

Link to Liturgy



7th Sunday of Easter They May All be One

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Lessons and Discussions

Page 5 – Perfect Unity

“as you, Father, are in me and I in you”

Page 11 – Ecumenism: Unity between Christ followers

“so that they may all be one”

Page 15 – Ecumenism Part II

“so that they may all be one”

Communion Antiphon (Jn 17:12, 13, 15) – Simple English Propers

This should be chanted so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred. Another song can be substituted, but should have the same theme.

Pater, cum essem *Jn 17: 12, 13, 15*

IV

Father, when I was amongst them, * I kept those
whom you had given me, al-le-lu-ia; * but now I am
coming to you; I do not ask you to take them out
of the world, but to keep them from ev-il, al-le-lu-ia,
al-le-lu-ia.

Alternative Options:

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus
Christ the Lord Is Risen Today
Hail Thee, Festival Day
Rejoice the Lord Is King
The Strife Is O'er

Collect –Roman Missal

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

R. Because the Lord is truly risen, alleluia!

“The End” Notes

- [1] CCC 2746
- [2] CCC 2748
- [3] CCC 2749
- [4] CCC 2751
- [5] Hardon, *Modern Catholic Dictionary* pg. 553
- [6] CCC 820
- [7] 9, *Ut unum sint*
- [8] *ibid.*
- [9] *Divine Intimacy* Vol. II, pg. 235
- [10] J. Escriva, Homily on “Loyalty to the Church”
- [11] *The Navarre Bible Commentary*, St. John pg 209
- [12] CCC 240
- [13] CCC 242
- [14] Fr. Romanus Cessario, *Magnificat*, February 2011, Vol.12, No. 12, pp. 5-8
- [15] *ibid.*
- [16] *The Roman Missal – Mass of the Day, Feast of the Incarnation*
- [17] *The Roman Missal*
- [18] CCC 243
- [19] CCC 244
- [20] CCC 859
- [21] *Divine Intimacy* Vol. II, pg. 236
- [22] John Paul II, General Audience, 17 January 1979
- [23] Hardon, *Modern Catholic Dictionary*
- [24] Hardon, *Modern Catholic Dictionary* pg. 179
- [25] Introduction, *Ut unum sint*, 25 May, 1995, John Paul II
- [26] *ibid.* 2
- [27] *ibid.* 5
- [28] *unitatis Redintegratio*, Second Vatican Council 1964
- [29] *ibid.* 6.
- [30] *ibid.* 9
- [31] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 3.
- [32] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 3.
- [33] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio*
- [34] *ibid.*
- [35] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio*
- [36] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 7-8
- [37] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 9
- [38] cf. *ibid.* 11
- [39] CCC 821
- [40] CCC 822
- [41] *Ut unum sint* 22, 25 May, 1995, John Paul II
- [42] Decree on Ecumenism, 20
- [43] cf. *ibid.* 21
- [44] *ibid.* 22
- [45] *ibid.* 24
- [46] *ibid.* 24

Graciously hear our supplications, O Lord,
so that we, who believe that the Savior of the human race
is with you in your glory,
may experience, as he promised,
until the end of the world,
his abiding presence among us.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Gospel Reading – John 13:31-33A, 34-35 – Roman Missal

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John
- Glory to you O Lord

Lifting up his eyes to heaven, Jesus prayed saying: “Holy Father, I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me. Father, they are your gift to me. I wish that where I am they also may be with me, that they may see my glory that you gave me, because you loved me before the foundation of the world. Righteous Father, the world also does not know you, but I know you, and they know that you sent me. I made known to them your name and I will make it known, that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in them.”

The Gospel of the Lord.
- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Spiritual Reading

From a sermon by Saint Augustine, bishop
No one has ever ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven

Today our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven; let our hearts ascend with him. Listen to the words of the Apostle: *If*

you have risen with Christ, set your hearts on the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God; seek the things that are above, not the things that are on earth. For just as he remained with us even after his ascension, so we too are already in heaven with him, even though what is promised us has not yet been fulfilled in our bodies.

Christ is now exalted above the heavens, but he still suffers on earth all the pain that we, the members of his body, have to bear. He showed this when he cried out from above: *Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?* and when he said: *I was hungry and you gave me food.*

Why do we on earth not strive to find rest with him in heaven even now, through the faith, hope and love that unites us to him? While in heaven he is also with us; and we while on earth are with him. He is here with us by his divinity, his power and his love. We cannot be in heaven, as he is on earth, by divinity, but in him, we can be there by love.

