

Many Gifts, One Spirit

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We are united to the Christ in a very special way through Baptism and Eucharist. We actually participate in His Death and Resurrection through Baptism, in a mysterious but real concrete way.

"Or are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection. We know that our old self was crucified with him, so that our sinful body might be done away with, that we might no longer be in slavery to sin" (The Letter to the Corinthians 6, 3-6).

The Lord allows us to be part of His Body through Eucharist. When you celebrate the Holy Communion, you become consanguineous and co-corporeal with Jesus. The Holy Spirit then comes and guides you towards an intimate communion with the Christ and with your brothers, so that all together become One Only Body with Jesus.

The variety among the members of this Mystical Body does not destroy Its Unity. It is a real "unity in the diversity" as Saint Paul teaches us:

"There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another mighty deeds; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another varieties of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes. As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit" (The First Letter to the Corinthians 12, 4-13).

Saint Paul also insists in this point with the Romans:

"For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another" (The Letter to the Romans 12, 4-5).

"Unity in the diversity" is one of the wonders God granted to His Church. Among other advantages, it encourages and nourishes mutual charity among the members of this one Body. God grants a different gift to each member of the Church. This gift enables the member to help and be at the service of his brothers and the Church, so that no one can become self-sufficient and think that one is able to do everything by oneself, without the help of one's fellowman. God constituted the Church as a Community, a Family, in which each and every member serves and is served by the other members. That is what Saint Paul means when he affirms that we are "individually parts of one another" (The Letter to the Romans 12, 5).

No community is strong, active and lively without mutual collaboration that encourages community members to increasingly practice charity. The Church becomes the Treasure of Salvation to the world by gathering the small individual gifts and talents God gave to each Baptized Christian.

In this sense, the Apostle affirms to the Corinthians that:

"Now the body is not a single part, but many. If a foot should say, "Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body," it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. Or if an ear should say, "Because I am not an eye I do not belong to the body," it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God placed the parts, each one of them, in the body as he intended. If they were all one part, where would the body be? But as it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you," nor again the head to the feet, "I do not need you." Indeed, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are all the more necessary, and those parts of the body that we consider less honorable we surround with greater honor, and our less presentable parts are treated with greater propriety, whereas our more presentable parts do not need this. But God has so constructed the body as to give greater honor to a part that is without it, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same concern for one another. If (one) part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy (The First Letter to the Corinthians, 12, 14-26).

It is worth noticing that the Apostle affirms that: "the parts may have the same concern for one another" (I Cor 12, 25).

No member of the Church should try doing things all by himself in a haughty self-sufficient way; that is the very contrary of God's Will for His Church. We are Church indeed when depend on one another to make evangelization happen. This co-dependence is sometimes very difficult to be lived because of the limitations and faults of each member, though this also contributes to the development of real humbleness in the heart of each member of Jesus Christ's Body.