

Christ's last words unite Philippine churches

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April 19, 2011

Baguio City, Philippines, April 20 (ENInews)--Philippine Roman Catholic, mainline Protestant and evangelical churches have united in reflecting on Christ's seven last sayings in a taped ecumenical radio program that will be aired on Good Friday.

"This ecumenical activity is a realization of Jesus' prayer for His followers to be one. It also reminds us of our common Christian tradition, which should unite and not divide us," Rev. Joie Galinato of the United Methodist Church told ENInews. Galinato will reflect on the words "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," Christ's prayer for those who had condemned him to die on the cross. Good Friday commemorates the Crucifixion.

The radio program has been led by the Baguio-Benguet Ecumenical Group, which works to strengthen ecumenical relations in this northern Philippine city, since 2007. The group has also, for 14 years, collaborated in observing the World Council of Churches and Vatican-led global week of prayer for Christian unity each January or February.

Catholic lay leader Reylita Calimlim, the ecumenical group's secretary, told ENInews that the radio program is "a great witness of the unity of the various Christian churches, particularly in the Word."

For Bishop Marino Inong of the United Church of Christ, the radio program is "an avenue to reach out more people ... as it is a witness of faith by the various churches." Inong will reflect on the words, "I thirst," which Christ spoke from the cross.

Fr. Andres Cosalan, vicar-general of the Roman Catholic Baguio diocese, noted that the churches "share a common faith in Jesus and a common mission to share that faith." Cosalan will reflect on the words, "Verily, I say unto thee, today shalt thou be

with me in paradise," which Christ spoke to a thief who was also crucified.

Christ's seven last sayings were: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do;" "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise;" "Woman, behold thy son!" "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" "I thirst;" "It is finished;" "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."