He did not leave heaven when he came down to us; nor did he withdraw from us when he went up again into heaven. The fact that he was in heaven even while he was on earth is borne out by his own statement: *No one has ever ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven.*

These words are explained by our oneness with Christ, for he is our head and we are his body. No one ascended into heaven except Christ because we also are Christ: he is the Son of Man by his union with us, and we by our union with him are the sons of God. So the Apostle says: *Just as the human body, which has many members, is a unity, because all the different members make one body, so is it also with Christ.* He too has many members, but one body.

Out of compassion for us he descended from heaven, and although he ascended alone, we also ascend, because we are in him by grace. Thus, no one but Christ descended and no one but Christ ascended; not because there is no distinction between the head and the body, but because the body as a unity cannot be separated from the head.

Responsory – Office of Readings – Acts 1:3, 9, 4

During the forty days after his passion, he appeared to them and spoke with them about the kingdom of God.

– As they watched, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight, alleluia.

safety, to pilgrims return, health to the sick, and salvation to the dying.

[Prayer in silence.]

Almighty ever-living God, comfort of mourners, strength of all who toil, may the prayers of those who cry out in any tribulation come before you, that all may rejoice, because in their hour of need your mercy was at hand. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Marian Antiphon – Regina Caeli – Simple Tone

6. 

V. Guade et laetare, Virgo Maria, alleluia.

R. Quia surrexit Dominus vere, alleluia

Let us pray. O God, who by the Resurrection of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, didst vouchsafe to make glad the whole world; grant, we beseech Thee, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may lay hold of the joys of eternal life. AMEN

English Translation

Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia; For He whom thou didst merit to bear, alleluia, has risen as He said, alleluia: Pray for us to God, alleluia.

V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia!

your ministers, that, by the gift of your grace, all may serve you faithfully. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

IV. FOR CATECHUMENS

Let us pray also for our catechumens, especially N., who will be baptized

at the Easter Vigil Mass that our God and Lord may open wide the ears of their inmost hearts and unlock the gates of his mercy, that, having received forgiveness of all their sins through the waters of rebirth, they, too, may be one with Christ Jesus our Lord.

[Prayer in silence.]

Almighty ever-living God, who make your Church ever fruitful with new offspring, increase the faith and understanding of (our) catechumens, that, reborn in the font of Baptism, they may be added to the number of your adopted children. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

V. FOR THE UNITY OF CHRISTIANS

Let us pray also for all our brothers and sisters who believe in Christ,

that our God and Lord may be pleased, as they live the truth, to gather them together and keep them in his one Church.

[Prayer in silence.]

Almighty ever-living God, who gather what is scattered and keep together what you have gathered, look kindly on the flock of your Son, that those whom one Baptism has consecrated may be joined together by integrity of faith and united in the bond of charity. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

VI. FOR THE JEWISH PEOPLE

Let us pray also for the Jewish people, to whom the Lord our God spoke first, that he may grant them to advance in love of hisName and in faithfulness to his covenant.

[Prayer in silence.]

Almighty ever-living God, who bestowed your promises on Abraham and his

descendants, hear graciously the prayers of your Church, that the people you first made your own may attain the fullness of redemption. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

X. FOR THOSE IN TRIBULATION

Let us pray, dearly beloved, to God the Father almighty, that he may cleanse the world of all errors, banish disease, drive out hunger, unlock prisons, loosen fetters, granting to travellers

While he was with them, he told them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the fulfillment of the Father's promise.
– As they watched, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight, alleluia.

Perfect Unity – Lesson and Discussion

“as you, Father, are in me and I in you”

In today's Gospel, we see Jesus's final prayer with His apostles. The final prayer takes place in the context of the Last Supper. “When ‘his hour’ came, Jesus prayed to the Father. His prayer, the longest transmitted by the Gospel, embraces the whole economy of creation and salvation, as well as his death and Resurrection. The prayer of the Hour of Jesus always remains his own, just as his Passover ‘once for all’ remains ever present in the liturgy of his Church.”[1]

What does Jesus show us in this prayer? The Catechism teaches us that this final prayer reveals an immense amount of things about Christ, His Mission, and the unity between the Father and the Son. In the final prayer everything is reset and focused on the centrality of Christ. “In this Paschal and sacrificial prayer, everything is recapitulated in Christ: God and the world; the Word and the flesh; eternal life and time; the love that hands itself over and the sin that betrays it; the disciples present and those who will believe in him by their word; humiliation and glory. It is the prayer of unity.”[2]

