

**“The community of believers was of one heart and mind.”**

I want you to try to imagine that you **never believed** in Christianity. For most of us that means trying to imagine our parents never having raised us to follow Jesus. For others of you who weren't raised in any Christian tradition but came to believe and be baptized later in life, you don't have to imagine it. **You lived it.**

But for the vast majority of us, we can't remember a time when we weren't part of the “the community of believers”—the Catholic Church. But try to imagine that you are **still an unbeliever at this point in your life—at** the age you are now, with all of your other life experiences being the same, and the world just as we know it. Do you have that image in your mind?

Now consider this: **What would you think of Christians?**

I know it's not easy to try to place ourselves into that scenario. Maybe it's nearly impossible; but let us try nonetheless.

What would you think of Christians? Would you have a **favorable opinion** of them? Would you be **attracted** to the way they live their lives, or to their **beliefs**, or to their **attitudes**? Would you be thinking, “I really need to look into this whole Christianity thing. I really think they're onto something. I want to know more, and maybe even **be a part of their community someday.**” Or would your view of Christians be much different?

**“The community of believers was of one heart and mind.”**

Do those words we heard in the First Reading from Acts still hold true today? Are we, the Christian community (or Catholics for that matter), **on the same page—** of one heart and mind? Are there concrete practices and beliefs that **define who we are?**

I mean **attitudes**, and **qualities**, and ways of living, in short the **lens** through which we view the world. Do we act with one heart and mind, or a million different ones?

No one should presume that Christians being of one heart and mind is an easy thing. It certainly is not. Each one of us is unique. We have **different personalities and life experiences** and strengths and weaknesses and fears and biases—all sorts of things. And so, when we talk about being of one heart and mind, we're not talking about being **carbon copies** of each other. That's not what God is asking.

People often look at us and wonder if we really stand for anything, anymore, if there really are any “**hallmarks**” of Christianity, some things **common to nearly all of us**.

Thank God we have the Church to help us with this task, **guide us on this journey**. Thank God we have a Church that takes seriously her role as teacher—giving us the **guard rails and signposts** to keep us from straying too far from the path.

Thank God we have a Church that is entrusted with helping us flesh out the **implications and consequences of our beliefs-- helping us put into practice** the faith we hold dear. Thank God we have a Church that does all she can to **keep us of one heart and one mind**.

And so, today, let's leave this place, not thinking about how **others** aren't reflecting the true spirit of the Gospel message, the true spirit of the Risen Jesus. That shouldn't be our first concern.

Rather, let's leave this holy place **reflecting on our own failures**, the ways each one of us fails to do what Jesus did for Thomas, the ways each of us **fails to give others a reason to believe** in the Risen Lord.

People *are* **searching**. Now, perhaps, more than ever. Let us help them find **what they're looking for**.

