



## PRAYER LETTER 71

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Here is the first prayer letter 2026. It is proposed by Benjamin Simon, director of DM in Switzerland.

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### *Introduction to prayer*

Switzerland is internationally regarded as a country of stability, prosperity, and social balance. Its political system, shaped by federalism and direct democracy, has contributed to strong social cohesion over many decades. Nevertheless, Switzerland too faces significant social and ecclesial challenges that reflect the changes of the present day.

From a social perspective, these challenges are evident, among other things, in increasing individualization, questions of social justice, migration, and the handling of demographic change. Despite a well-developed welfare state, solidarity and social cohesion are repeatedly coming under pressure. Economic inequalities, social isolation, and the integration of diverse cultural backgrounds call for new responses from politics, civil society, and social institutions.

The churches in Switzerland are also undergoing a profound process of change. Declining membership numbers, loss of trust, and advancing secularization confront church communities with the question of their role in a pluralistic society. At the same time, they remain important actors in the social sphere, in pastoral care, education, and advocacy for disadvantaged people. The challenge lies in connecting tradition and renewal and responding credibly to the questions of today's world.

## *Introduction to prayer (continued)*

More recent history also includes tragic events that have had a lasting impact on Switzerland's social consciousness. The fire in Crans-Montana in 2026 painfully demonstrated how vulnerable even well-organized and prosperous regions can be. The destruction, human suffering, and uncertainty triggered by this event served as a stark reminder of the importance of solidarity, prevention, and shared responsibility. Especially in such moments, social and church actors became vital pillars of comfort, cohesion, and practical assistance.

Within this field of tension between stability and change, between tradition and new challenges, Switzerland continues to seek ways to shape its social and ecclesial life in a sustainable and humane manner.

## *Prayer*

Loving and compassionate God,  
we come before you with heavy hearts and trusting spirits.

We remember the tragedy in Crans-Montana on January 1st, 2026.

We place before you all those who lost their lives,  
those who mourn loved ones,  
and all who were wounded in body, mind, or spirit.

Be close to them in their pain,  
grant them comfort, strength, and healing,  
and surround them with people who carry your light and care.

We lift up Switzerland to you,  
a country blessed with stability and prosperity,  
yet facing deep social challenges.

We pray for wisdom and courage  
to address injustice, division, loneliness, and exclusion.

Strengthen solidarity within society  
and inspire leaders, institutions, and communities  
to act with responsibility, compassion, and hope.

## *Prayer (continued)*

We especially pray for young people,  
who are searching for meaning, hope, and perspective in uncertain times.  
When the future feels fragile or overwhelming,  
renew their trust in life,  
open doors of opportunity,  
and help them discover their gifts and their calling.  
May they encounter people and communities  
that listen, support, and believe in them.

Revive our Christian faith, O God.  
Where faith has grown weak or silent,  
rekindle trust in your presence and your promise.  
Help us to live the Gospel with credibility, humility, and love,  
so that our words and actions may give hope  
and witness to your grace in the world.

We pray for DM and its member churches and partners.  
We hold especially before you ACO,  
all its members, and the many countries and cultures they come from.  
Bless their cooperation, their service, and their commitment.  
Strengthen bonds across borders,  
guide their work for justice, peace, and reconciliation,  
and protect all who serve in challenging contexts.

God of hope and life,  
in times of sorrow and change,  
lead us forward with faith, courage, and compassion.  
May your Spirit unite us  
and help us build a future rooted in love, dignity, and peace.

Amen.

*Author: Benjamin Simon, director of DM*