“Jesus fulfilled the work of the Father completely; his prayer, like his sacrifice, extends until the end of time. The prayer of this hour fills the end-times and carries them toward their consummation. Jesus, the Son to whom the Father has given all himself with a sovereign freedom by virtue of the power the Father has given him over all flesh. The Son, who made himself Servant, is Lord, the Pantocrator. Our high priest who prays for us is also the one who prays in us and the God who hears our prayer.”[3]

“Finally, in this prayer Jesus reveals and gives to us the ‘knowledge,’ inseparably one, of the Father and of the Son, which is the very mystery of the life of prayer.”[4]

What is unity? “The condition or state of oneness, especially among persons. What ultimately unites people is their common beliefs or convictions, and their common desires and affections.

Union is the state of uniting different people. It is their state of mind agreeing on certain ideas and of will attaching its desires or love to certain objects that unify.”[5] Unity is centered in common belief (reason) and common action (will). We are united in truth, a common belief that we assent to and know to be revealed to us by God. We are united in charity as we unite our will with the will of the Father. Thus, when Christians live what they pray, “Thy will be done” they are united in the will of the Father. There is only one will of the Father, therefore when the Christian united his will with the will of the Father, and other Christians united their will, those Christians are united in the bond of truth and charity. Unity is practiced when we pray, and then live “Thy will be done.” Disunity is practiced when we say and live “My will be done.”

How does Jesus show unity between Him and the Church?

“Christ bestowed unity on his Church from the beginning. This unity, we believe, subsists in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose, and we hope that it will continue to increase until the end of time’ Christ always gives his Church the gift of unity, but the Church must always pray and work to maintain, reinforce, and perfect the unity that Christ wills for her. This is why Jesus himself prayed at the hour of his Passion, and does not cease praying to his Father, for the unity of his disciples: ‘That they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us,...so that they world may know that you have sent me.’”[6]

What is the unity of the Catholic Church? “We would think it is the belief in God and the communion or unity of believers in Jesus Christ. In effect, this unity bestowed by the Holy Spirit does not merely consist in the gathering of people as a collection of individuals. It is a unity constituted by the bonds of the profession of faith, the sacraments and hierarchical communion. The faithful are *one* because, in the Spirit, they are in *communion* with the Son and, in him, share in his *communion* with the Father: ‘Our *fellowship* is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ’ (1 *Jn* 1:3).”[7] However, if we are to follow Christ and Jesus said He desired for us to be one with Him “...then, the *communion* of Christians is none other than the manifestation in them of the grace by which God makes them sharers in his own *communion*, which is his eternal life. Christ’s words ‘that they may be one’ are thus his prayer to the Father that the Father’s plan may be fully accomplished, in such a way that everyone may clearly see ‘what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages

VIDEO - Patriarch Bartholomew invites Pope Francis to Jerusalem – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 1:28

<http://youtu.be/PVqN4pZTGXg>

Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion – Prayer at the Good Friday Liturgy

Every Good Friday the people pray for the Holy Church, the Pope, and all the faithful those that are Catholics and non-Catholics. The Church is always seeking to bring everyone to Christ.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

I. FOR HOLY CHURCH

Let us pray, dearly beloved, for the holy Church of God, that our God and Lord be pleased to give her peace, to guard her and to unite her throughout the whole world and grant that, leading our life in tranquility and quiet, we may glorify God the Father almighty.

[Prayer in silence.]

Almighty ever-living God, who in Christ revealed your glory to all the nations, watch over the works of your mercy, that your Church, spread throughout all the world, may persevere with steadfast faith in confessing your name. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

II. FOR THE POPE

Let us pray also for our most Holy Father Pope Francis, that our God and Lord, who chose him for the Order of Bishops, may keep him safe and unharmed for the Lord’s holy Church, to govern the holy People of God.

[Prayer in silence.]

Almighty ever-living God, by whose decree all things are founded, look with favour on our prayers and in your kindness protect the Pope chosen for us, that, under him, the Christian people, governed by you their maker, may grow in merit by reason of their faith. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

III. FOR ALL ORDERS AND DEGREES OF THE FAITHFUL

Let us pray also for our Bishop N., for all Bishops, Priests, and Deacons of the Church and for the whole of the faithful people.

[Prayer in silence.]

