relationships.

I would also like to share with you two initiatives designed to live together this week: one is proposed worldwide, on January 23, through the Holy Rosary online, which we will pray for this intention; the second is the ecumenical prayer meeting which will be held in our Mother House of San Zeno in Monte, on January 25, which can be followed by YouTube channel.

Brothers, Sisters and Laity, let us unite in these special week of prayer. My fervent invitation is not limited only to participating in the initiatives of these days, which is already a very beautiful thing, but I hope that it may kindle in us a true desire for unity and communion by responding to the practical invitation of Fr. Calabria: to live charity in the concrete gestures of everyday life, to travel the opposite path of returning to unity.

Do not let our charity cool within the Calabrian Family and among us. Let us kindle the fire of fraternal love and charity in our hearts as a precious contribution and a sure path towards unity and the prophecy of communion.

Let us keep united in prayer. I carry all of you in my heart. With fraternal love.

Fr. Miguel Tofful

Verona, January 15, 2021



² Chiara Lubich, *Corrispondenza epistolare con Sorella Maria Maddalena Bredo*, Trento 1 maggio 1947.