

Continuing our sharing of quotes from religious and spiritual leaders – this month's quote is from 'Spiritual Ecumenism', a talk given by Bishop Chessun, Chairman of 'Churches Together in South London'.

'The power of prayer, and its potential for overcoming separation and the wounds of centuries, lay at the heart of all groups of Christian believers, and so Paul Couturier came to see that, as people grow in sanctity in their different traditions, they grow closer to Christ. If Christians could then be aware of each others' history, spirituality, traditions of faith and worship, their hurts and their glories, they could thus grow closer to each other. ...If Christians could imitate each other – not just go to each others' services, but embrace each others' spirituality and traditions for their own – the path to holiness in one Church could be adopted and enhance the path to holiness in the others too.'

The term 'spiritual ecumenism' was first used by Paul Couturier (1881-1953), ordained in the Society of St. Irenaeus in 1906, a company of mission and teaching priests, who was to have a major impact on the ecumenical movement and in the 1930s transformed the Octave of Christian Unity, bringing to birth in 1934 the modern Week of Prayer for Christian Unity."