Almighty ever-living God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is sanctified and governed, hear our humble prayer for

The next step are those who have a love and reverence for Sacred Scripture. Yes, there can be great differences in the interpretation of Scripture, but it must rejoice in that we can share in dialogue using what we both recognize as God's Word spoken to us.[43]

Next is Baptism. "Baptism therefore establishes a sacramental bond of unity which links all who have been reborn by it. ... Though the ecclesial Communities which are separated from us lack the fullness of unity with us flowing from Baptism, and though we believe they have not retained the proper reality of the Eucharistic mystery in its fullness, especially because of the absence of the sacrament of Orders, nevertheless when they commemorate His death and resurrection in the Lord's Supper, they profess that it signifies life in communion with Christ and look forward to His coming in glory. Therefore the teaching concerning the Lord's Supper, the other sacraments, worship, the ministry of the Church, must be the subject of the dialogue." [44]

Finally, we must realize that we as mere people, cannot bring those back into the Catholic Church on our own abilities and strengths. It is only through God that brings back souls. The Church has always rested its hope and prayer on "Christ for the Church, on our Father's love for us, and on the power of the Holy Spirit." [45]

"Their ecumenical action must be fully and sincerely Catholic, that is to say, faithful to the truth which we have received from the apostles and Fathers of the Church, in harmony with the faith which the Catholic Church has always professed, and at the same time directed toward that fullness to which Our Lord wills His Body to grow in the course of time." [46]

Is ecumenism working? Yes, very much so. Thousands of protestant churches are coming back into communion with the Catholic Church all over the world. The Eastern Churches and the Roman Catholic Church have been gaining ground every year. For the first time since the separation of the Eastern and Western Church back in 1054, the Eastern Patriarch came to the instillation Mass of Pope Francis in 2013.

Video – Bartholomew I recognizes before the Pope the capacity of uniting of the Second Vatican Council – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 2:05

<http://youtu.be/iRMaQW9rL54>

in God who created all things' (Eph 3:9). To believe in Christ means to desire unity; to desire unity means to desire the Church; to desire the Church means to desire the communion of grace which corresponds to the Father's plan from all eternity. Such is the meaning of Christ's prayer." [8]

What unity does Jesus ask of us who believe? "The union he asked for us who believe was above all union with the Father and with the Son, the sole source of our mutual union. We are mature as Christians when we achieve a personal encounter with God, which then overflows into our personal encounter with our brothers... Jesus wants our union with God and among ourselves to be something so perfect that it reflects the union that exists between himself and the Father." [9]

What mystery does the Church teach about unity with God?

Saint Jose Maria Escriva says it best: "Now we can understand better how... one of the principal aspects of her holiness is that unity centered on the mystery of the one and triune God. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all' (Eph. 4:4-6)." [10]

[See also Link to Liturgy Lesson - Peace: Unity in One]

What did Jesus reveal to us in order to be with God from the prayer in the Gospel Reading? Jesus revealed that in order to be in complete unity with God the Father, we must strive to love the same way the Holy Trinity shows mutual love. "Christ has revealed to us all we need to know in order to participate in the mutual love of the divine Persons – primarily, the mystery of who he is and what his mission is and, with that, the mystery of God himself ('I made known to them thy name'), thus fulfilling what he had announced: 'No one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him' (Mt. 11:27). Christ continues to make known his Father's love, by means of the Church in which he is always present: 'I am with you always, to the close of the age' (Mt. 28:20)." [11] As members of the Church we are to continue to enter into the mystery of who Christ is. We do this through prayer and liturgy, a sacramental life, and catechesis. We unite to the mission of Christ, by doing the work of the Church, which continues the saving mission of Christ. This is done through the works of mercy, a life of charity, and evangelization.

What is the unity between Jesus and God the Father? “Jesus revealed that God is Father in an unheard-of sense: he is Father not only in being Creator; he is eternally Father in relation his only Son, who is eternally Son only in relation to his Father: ‘No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.’”[12]

“Following this apostolic tradition, the Church confessed at the first ecumenical council at Nicaea (325) that the Son is ‘consubstantial’ with the Father, that is, one only God with him. The second ecumenical council, held at Constantinople in 381, kept this expression in its formulation of the Nicene Creed and confessed ‘the only-begotten Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father.’”[13]

