

### **“Jesus Calls for Love and Unity”**

Last week in continuing His theme of a Good Shepherd, Jesus tells us what we must do so we can be grafted to the Good Shepherd by using the simile of *‘He is the Vine and we are the branches.’* This week, our Lord calls for love, unity, that leads to Christ’s peace with God and with one another for those who believe in Him.

In His last discourse in the Gospel of John chapters 14 - 17, Jesus prayed the longest recorded prayer. It was at the last supper meal with His disciples that He expressed out loud His love for His Father, and His love for all who would believe in Him not only in the present age, but in the future. His prayer expressed what was uppermost in His heart and mind and what He loved most. The crux of His prayer is about love and unity He desires of all who believe in Him and follow Him.

His prayer on the eve of His sacrifice showed the great love he had for His disciples. He trusted them that they would carry on His mission after His Ascension to where He was before the beginning of time, a place He would most like all of us to be with Him.

He knew they would abandon Him during His trial, yet, He entrusted to them the great task of spreading His Good News to every corner of the earth until the end of time. Since they could not live forever, we are entrusted with the same mission that has been passed on to us from Him through them.

Jesus towards the end of His mission on earth, a mission He received from His Father, Jesus set an example for us on praying for others. When we pray for ourselves, we usually ask for help, blessing, guidance, and wisdom; Jesus expects us to pray in the same way for our neighbors. He set an example throughout His ministry in prayer, blessing, and gratitude to His Father. Jesus is the teacher of harmony, peace and unity and He desires each of us to pray for our brothers and sisters.

The mission He gave us is to love one another. He died and rose from the dead so that we might be one with Him and His Father as He and His Father are one for eternity. Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit draws those who believe in Him into the unity which He and the Father have together and into the unity He desires for us. We become sons and daughters of our Father in heaven through the love of Christ in union with the Holy Spirit.

As Jesus said, He is the Vine we are the branches and Paul said Jesus is the Head and the Church is the body of Christ. Jesus prays that all the members of His body would remain firm in the unity of that body even when persecution occurs. The unity will occur through the bond of love. It is our responsibility to pray that by the same grace which made the Church Christ’s body, we may remain firm in that unity.

When there is unity, there will be peace of Christ. Peace is not absence of wars between countries that do not have relations nor is it absence of friction between members of families who do not interact. Peace of Jesus is found when there is interaction and there is harmony between the parties. Jesus gave us His Sacraments to help us attain these stage of holiness of love for each other and peace in this world. He has given us His sanctifying grace towards this end.

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It is the will of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit that all Christians would be one. Just as Jesus prayed for Peter to strengthen his brothers after he would be tested by the devil and he would deny Jesus, so may all Christians throughout the world attain the unity Christ prayed for at the Last Supper with His disciples!

As we come to receive Him in the Eucharist, let us ask Him for His sanctifying grace so we can remain grafted to the Vine.