What does “consubstantial” mean? “The Greek expression adopted at the Council of Nicaea is ‘homoousios,’ which is translated into English as ‘con-substantial.’ The Eternal Son, who was born of the Virgin Mary, is neither ‘like’ the Father nor ‘practically the same substance’ as the Father. The Eternal Son enjoys the very same substance as the Father. The Son possesses fully the Godhead of the Father. So today, the Church again confesses in the English rendition of the Creed that Jesus Christ is ‘consubstantial with the Father.’”[14] For many years, the English translation of the Nicene Creed said at Mass said “one in being with the Father” until 2011 when the Church changed it to the more literal and correct language “consubstantial with the father. The main reason is “one in being with the Father” does not translate “consubstantialem”. “The expression is too vague. Since God creates and sustains all that exists, everything in some sense can be said to be one in being with God. Not that everything is the divine nature but that everything outside of God remains dependent on the divine nature for its borrowed existence. The sameness that the Eternal Son enjoys with the Father is not like that. Instead, this sameness arises from the specific substance or nature of the Godhead. Catholic faith holds that each of the three Divine Persons share one and the same divine nature or substance. Just as the mystery of the Blessed Trinity stands at the heart of our belief, so also it grounds our salvation.”[15] Humans are made in the image and likeness of God, we “borrow” or “share” in the substance of God, but we are not in essence or in substance God. We share in the divine life and have the divine life dwelling within us through our baptism,

prayer in common, because ‘change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement, and merits the name ‘spiritual ecumenism;’

fraternal knowledge of each other;

ecumenical formation of the faithful and especially of priests;

dialogue among theologians and meetings among Christians of the different churches and communities;

collaboration among Christians in various areas of service to mankind. ‘Human service’ is the idiomatic phrase.[39]

“Concern for achieving unity ‘involves the whole Church, faithful and clergy alike.’ But we must realize ‘that this holy objective—the reconciliation of all Christians in the unity of the one and only Church of Christ—transcends human powers and gifts.’ That is why we place all our hope ‘in the prayer of Christ for the Church, in the love of the Father for us, and in the power of the Holy Spirit.’”[40]

How does the Church begin dialogue with others? The Church first starts with prayer. Blessed Pope John Paul II said, “When Christians pray together, the goal of unity seems closer. The long history of Christians marked by many divisions seems to converge once more because it tends towards that Source of its unity which is Jesus Christ.”[41]

We first start simply with those Christians who openly confess Jesus Christ as Lord and God. That Jesus is the sole Mediator between God and men, and the Holy Trinity. “We are aware indeed that there exist considerable divergences from the doctrine of the Catholic Church concerning Christ Himself, the Word of God made flesh, the work of redemption, and consequently, concerning the mystery and ministry of the Church, and the role of Mary in the plan of salvation. But we rejoice to see that our separated brethren look to Christ as the source and center of Church unity. Their longing for union with Christ inspires them to seek an ever closer unity, and also to bear witness to their faith among the peoples of the earth.”[42]

have frequent recourse to that prayer for the unity of the Church which the Saviour Himself on the eve of His death so fervently appealed to His Father: 'That they may all be one'... There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart. For it is from renewal of the inner life of our minds"[36]

The Second Vatican Council also instructs the Church to learn and understand more of the separated brethren and their beliefs. "We must get to know the outlook of our separated brethren. To achieve this purpose, study is of necessity required, and this must be pursued with a sense of realism and good will. Catholics, who already have a proper grounding, need to acquire a more adequate understanding of the respective doctrines of our separated brethren, their history, their spiritual and liturgical life, their religious psychology and general background. Most valuable for this purpose are meetings of the two sides - especially for discussion of theological problems - where each can deal with the other on an equal footing - provided that those who take part in them are truly competent and have the approval of the bishops."[37] A quick note; The first thing is to know the Catholic Church FIRST, and then study others. We must realize that by trying to understand their doctrines, this does not mean they are true, and if we do not know our own doctrine how can we see the similarities and differences.

Lastly, we should strive to explain and transmit the faith in a way that all can understand. It must be clear and precise, but not lose any of the profoundness and fullness of truth.[38] We should present it with charity, but never back down from pressure.

What steps is the Church taking for ecumenism? The Catechism teaches us how the Church is making ecumenism happen. As we see, many of things have already been discussed. "The desire to recover the unity of all Christians is a gift of Christ and a call of the Holy Spirit. Certain things are required in order to respond adequately to this call:

a permanent renewal of the Church in greater fidelity to her vocation; such renewal is the driving force of the movement toward unity;

conversion of heart as the faithful 'try to live holier lives according to the Gospel'; for it is the unfaithfulness of the members to Christ's gift which causes divisions;

but we are not the divine life. God the Father cannot lose His essence or His substance; nor can Jesus, the Son, lose His essence. Humans, through mortal sin, can lose or give up the divine life that they share in. The divine life can be gained and lost, and gained again. We are only sharing in the divine life, we are not the divine life itself; it is a complete gift. Saint Thomas Aquinas says it best, "God became man, so that man can become like God". The collect for the feast of the Incarnation says, "O God, who wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and still more wonderfully restored it, grant, we pray, that we may share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever."[16] During the Liturgy of the Eucharist "the Deacon, or the Priest, pours wine and a little water into the chalice, saying quietly: By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity."[17] **How is it then that we share in divinity, share in the very nature or essence of God?** It is only through the Son who shared in our humanity, so that we are able to share in His divinity.

How does God help keep us in unity with Him? He has given us the Holy Spirit. "Before his Passover, Jesus announced the sending of 'another Paraclete' (Advocate), the Holy Spirit. At work since creation, having previously 'spoken through the prophets, the Spirit will now be with and in the disciples, to teach them and guide them 'into all the truth.' The Holy Spirit is thus revealed as another divine person with Jesus and the Father."[18]

How is the Trinity unified in this mission? The Holy Trinity has always been the model of unity. The Holy Trinity is an external exchange of love. Father the lover, Son the beloved, and Holy Spirit, the shared loved. The people of God are called into this love and have been called since the beginning. God worked to unify the people of Israel. He brought them out of slavery and exile time and time again. He then sent His only Son to unify the whole world. Finally, He sends the Holy Spirit to keep the Church His Son, Jesus Christ, founded from perishing into Hell. "The Spirit is sent to the apostles and to the Church both by the Father in the name of the Son, and by the Son in person once he had returned to the Father. The sending of the person of the Spirit after Jesus' glorification reveals in its fullness the mystery of the Holy Trinity."[19]

See Also Link to Liturgy Packet – Holy Trinity Sunday

Was Jesus speaking only for the unity of just the apostles?

No. Jesus' final prayer was for the apostles, and all those who would be called throughout history to follow His mission. "Jesus unites them to the mission he received from the Father. As 'the Son can do nothing of his own accord, 'but receives everything from the Father who sent him, so those whom Jesus sends can do nothing apart from him, from whom they received both the mandate for their mission and the power to carry it out. Christ's apostles knew that they were called by God as 'ministers of a new covenant,' 'servants of God,' 'ambassadors for Christ,' 'servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.'"[20]

What does each of these titles tell us about the role of the Church?

Is it possible to have perfect unity here on earth? No, it is not possible because we reach full oneness with God only in the beatific vision in heaven. This does not mean we can feel some unity here on earth, and we should not stop striving for unity with Him. "Nevertheless, absolutely perfect union exists only in heaven; on earth it is impossible for it not to feel the limitations of the creature. Still, it is a goal toward which we need to strive without ever tiring, by continually calling for divine help. 'Come, Lord Jesus' (Rev. 22:20; 2nd reading) is the last cry of Scripture and the unceasing sigh of the Church, as it awaits the final return of the Lord, calling upon him continually to come to sustain and strengthen the unity of her children."[21] As mentioned earlier, "Prayer...reminds us that unity, ultimately, is a gift from God, a gift for which we must ask and for which we must prepare in order that we may be granted it."[22]

We pray in the Our Father, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." We do strive for unity and peace. We also strive to have earth be as much like heaven as possible, but this earth, this temporal life will never be heaven, eternal life. Humanity can share or borrow from divinity, but humanity will never be completely divine. In like manner, earth can share or borrow in the likeness of heaven, but will never completely be "heaven on earth." There is a false teaching called liberation theology that claims that we can have "heaven on earth".

What is liberation theology? "Originating in Latin America, liberation theology has held as its main concert the exploitation

Spirit, and visible elements too."[33] The spirit blows where it wills to blows. This doesn't mean that they have Truth that cannot be found in the Church. It means even though they may be separated doesn't mean God can't infuse grace upon them. "Nevertheless, our separated brethren, whether considered as individuals or as Communities and Churches, are not blessed with that unity which Jesus Christ wished to bestow on all those who through Him were born again into one body, and with Him quickened to newness of life - that unity which the Holy Scriptures and the ancient Tradition of the Church proclaim. For it is only through Christ's Catholic Church, which is 'the all-embracing means of salvation,' that they can benefit fully from the means of salvation. We believe that Our Lord entrusted all the blessings of the New Covenant to the apostolic college alone, of which Peter is the head, in order to establish the one Body of Christ on earth to which all should be fully incorporated who belong in any way to the people of God. This people of God, though still in its members liable to sin, is ever growing in Christ during its pilgrimage on earth, and is guided by God's gentle wisdom, according to His hidden designs, until it shall happily arrive at the fullness of eternal glory in the heavenly Jerusalem."[34]

Ecumenism Part II – Lesson and Discussion

"so that they may all be one"

How is the Church working to bringing about reunification and ecumenism within the Church? The Church first looks to Herself. For how can we expect others to enter into the Catholic Church if we do not hold the truths of Jesus Christ? The Second Vatican Council acknowledges this, "For although the Catholic Church has been endowed with all divinely revealed truth and with all means of grace, yet its members fail to live by them with all the fervor that they should, so that the radiance of the Church's image is less clear in the eyes of our separated brethren and of the world at large, and the growth of God's kingdom is delayed. All Catholics must therefore aim at Christian perfection and, each according to his station, play his part that the Church may daily be more purified and renewed."[35] This means every Catholic must strive for perfection when it comes to our faith so we can win souls. The first soul we must win is our own and then those specifically entrusted to our care.

Next, we must pray, and those who wish to have dialogue must have an open heart. "It is a recognized custom for Catholics to

clesial Community has their own origins and different teachings in the matters of faith and morals. The Church looks to build bridges with each of the separated churches and communities on a case by case bases. "It follows that these separated Churches and Communities, though we believe that they suffer from defects, have by no means been deprived of significance and value in the mystery of salvation. For the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as means of salvation which derive their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church"[31].

[\[See also Link to Liturgy Lesson - "One" Catholic Church\]](#)

[See also Link to Liturgy Lesson - The Four Marks of the Church "One"]

"Even in the beginnings of this one and only Church of God there arose certain rifts, which the Apostle strongly condemned. But in subsequent centuries much more serious dissensions made their appearance and quite large communities came to be separated from full communion with the Catholic Church - for which, often enough, men of both sides were to blame. The children who are born into these Communities and who grow up believing in Christ cannot be accused of the sin involved in the separation, and the Catholic Church embraces upon them as brothers, with respect and affection. For men who believe in Christ and have been truly baptized are in communion with the Catholic Church even though this communion is imperfect. The differences that exist in varying degrees between them and the Catholic Church - whether in doctrine and sometimes in discipline, or concerning the structure of the Church - do indeed create many obstacles, sometimes serious ones, to full ecclesiastical communion. The ecumenical movement is striving to overcome these obstacles. But even in spite of them it remains true that all who have been justified by faith in Baptism are members of Christ's body, and have a right to be called Christian, and so are correctly accepted as brothers by the children of the Catholic Church."[32]

How can other Christians exist outside the Catholic Church? "...some and even very many of the significant elements and endowments which together go to build up and give life to the Church itself, can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church: the written word of God; the life of grace; faith, hope and charity, with the other interior gifts of the Holy

of the poor, but it also seeks to defend the rights of minority and ethnic groups and to support women's liberation. It is, therefore, a theory of deliverance from the injustices caused to people by the power structures of modern society. It is a new approach to theology, and its leaders urge a reinterpretation of the Christian faith to concentrate on the main task of the Church today, to deliver people everywhere from the inhumanity to which they are being subjected, especially by those in political power. Accordingly all the main doctrines of historical Christianity are to be reassessed and, if need be, revised. Christ becomes an inspired human deliver of the weak and oppressed; God's kingdom centers on this world, and not on the next; sin is essentially social evil and not an offense against God; the Church mission is mainly sociopolitical and not eschatological; and objective divine revelation is subordinated to personal experience."[23]

Ecumenism: Unity Between Christ Followers – Lesson and Discussion

"so that they may all be one"

What is Ecumenism? We will unpack ecumenism and the church documents, but to give a concise definition and/or answer to this question ecumenism is "The modern movement toward Christian unity whose Protestant origins stem from the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference in 1910, and whose Catholic principles were informulated by the Second Vatican Council in 1964. These principles are mainly three:

1. Christ established his Church on the Apostles and their episcopal successors, whose visible head and principle of unity became Peter and his successor the Bishop of Rome;
2. Since the first century there have been divisions in Christianity, but many persons now separated from visible unity with the successors of the Apostles under Peter are nevertheless Christians who possess more or less of the fullness of grace available in the Roman Catholic Church;
3. Catholics are to do everything possible to foster the ecumenical movement, which comprehends all 'the initiatives and activities, planned and undertaken to promote Christian unity, according to the Church's various needs and as opportunities offer' (Decree on Ecumenism, I, 4)."[24]

In other words, the Church is looking to bring back fellow Christians who are not in full union with the Catholic Church.

Why is ecumenism so important? As Blessed Pope John Paul II said, “If they wish truly and effectively to oppose the world’s tendency to reduce to powerlessness the Mystery of Redemption, they must *profess together the same truth about the Cross.*”[25]

Why is ecumenism difficult? Blessed Pope John Paul II mentions several reasons why it is difficult at times for ecumenism: “Nevertheless, besides the doctrinal differences needing to be resolved, Christians cannot underestimate the burden of *long-standing misgivings* inherited from the past, and of mutual *mis-understandings* and *prejudices*. *Complacency, indifference* and *insufficient knowledge of one another* often make this situation worse. Consequently, the commitment to ecumenism must be based upon the conversion of hearts and upon prayer, which will also lead to the *necessary purification of past memories*. With the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Lord’s disciples, inspired by love, by the power of the truth and by a sincere desire for mutual forgiveness and reconciliation, are called to *re-examine together their painful past* and the hurt which that past regrettably continues to provoke even today. All together, they are invited by the ever fresh power of the Gospel to acknowledge with sincere and total objectivity the mistakes made and the contingent factors at work at the origins of their deplorable divisions. *What is needed is a calm, clear-sighted and truthful vision of things*, a vision enlivened by divine mercy and capable of freeing people’s minds and of inspiring in everyone a renewed willingness, precisely with a view to proclaiming the Gospel to the men and women of every people and nation.”[26]

Why is the Church so concerned with ecumenism? The Church is concerned about saving souls. Jesus has told us to go out and proclaim the Good News. We are Church with doors and arms open “Together with all Christ’s disciples, the Catholic Church bases upon God’s plan her ecumenical commitment to gather all Christians into unity. Indeed, ‘the Church is not a reality closed in on herself. Rather, she is permanently open to missionary and ecumenical endeavour, for she is sent to the world to announce and witness, to make present and spread the mystery of communion which is essential to her, and to gather all people and all things into Christ, so as to be for all an “inseparable sacrament of unity.”’[27]

What does disunity cause? First, it contradicts the will of Christ. Second, it scandalized the world. Why would anyone want to become a follower of Christ or even adhere to our prayer, belief, and life if they see Christians that are not united in prayer, belief, or life? Finally, it damages the holy cause of preaching the Gospel. The Second Vatican Council made the restoration of unity among Christians a top priority. “Christ the Lord founded one Church and one Church only. However, many Christian communions present themselves to men as the true inheritors of Jesus Christ; all indeed profess to be followers of the Lord but differ in mind and go their different ways, as if Christ Himself were divided. Such division openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages the holy cause of preaching the Gospel to every creature.”[28]

Does God want unity and ecumenism? Yes! This is what God has willed for all time. “The unity of all divided humanity is the will of God. For this reason he sent his Son, so that by dying and rising for us he might bestow on us the Spirit of love. On the eve of his sacrifice on the Cross, Jesus himself prayed to the Father for his disciples and for all those who believe in him, that they *might be one*, a living communion. This is the basis not only of the duty, but also of the responsibility before God and his plan, which falls to those who through Baptism become members of the Body of Christ, a Body in which the fullness of reconciliation and communion must be made present. How is it possible to remain divided, if we have been ‘buried’ through Baptism in the Lord’s death, in the very act by which God, through the death of his Son, has broken down the walls of division? Division ‘openly contradicts the will of Christ, provides a stumbling block to the world, and inflicts damage on the most holy cause of proclaiming the Good News to every creature.’[29]

“Jesus himself, at the hour of his Passion, prayed ‘that they may all be one’ (*Jn 17:21*). This unity, which the Lord has bestowed on his Church and in which he wishes to embrace all people, is not something added on, but stands at the very heart of Christ’s mission. Nor is it some secondary attribute of the community of his disciples. Rather, it belongs to the very essence of this community. God wills the Church, because he wills unity, and unity is an expression of the whole depth of his *agape*.”[30]

What are the differences between the Eastern Churches and the Reformation Communities? This is a difficult question to answer in a few sentences, but put simply each Church and ec-